

# SALAL



Gorge Waterway Action Society



## Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*)

### OVERVIEW:

### Edible Nature

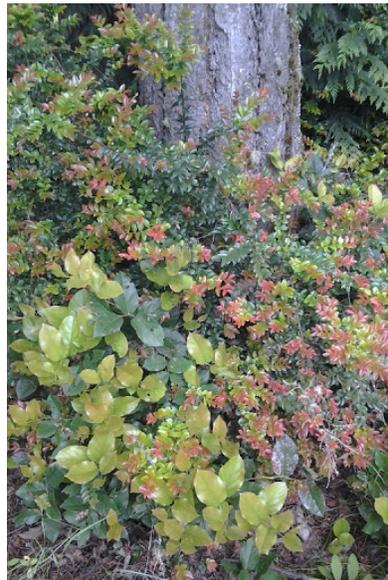
Salal is easily identified by its vigorous, mostly erect, evergreen shrubbery. There are pliable soft hairs on the stems between the large, leathery, thick, glossy, ovular, finely-toothed edged leaves. Urn shaped white or plate to bright-pink flowers hang individually from one side of the stem tips in large clusters and develop into reddish-blue to dark-purple berries. These berries are delicious. Spit out the seeds of the berries to plant more Salal shrubs.



- General Information: Salal has evergreen, shiny, dark-green leaves that are bell-shaped. These leaves have stems that form above them that have white flowers and dark-bluish to purple fruits. It grows to be 0.5-2 metres in height. Salal spreads primarily through underground stems and roots, much like the way the Coastal Strawberry uses 'runners.'
- Habitat: Salal is the most common shrub in the coastal British Columbia area, often found growing in amongst coniferous coastal forests.
- Horticultural Uses: Salal is found in many ornamental gardens and native gardens. It is a primary component of floral arrangements transported worldwide.

## Indigenous Uses of Salal

The berries of the evergreen Salal shrub are a major source of food for the Coastal Indigenous peoples of British Columbia. The berries were often dried and turned into cakes, mixed with other berries. They were often sun dried, pan/oven dried into fruit leathers. The berries were often used as a dye to create dark-blue or purple hues. The branches and leaves were a staple for lining cooking pits and for flavouring various foods. The leaves were further used as a bandage to cover cuts and wounds.



## Species Uses of Salal

Salal is often browsed upon by herbivores due to its evergreen nature. It forms dense thickets that often shed the snow during winter months and remains as a viable forage food for the Cervidae family (deer, elk, moose). Smaller mammals and birds use the dense thickets as habitat and nesting areas. The berries of the shrubs are eaten by many species while the flowers are an important source of pollen and nectar for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds.

Be sure to find the berries before the birds eat them all!



## Salal Nature Question

### Question:

What is the ecoregion that Salal is known to grow in?

### Answer:

Salal is most prominent in the Georgia Depression ecoregion.

For a full list of information & image sources, visit our website at: <http://gorge.ca/ycp-references/>