

NATIVE PLANT RESOURCES FOR SAN JUAN COUNTY

This handout addresses the questions: Where can I buy plants and seed native to San Juan County? And how do I grow them?

To begin with, which plant species are actually native to San Juan County? A pretty good reference for determining this is the field guide “Wild Plants of the San Juan Islands” by Atkinson and Sharpe, which includes an appendix listing most native and non-native plants in the islands. (“Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast” by Pojar and Mackinnon is another excellent guide for the larger region.)

Second, it’s good to find out the provenance of the plants or seed before purchasing. Provenance means the geographical origin. For example, great camas (*Camassia quamash*) is native to the San Juans. This species is also native to Oregon, Nevada, and California, but plants from different areas have different genetic traits, such as color. So if it’s a goal to conserve local diversity and adaptation, sticking with a relatively local provenance is important. Many growers specializing in native plants list provenance on their website, or should be able to look it up if asked.



Sea blush (*Plectritis congesta*) dominates the spring bloom in a garden planted with native wildflowers.

NURSERIES

This list concentrates on suppliers that have at least some San Juan County or western Washington provenance plants.

The Center for Natural Lands Management runs a conservation nursery with seed production for a number of species of San Juan County and the greater Olympic rainshadow area provenance. Contact nursery manager Sierra Smith, ssmith@cnlm.org, 360-480-6105

Fourth Corner Nursery is a well-established, wholesale native plant nursery in Whatcom County. They sell primarily bare-root stock of shrubs, trees, wetland plants, forbs. Much of their material is of western Washington provenance. fourthcornernurseries.com/ 360-592-2250

Heritage Seedlings in Oregon sells native seed wholesale, most of it of Willamette Valley provenance. Their website also has great information about site preparation and seeding. <http://www.heritageseedlings.com/> 503-585-9835

Inside Passage Seeds in Port Townsend sells wild-collected seeds from the Salish Sea region. insidepassageseeds.com 360-385-6114

The Master Gardener Foundation of San Juan County holds an annual native plant sale in early spring, specializing in resales of purchased bare root trees and shrubs and as well as some container plants: <https://www.mgfsjc.org/>

Northwest Meadows based on Whidbey Island sells a regional wildflower mix and other native grass and wildflower seed. Some of their offerings are of Whidbey Island provenance. <https://northwestmeadows.com/>

Oxbow Farm and Conservation Center near Carnation grows a wide variety of Western Washington provenance container plants using organic and sustainable practices. <http://www.oxbow.org/> 425-788-1134 ext. 4

The Pacific Rim Institute on Whidbey Island runs a plant and seed nursery primarily for restoring their own site, but also takes orders and sells seeds and plants when available. www.pacificriminstitute.org

Plantas Nativas is a retail native plant nursery in Whatcom County, selling species native to western Washington. <http://www.plantasnativa.com/> 360-715-9655

The Plant Materials Center in Bow, Washington, sells bare-root shrubs and trees, some of western Washington provenance. <http://wacdpmc.org/home.html> 360-757-1094

Saanich Native Plants on Vancouver Island is a retail nursery selling local provenance container plants as well as seed of shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses. While their offerings

Updated June 24, 2019 by the San Juan County Land Bank's Salish Seeds Project.

are perfect for San Juan County, permits are likely required to bring plants and seeds across the border. Their website also has excellent resources on plant selection, pollinators, hedgerows, etc. www.saanichnativeplants.com

The Salish Seeds Project is managed by the San Juan County Land Bank, and specializes in grasses and wildflowers of oak, prairie, and coastal habitats of San Juan County provenance. Plants and seed are grown primarily by special order. Contact nursery manager Eliza Habegger: elizah@sjclandbank.org or 360-378-4402

LANDSCAPING AND GARDENING GUIDES

This is just a small selection of what's out there.

King County has a number of native plant resources on their website, such as this western Washington planting guide. <https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/water-and-land/yard-and-garden/native-plant-guide-western-washington.pdf>

“The Garry Oak Gardeners Handbook” contains good ideas and landscaping plans using native wildflowers and grasses in the Salish Sea region. Free download available from the Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team (GOERT) at http://www.goert.ca/publications_resources/general.php

Saanich Native Plants offers a variety of resources tailored to the Salish Sea region, such as a list of plants suitable for green roofs, a hedgerow guide, planting for pollinators, and more. <http://www.saanichnativeplants.com/>

“Planting Native Oak in the Pacific Northwest”, USDA booklet, free download available at <http://www.arlis.org/docs/vol1/B/547193245.pdf>

“Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest: An Illustrated Guide” by Arthur Kruckeberg, University of Washington Press, 1996.

“Rain Garden Handbook for Western Washington” by Hinman et. al. is available for free download at <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/publications/1310027.pdf>

The Xerces Society offers many resources about planting for pollinators, including this excellent general guide to creating a wildflower meadow. Free download at <http://www.xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/EstablishingPollinatorMeadows.pdf>