

We hope you've enjoyed this special place.

The environment around us is rich with wonder, intrigue, and lessons about nature's order. We at Harris Beach State Recreation Area are happy you took time to explore the area. If you've found this information interesting, please continue to expand your understanding of this dynamic environment through our other interpretive programs and materials.

Please leave plants and animals just as you found them. Your state parks are nature reserves, where living things are protected for others to enjoy.



**Harris Beach
State Recreation Area
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Printed on recycled paper.

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63400-8049(1/04)



Nature
HISTORY
Discovery

Harris Beach State Park

Common Trees & Plants



W I L D R H O D O D E N D R O N



Wild Rhododendron is a handsome plant that prefers the shaded portions of the park. Its beautiful pale-pink to deep rose flower starts blooming in May and peaks in June. The Western Azalea and the wild “rhody” are in the Rhododendron family, which is, in turn, distantly related to the evergreen huckleberry.

E S C A L L O N I A



Escallonia (non native) is a fast-growing shrub from South America, which is planted at the park to provide quick, beautiful, visual barriers between campsites. The leaves are slightly sticky to the touch and they can flower with white or pink blooms. Hummingbirds are fond of the nectar in this plant.

W I L D F U C H S I A



Wild Fuchsia (non native) is another plant from South America that grows well in our mild coastal climate. It will often bloom the whole year. The colorful purple and pink flowers attract hummingbirds. It is one of the parents of the fuchsia plants that are commonly cultivated in hanging baskets and containers.

H I M A L A Y A N B L A C K B E R R Y



Himalayan Blackberry (non native) has been quite the world traveler. Originally from India and Asia, it traveled to England and then to North America. The flowers are 5 petaled and range from white to pinkish. If you look closely, you will see its resemblance to a rose; in fact, it is a member of the rose family. The delicious fruit ripens by August. The best berries are almost black and very soft. The fruit is eaten fresh or in jellies, pies and cobblers. The tangled, thorny stems provide food and cover for birds and small mammals.

S H O R E P I N E



Shore Pine is our only two needle pine in the park. Its Latin name, *pinus contorta*, means twisted or contorted. Strong coastal winds do shape the trees into unusual forms. Native Americans used the pitch to apply to wounds (like a bandage) and to waterproof their baskets. Modern science has found antiseptic properties in the pine sap.

S I T K A S P R U C E



Sitka Spruce is the most common tree in the park. They grow to over 150' tall and live over 300 years. One easy way to tell if you are looking at a spruce is to “shake hands” with it gently. If it pokes you, it’s a spruce. The chickaree squirrel thrives on its seed in the fall. It will often cache hundreds of the cones in the cool moist forest duff for a food source in winter. Sitka spruce forests hug the coastline and tidewater areas from Alaska to northern California.

D O U G L A S — F I R



Douglas-fir is the second most common tree in our park and is the state tree of Oregon. It generally has a single trunk and a Christmas tree appearance. The needles grow around the branch like a bottle brush. The cones on the tree also offer a clue as to its identification. On the cones, look for the bracts and the ‘mouse tail’ poking out!

R E D A L D E R



Red Alder is an important “first” tree to return to a disturbed area in the coastal forest. These trees grow quickly, and are able to fix nitrogen with their roots, adding nutrients that enrich the soil for other trees like spruce and fir. The buds are an early spring food source for birds such as the ruffed grouse. Its bark chips are considered to be one of the finest for smoked fish and jerky.

SALMON BERRY



Salmonberry is an early (March–April) pink flowering shrub. The raspberry-sized fruit that ripens in May and June is one of the oldest and most important food sources for Native Americans. The fruit was named for the salmon color of the berry and its ripening time—when the first spring salmon arrive. Different bushes have different flavored berries. Taste around to find the ones you like. Closely related to blackberry.

PACIFIC WAX MYRTLE



Pacific Wax Myrtle is a tall growing shrub (20'-30') with dense green foliage. Tiny black seeds are formed in fall and are an important food source for park birds. Winter chickadees and kinglets feed heavily on the seeds during cold wintry days. A wax coating forms on the fruit.

WESTERN AZALEA



Western Azalea is a deciduous shrub commonly found along our paths and trails to the beach. Soft-scented white flowers with pink and yellow throats dot this plant from April through June. This is a favorite flower of hummingbirds and bumblebees! Azalea Park in Brookings is situated in a grove of these plants.

EVERGREEN HUCKLEBERRY



Evergreen Huckleberry is a shrub that blooms in the spring with tiny, inconspicuous bell shaped flowers noticed only by the bees. The delicious blue-black round berries are generally ripe by late August. Many people make pies and jellies from the fruit or eat them right off the bush.