Common Plants of the Pacific Northwest

This is a list of the most common angiosperm shrubs and trees you will encounter in the Pacific Northwest. The provided key should help you in your recognition. An easy way to remember most of these species is by putting them in groups i.e. grasses with awns, species with opposite leaves, "armed"species, etc. You should only be left with a small group in which you will have to spend time learning the more subtle characteristics.

Scientific Name	***Family***	***Common Name***
Bromus tectorum	Poaceae	cheat grass
Pseudoroegneria spicata	Poaceae	bluebunch wheatgrass
**Agropyron spicatum*		
Festuca idahoensis	Poaceae	Idaho fescue
Poa secunda	Poaceae	Sandberg bluegrass
Acer glabrum	Aceraceae	Rocky Mtn. maple
Pachistima myrsinites	Celastraceae	mountain box, mountain lover
Symphoricarpos albus	Caprifoliaceae	snowberry
Cornus sericea	Cornaceae	red-osier dogwood
**Cornus stolonifera*		
Philadelphus lewisii	Hydrangeaceae	mockorange, syringa
Rosa spp	Rosaceae	wild rose
Crataegus douglasii	Rosaceae	black hawthorn
Purshia tridentata	Rosaceae	bitter-brush, antelope-brush
Artemisia tridentata	Asteraceae	big sagebrush
Cercocarpus ledifolius	Rosaceae	mountain mahogany
Populus tremuloides	Salicaceae	quaking aspen
Populus trichocarpa	Salicaceae	black cottonwood
Holodiscus discolor	Rosaceae	ocean spray
Spiraea betulifolia	Rosaceae	spiraea
Amelanchier alnifolia	Rosaceae	serviceberry
Prunus virginiana	Rosaceae	chokecherry
Vaccinium membranaceum	Ericaceae	huckleberry
**Vaccinium globulare*		

* Note: you may see these species names used as an alternative name. *Pseudoroegneria spicata* is the current acceptable name for the widespread indicator species *Agropyron spicatum*. The same applies to the name *Cornus stolonifera* being replaced by the name *Cornus sericea*. These two species of *Vaccinium* are often "lumped" together.

KEY TO SOME COMMON PLANTS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

1 Plants grass-like (flowers small, not brightly colored)
- 2 Plants annual; awns present and generally 15-20 mm or more..... ***Bromus tectorum***
- 2 Plants perennial, awns various but generally not as long as above or absent
  - 3 Spikelets awned (a slender thread or needle-like appendage)
    - 4 Spikelets attached directly to main axis of inflorescence; leaves gen wider than 2mm, not strongly rolled..... ***Pseudoroegneria spicata***
    - 4 Spikelets with pedicels.....***Festuca idahoensis***
  - 3 Spikelets without awns.....***Poa secunda***

1 Plants NOT grass-like
- 5 Leaves opposite
  - 6 Leaves palmately lobed.....***Acer glabrum***
  - 6 Leaves various but not palmately lobed
    - 7 Leaves evergreen (leathery), generally under 3cm long, elliptic to narrowly oblanceolate, glossy on the upper surface, the margins finely and evenly toothed.....***Pachistima myrsinites***
    - 7 Leaves deciduous, and not at once as above
      - 8 Leaves elliptic to ovate, the margins entire to somewhat undulate, medium to dark green above, gray-green below, mostly less than 4cm long.....***Symphoricarpos albus***
      - 8 Leaves not at once as above, generally longer than 3 cm
        - 9 Veins of blade prominent, numerous and evenly spaced along midrib, the apex generally acuminate; stems often reddish-purple.....***Cornus sericea***
        - 9 Veins of plade prominent but lateral, only 2 diverging from midrib near the base, the apex generally acute; stems not reddish-purple.....***Philadelphus lewisii***
- 5 Leaves alternate
  - 10 Plants armed
    - 11 Leaves pinnately compound; armed with prickles.....***Rosa***
    - 11 Leaves simple, the margins serrate to doubly serrate; armed with well-developed thorns.....***Crataegus douglasii***
  - 10 Plants unarmed
    - 12 Leaves mostly less than 2cm long and apically tridentate (with 3 small teeth)
      - 13 Leaves greenish above, grey below.....***Purshia tridentata***
      - 13 Leaves grey on both surfaces.....***Artemisia tridentata***
    - 12 Leaves not as above
      - 14 Leaves evergreen, linear to lanceolate or very narrowly elliptic, margins strongly revolute, dark green above, tan or brownish and hairy below, bark light colored.....***Cercocarpus ledifolius***
      - 14 Leaves not at once as above
        - 15 Leaves rotund to ovate or reniform-cordate, the petioles strongly flattened.....***Populus tremuloides***
        - 15 Leaves not at once as above

See lead #16 – next page

16 Leaves up to 4 cm broad, deltoid to broadly lanceolate, the lower surface distinctly lighter than the upper, the margins crenulate, the apex attenuate, acute or acuminate.....***Populus trichocarpa***

16 Leaves not at once as above

17 Leaf bases cuneate to somewhat attenuate, the basal margins entire

18 Blades ovate to elliptic, the margins deeply toothed, each tooth with a rounded, shortly aristulate apex; inflorescence rather large and pyramidal; stems gray to brown or only slightly reddish.....***Holodiscus discolor***

18 Blades ovate to broadly elliptic, the margins prominently but not deeply toothed, each tooth shortly acuminate; inflorescence distinctly flat topped; stems often reddish.....***Spiraea betulifolia***

17 Leaf bases various but not distinctly cuneate or attenuate

19 Basal portions of blades generally entire with serrations or crenations generally restricted to the upper 2/3 of the blade

20 Blades broadly ovate to nearly rotund, the margins generally evenly serrate; inflorescence not flat-topped; stems often purplish….....***Amelanchier alnifolia***

20 Blades ovate to broadly elliptic , the margins often irregularly and coarsely toothed, frequently doubly serrate; inflorescence flat-topped; stems often reddish but not purple.....***Spiraea betulifolia***

19 Basal portions of blades generally crenate or serrate (teeth not restricted to upper 2/3 of margin)

21 Blades with acuminate apex; leaf margins serrate; inflorescence racemose.....***Prunus virginiana***

21 Blades with more attenuate apex; leaf margins crenate-serrulate; flowers in leaf axils.....***Vaccinium membranaceum (Vaccinium globulare)***