

Conservation Corner (appeared in *Ferry County View*)

2020 Spring Plant Sale

Ferry Conservation District Event to Offer Natives, Fruit Trees, Berries, Grapes and other Edibles. New this year: Milkweed

Planting trees, shrubs and edibles on your property provides multiple benefits. Plants will beautify your property and add to its value. The foliage and fruits of plants provide food for wildlife and for your family. Flowering shrubs attract pollinators, such as butterflies and bees, enhancing the entire ecosystem. Trees can provide shade or act as a windbreak. Reforestation trees enhance the landscape and provide timber and firewood for harvest in the future. Planting in riparian areas (river and stream banks and lakeshore) helps protect the banks, preventing erosion and degradation of water quality.

This year, for the first time, we are offering milkweed plants. Milkweed is in decline across the country, and, as a result, the population of monarch butterflies (dependent on milkweed) has plummeted. The planting of native milkweed plants will improve habitat for monarchs and other pollinators.

All plants selected will grow in our local climate (Most of the plants chosen will thrive in Plant Hardiness Zones 2-5. Most of Ferry County is Zone 5, with microclimates ranging from Zone 3-6).

Wholesale nurseries in Washington and Oregon supply healthy, hardy planting stock grown in the Northwest. By purchasing in bulk the District is able to provide excellent plants at good prices.

Natives: Trees, Shrubs and Perennials

Native plants have always been an important part of the annual sale. Because they naturally occur in an area, native plants are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions and, once established, need less irrigation and fertilization than non-native plants. They are more resistant to pests and disease and will better provide food and shelter for local wildlife. This year's selections include three native conifer trees for reforestation and two native shrubs/woody perennials.



The **Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)** grows abundantly in our area on dry south-facing slopes and is very tolerant of high summer temperatures. This tree, a major source of timber in our region also provides important wildlife habitat, recreation use and aesthetic value. The very thick bark of mature trees makes them fire resilient, though they are not truly fire resistant. Deer-resistant. Zone 4+. Mature size: height 60-100 ft+, canopy spread 25-30 ft.

Our only native deciduous conifer, the **Western larch (*Larix occidentalis*)**, may grow to 150 feet with a trunk up to 3 ft. in diameter. The needles of the larch (also known as tamarack) turn a beautiful golden color in October and drop off in November. A popular reforestation tree, it thrives in deep, moist, porous soils with northern or western exposure. The larch is the conifer least prone to disease and pest issues in our area. The very thick bark of mature trees makes them fire



resilient, though they are not truly fire resistant. Deer-resistant. Zones 4-8. Mature size: height 100+ ft., canopy spread 25-30 ft.

The District is again offering **Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)** for reforestation. This native is an attractive conifer whose abundant seeds provide food for many birds and small mammals. The Douglas fir is a valuable timber tree which typically grows to a height of 150 feet and sometimes reaches 200 feet. It likes warm, dry sites, but is more shade tolerant than Ponderosa pine. Zone 4+.



Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias speciose*). Much milkweed has disappeared across the country, devastated largely by pesticides used in large-scale agriculture in recent years. Because monarch butterflies are completely dependent on this plant for food and reproduction, their survival as a species is at risk. Help out the monarch by adding some of these beautiful plants to your garden. 24 inches high by 6 inches wide. Fire resistant. Zones 3-10

Mountain Ash (*Sorbus scopulina*). White flower clusters, orange berries, and yellow and orange fall color makes Native mountain ash an excellent landscape shrub. Berries will attract a variety of birds during the winter months. Can grow to a height of 16 feet and a width of 16 feet. Fire resistant. Zones 3-6



Non-Native Trees and Shrubs



Western White Pine (*Pinus monticola*) is a large pine which can grow to a height of 100 to 160 feet and sometimes to 230 feet. Needles of the white pine are in bundles of 5. There are no stands of white pine on the dry east side of the Kettle Range but (despite widespread devastation by white pine blister rust) a few can still be found on wetter north-facing sites on the west side of the county. The white pine will thrive as an ornamental on the east side, if given enough water and space. It must be planted at least 1000 feet from any currants (which may host blister rust). Deer resistant. Zones 3-9.

