

(Appeared in the Ferry County View Extra, January 2018)

2018 Spring Plant Sale Ferry Conservation District Event to Offer Natives, Ornamentals and Edibles

Planting trees, shrubs and berries 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) helps protect river and stream banks, preventing erosion and degradation of water quality.

For its 2018 Spring Plant Sale, the Ferry Conservation District (the District) is offering a variety of plants carefully selected for use 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 4-6). Wholesale nurseries in Washington, Montana, Oregon, and Idaho supply healthy, hardy, planting stock grown in the Northwest (asparagus will again be supplied by a grower in Michigan). By purchasing in bulk the District is able to provide excellent plants at good prices.

Natives

Native trees and shrubs are an important part of the sale. Why natives? Natives are the plants naturally occurring in an area. This means they are adapted to the local climate and soil conditions and 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 native wildlife. This year's selections include four native plants: one shrub, one deciduous tree and two conifers.



Blue elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*) is a native tree/shrub which can grow to 12 feet or higher. This deciduous plant produces creamy white blossoms followed by powder blue berries. The highly edible berries can be made into wine, jam, or pie. Elderberry flowers attract pollinators and many mammals and birds eat the fruit and leaves. Elderberry prefers full sun, and likes moist conditions, though it will tolerate a drier site. Deer-resistant. Zone 5-10.

This year we are again offering **Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)** for reforestation. The Ponderosa (reaching 50'-100' and sometimes much higher) grows abundantly in our area on dry south-facing slopes and is very tolerant of high summer temperatures. The Ponderosa pine, a major source of timber in our region also provides important wildlife habitat, recreation use and aesthetic value. Among the most fire-resistant conifers (Make sure to prune branches to 15-20 feet near homes). Deer-resistant. Fire-resistant. Zone 4.





The District is offering **Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)** again as a reforestation tree. 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. Deer-resistant. Zone 4.

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. Fire-resistant. Zone 4-8.



Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) is a deciduous broad-leaved tree which grows well in moist sites. It provides aesthetic appeal with its early brilliant green foliage and its bright yellowish-gold fall foliage. Aspen also has great conservation value, providing nesting opportunities for birds, browse for mammals and soil stabilization and shade for streams and other bodies of water. Fire-resistant. Zones 1-8.

The District is also offering one ornamental shrubs and one vine.



Meadowlark forsythia (*Forsythia x 'Meadowlark'*) The forsythia has bright yellow spring blooms, and an upright arching habit. After a long, cold winter, the bloom of the forsythia is a welcome early sign of spring. This variety has been developed for superior cold tolerance. Zone 3-8.

Cascade hops (*Humulus lupulus*). A new plant in our sale this year, hops are used in the brewing of beer, providing its distinctive flavor and aroma. The Cascade variety is often used in the brewing of pale ale. Even if you are not planning to brew beer, or stuff pillows with hops to help you sleep better, you will find the fast-growing vine, with its cone-like fruit, to be an attractive addition to your landscape. Zones 5-8



Edible fruits, berries and vegetables



The **Cortland apple (*Malus domestica*)**. This close relative to the McIntosh originated in the Finger Lakes area of New York State over 100 years ago. This large, red apple with white flesh is juicy and sweet, with a hint of tartness. It is an all-purpose apple, good for eating raw, or used in salads and pies. Though partially self-fertile, the Cortland will produce better with a pollination partner. Planting with an early to midseason blooming crabapple or the Lodi apple

(among others) will increase its yield. Zones 4-8. *

The **Lodi apple (*Malus domestica*)**. Related to the Transparent, the Lodi produces a similar, though larger fruit. This apple was developed in the Geneva, New York area almost 100 years ago. An early season favorite, it is sometimes ready to harvest by late July or early August. With its sharp, sweet-tart flavor, it is an excellent sauce, juice or pie apple, but does not keep well. The Lodi requires a pollinator, such as the Cortland or a mid-season blooming crabapple. Zones 3-8. *



*Both apples are grown on M-7 rootstock, which is very winter hardy (Zone 4), does well in a variety of soils (prefers well-drained soil) and is moderately disease tolerant. Both are semi-dwarf, growing to 10-15 feet, but may be held to desired height by pruning. They may need support in their early years.



The **Lapins cherry (*Prunus avium*)**. A large mahogany-red cherry developed in nearby Summerland, British Columbia. The fruit is sweet and split resistant. Though it is self-fertile, it will produce better if grown with another sweet cherry variety. It is an excellent pollinator. This is a standard-sized tree, growing to 20 feet tall. Zones 5-8.

The **Redhaven peach (*Prunus persica 'Redhaven'*)** is the standard by which all early peaches are judged. It has an attractive red and golden, nearly fuzzless skin and a firm, yellow, smooth-textured, juicy, sweet flesh. It is semi-freestone and is excellent for canning. The Redhaven is vigorous, early bearing and self-pollinating. It is quite cold and drought tolerant. This is a standard-sized tree, growing to 17-20 feet tall. Zone 5-8.



The **American filbert or Hazelnut (*Corylus Americana*)**. This round-topped shrub produces nuts for human and/or wildlife consumption. The nut is eaten raw or roasted, or ground into a paste. (Commercially used in Nutella and Frangelico liqueur). The Filbert has dark green summer foliage, which turns to light yellow-green, sometimes with reddish tints in fall. Grows to 10 ft in height. Deer-resistant. Zones 4-9.

Albion strawberry. This large firm strawberry has an excellent sweet flavor. A “day-neutral” berry, it will produce fruit from July to October. This winter hardy plant is moderately disease resistant. Zones 4-8.



The **Shuksan strawberry**, developed at Washington State University in 1970, produces ripe berries for a three-week period in late June and early July. These deeply red berries have a wonderfully sweet flavor. Zones 4-10.

Asparagus. Back by popular demand, the District is including **asparagus** again at the 2018 plant sale. **Mary Washington asparagus**, touted as the best all-around variety for home garden use, will grow in acid, alkaline, clay or any type of black soil. Zones 4-8.



For the first time in several years, we are offering grapes.

Kettle Falls resident (formerly of Rose Valley here in Ferry County) and vintner Joe Barreca will provide both Himrod and Mannukka grape plants. With our cold winters and short growing season in mind, Joe has suggested these two table grapes for their hardiness and early ripening characteristics. Joe has offered to demonstrate proper pruning techniques to our customers at his vineyard. In addition to providing fruit for table consumption and wine making, grape vines have great ornamental value in a garden or landscape.



The **Himrod (*Vitis vinifera*)** is a seedless grape which makes wonderfully sweet raisins with a little bite to them. The wine from this variety is light and dry. The plant is extremely vigorous, growing up to 20 feet in a year, so allow plenty of room. Zone 5-11.

The **Manukka (*Vitis vinifera*)** is a medium black seedless table grape with excellent, crisp, sweet flavor. It is a hardy European grape variety with a long history of cultivation for wine and table use. Good fresh or for raisins. Excellent used as an ornamental, for summer shade, arbors or leafy walls. Zones 6-11.



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. 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 it back to the District without payment by January 31, 2017. Orders will be filled on a first come-first served basis. Confirming invoices will be sent out detailing the plants ordered and the cost. Most plants arrive as dormant, bare root stock (plugs and potted plants are noted). Plants will be available for pick up at the Ferry County Fairgrounds on Friday, April 21 from 10am – 4pm and on Saturday, April 22, from 9am – 1pm. 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.