



SOUND
NATIVE
PLANTS

Plants not to buy

Believe it or not, there are plants that we want you to consider *not* buying—from us or anyone. The way we think, successful restoration means making the most of what you have, be it limited dollars or a patch of subsoil next to an alder forest. Here is what we mean:

Consider site surroundings

If there is indeed a red alder (*Alnus rubra*) stand next to your restoration site, then you are almost guaranteed to see alders show up on their own. This species has no problem volunteering at most sites and sometimes comes in so thick that they crowd out plantings. So you may not want to buy alders for your site, even if they are in your reference stand!

Other species that commonly volunteer when there is a nearby seed source include big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), native willows, and black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*). Along with red alder, we generally consider these species to be helpful to restoration efforts, so we frequently specify them *if* we think they won't come in on their own. Douglas spirea (*Spiraea douglasii*), cattails (*Typha latifolia*), and soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) are other common native volunteers, but since all three often form monocultures (crowding out other plants you want), we hardly ever recommend planting them. Of course, if your soil conditions are not appropriate for these easy-germinators, it's possible you won't see them volunteering after all.

As you create your planting scheme, consider specifying plants that may do well alongside likely volunteers—plants that can withstand both sun and shade and grow vigorously enough not to be over-powered. Even better, consider a phased planting; after a few years, return to a site and plant shade-tolerant conifers or other later-succession species under alder or maple cover.

Late succession plantings

We sell lots of salal (*Gaultheria shallon*), low Oregon grape (*Mahonia nervosa*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), and all of our forest herbaceous perennials...and we wonder, *where are all these forest enhancement plantings going?* If you plant these and other late succession species at sites scraped bare by construction, then you are likely throwing those plants away. While pioneers like red alder or snowberry can handle full sun and bare soil, a western hemlock or western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*) can crisp up quickly. Please check the species selection lists in our catalog or on our website for more information before you buy.

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