Purple Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*): Common purple lilac has a moderate growth rate. Their large, colorful, fragrant blossoms add aesthetic value in spring. Lilacs do well on alkaline or acidic soils, are highly resistant to drought and cold, and are very long lived. Can reach 10 ft high by 8 feet wide. Fire resistant. Zones 3-7



Fruit Trees



The Lady in Red Apple (*Malus domestica*). This apple was developed in New Zealand from a mutation ("sport") of the Cripps Pink (Pink Lady) apple. It has a red-pink skin and the flesh has a very crisp texture and a tart-sweet taste. *

Dabinette Cider Apple (*Malus domestica*). This large round red “bittersweet” apple is grown primarily for making hard cider. Discovered by William Dabinett in Somerset, England in the early 1900s*



Manchurian Crab Apple (*Malus domestica*). Fragrant white flowers open from pink buds in spring. Small fall fruit attract birds and may be made into jelly. Manchurian crab apple will pollinate many apple varieties, including the Lady in Red and Dabinette. *

*(*All three of these apples are grown on EMLA-7 rootstock, which is very winter hardy and does well in a variety of soils (prefers well-drained soil) and is moderately disease tolerant. Semi-dwarf, growing to 10- 15 feet high and wide, but may be held to desired height and width by pruning. They may need support in their early years.)*

Red Gold Nectarine (*Prunus Persica*). This very large freestone fruit has glossy red and gold skin and firm, juicy, yellow flesh. Introduced in California in 1960, the Red Gold is now one of the most planted nectarines in the country. The tree is self-fruitful and productive. Will grow to 16-18 feet high and wide but may be held to desired height and width by pruning. Zones 4-8 (can withstand temperatures to -20 F.)



Berries



Red Lake Currant (*Ribes rubrum* “red lake”). Large, dark red berries on medium to large fruit clusters. Excellent for jellies, preserves, and muffins. Deciduous. Self-fertile. Should not be planted within 1000 ft of white pine. Grow to 3-5 ft tall and wide. Zones 4-8.

Primus White Currant (*Ribes rubrum* “primus”) is a heavy producer. It has long flowing clusters of berries which are the sweetest of all the currants. Do not plant within 1000 ft of white pine. Grows to 3-5 feet tall and side. Zones 3-8.



Grapes

This year we are offering three varieties of grapes.



The **Stueben (*Vitis labrusca* “stueben”)** is a very good (seeded) black-skinned table grape which makes an excellent wine. It has a sweet and slightly spicy flavor. Ripens mid-September. It is a hybrid, developed from the crossing of Wayne and Sheridan varieties. Zone 4-8.

The **Canadice** (*Vitis labrusca "canadice"*) is a seedless red table grape, with long, large clusters of medium size firm fruit. Excellent sweet and spicy, vinous flavor root. Ripens mid-September into October. Zone 5-8:



The **Glenora grape** (*Vitis labrusca "glenora"*) is a black seedless table grape, with well filled clusters of medium sized, bluish black berries. The fruit has a smooth thin skin with a unique sweet, delicate flavored flesh. Ripens early August into September. Zone 5-8

Other Edibles

Mary Washington Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis "Mary Washington"*). Touted as the best all-around variety for home garden use. Will grow in acid, alkaline, sandy, clay or any type of black soil. Zone 4-8



Sweet Purple Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis "sweet purple"*). Unique, deep-burgundy asparagus. With a 20% higher sugar content, this variety can be eaten raw! Spears are generally larger, more tender, and less stringy than green types. Mild nutty flavor. Zone 3-8

Plants which are fire resistant, deer resistant, and plants that provide pollinator habitat are designated as such. Though fire-resistant does not mean fire-proof, careful use of these plants along with other "firewise" practices may reduce your risk from wildfire. Neither is the designation of "deer resistant" a guarantee. All trees and shrubs are vulnerable to deer damages until they reach about 4 feet in height. Protective mesh tubes will help protect reforestation trees while they are getting started. The best deer-proofing is a proper deer fence. The Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/living/deer.html>) provides some good information on the subject.

To order plants, look for a flyer in the mail or visit the District website at www.ferrycd.org. Complete the form and mail or email it back to the District without payment by January 31, 2019. Orders will be filled on a first come-first served basis. Confirming invoices will be sent out detailing the plants ordered and the cost. Payment is due by April 3. Most plants arrive as dormant, bare root stock (plugs and potted plants are noted). Plants will be available for pickup at the Ferry County Fairgrounds on Friday, April 17 from 10 am – 4 pm and on Saturday, April 18, from 9am – 2pm. If you have any questions regarding plant availability or what type of plant(s) would best suit your needs, please contact the District at 775-3473 (ext. 100).

Ferry Conservation District is a non-regulatory agency. Our services are available to all without discrimination.