



GORGE WATERWAY NATURE HOUSE

Native Plant Walk

A Self Guided Park Tour

Take a self guided tour of the Esquimalt Gorge Park highlighting the **native plant species in the area!** Founded inside this guide are the roles some species play for the local ecosystem and why their presence is so vital to the area.

📍Refer to map located on the back📍

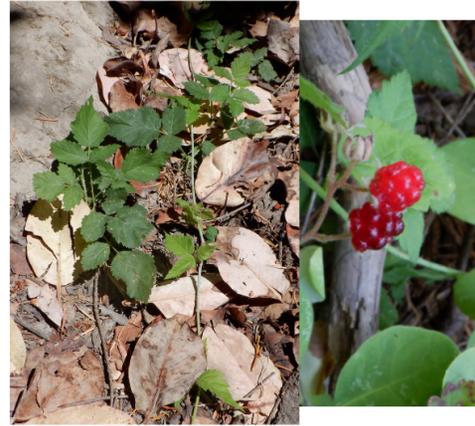
The Gorge Waterway Action Society acknowledges and respects the Lekwungen-speaking Peoples on whose traditional and unceded territories we work; and the Songhees, Esquimalt, T'Sou-ke, W̱SÁNEĆ and other First Nations peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day. We encourage members of the public to consider these relationships as they move through the self guided tour.

1

Common Name: **Sea Asparagus**Scientific Name: *Salicornia*

A common plant found in marine environments - usually bordering marshy areas - is sea asparagus. Sea asparagus is edible both raw and cooked with a very salty taste. They will grow very fast if given the opportunity.

15

Common Name: **Trailing Blackberry**Scientific Name: *Rubus ursinus*

The trailing blackberry is the only native blackberry found in the Pacific North West. They can be identified by having clusters of three leaflets. This is an edible berry that is harvested and eaten fresh or dried for the winter by Coast Salish peoples.

2

Common Name: **Arbutus**Scientific Name: *Arbutus menziesii*

The arbutus tree is a very popular plant in Southern Vancouver Island that is easily identifiable by its peeling orange/red bark. Some Coast Salish communities use arbutus bark and leaves for medication to treat tuberculosis.



3

Common Name: **Snowberry**Scientific Name: *Symphoricarpos albus*

The snowberry is a very common shrub for the Pacific North West. This shrub is identified by its pearl white berries and oval leaves. These berries are poisonous and some Indigenous communities refer to them as the berry for the 'land of the dead'.



16

Common Name: **Sword Fern**Scientific Name: *Polystichum munitum*

Sword Ferns are an evergreen fern and grow with multiple shoots gathering at its base. Smaller, new growth can be found curling up from the centre and their spores are located underneath the leaves.



7

Common Name: **Big Leaf Maple**
Scientific Name: *Acer macrophyllum*



Big Leaf Maples can be identified by their large maple leaves and can be seen hosting lots of mosses. This plant is used by Saanich to treat sore throats and many First Nation communities build paddles out of the wood.

9

Common Name: **Gumweed**
Scientific Name: *Grindelia integrifolia*



This plant is most commonly found in rocky areas and along ocean shores. Identifiable by its yellow flowers, gumweed was given its name due to the thick gum like film that surrounds the base of the flower.

8

Common Name: **Hardhack**
Scientific Name: *Spiraea douglasii*

Easily Identifiable by its fluffy pink clusters of flowers, hardhack can be found in wet environments such as stream banks and damp meadows. They are used by some First Nation communities to form a broom-like tool to collect dentalia shells.



10

Common Name: **Garry Oak**
Scientific Name: *Quercus garryana*

The Garry Oak can be identified by its gnarly hard angle branches and small acorns. The garry oak is a member of the Garry Oak ecosystem that is only found in Southern Vancouver Island. This ecosystem is particularly important as it offers many culturally significant plants such as ocean spray and oregon grape .



11

Common Name: **Oregon Grape**
Scientific Name: *Mahonia nervosa*

Oregon grape is an edible berry but have culturally been mixed with other sweeter berries, such as black berries, to mask their bitter taste. The bark hosts a yellow colouring that have been used for dyes. Some First Nation communities also make medicine for gall-bladders and eye issues.



12

Common Name: **Douglas Fir**Scientific Name: *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

Douglas Firs can be identified by having rounded needle patterns going all around the branch and cones having what looks like a small 'mouse' hiding inside. Douglas Firs can live to be over a thousand years old and are fire resistant making them extremely important in old growth forests.



13

Common Name: **Salal**Scientific Name: *Gaultheria shallon*

Salal is an evergreen plant that produces dark purple/blue berries which were utilized by First Nation communities in a variety of ways. These berries are harvest for eating and trading. The leaves and branches were also used in traditional cooking methods to provide flavouring.



4

Common Name: **Western Red Cedar**Scientific Name: *Thuja pilcata*

Cedar trees are considered the tree of life by many Indigenous communities due to its ability to provide clothing, shelter, tools, and material for building canoes. Cedars are also considered to be very spiritually charged and believed that if an individual put their back against the tree, they would gain strength to move through hard times.

14

Common Name: **Grand Fir**Scientific Name: *Abies grandis*

The Grand Fir can be identified by having needles in a flat orientation - growing horizontally leaving the top and bottom of branches bare. This tree has very thin bark making it vulnerable to large wildfires. These firs are most commonly found in drier regions on the Pacific Coast; such as in the south western areas of British Columbia, Canada and along the west coast of Washington, US.



5

Common Name: **Nootka Rose**Scientific Name: *Rosa nutkana*

This light pink rose, identified by its five petals, has a few uses by the Coast Salish communities. One includes boiling the bark and stems to make a tea which is used as an eye wash to help with cataracts. They were also occasionally used in traditional methods of cooking, such as pit cooks, for flavouring.



6

Common Name: **Ocean Spray**Scientific Name: *Holodiscus discolor*

Ocean Spray can be identified by its small clusters of white/cream coloured flowers and found in lower elevations. The Saanich, Stl'at'imx and other Indigenous communities use the fruits in medicine for children; usually for diarrhea, chickenpox, and measles.



