

# Teacher's Information Guide to Redwood Forest Plants

The **Redwood Forest Plant ID Guide** is to be used by students while visiting coast redwood forests. Depending on where you are, some of the plants may or may not be present. Students can use this guide to identify plants on their own while exploring the forest, or in a more structured way. You can walk along a path and stop in front of a plant that is on this guide and have the students try to identify it. After the plant has been identified, you can use the information below to teach the students some interesting facts about the plant. Cater the amount of information you give the students to their age and grade level. If you conduct a field trip in the winter, any plants which are deciduous will not have their leaves. Read over the guide carefully to see which plants are deciduous (losing their leaves seasonally) and which are evergreen (have their leaves year around).

**\*\* Remind the students to be careful of and not touch poison oak. If they are unsure of what it looks like make sure they ask an adult before they touch a leaf.**



Poison Oak

<p><b>Madrone</b> <i>Arbutus menziesii</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> The berries were chewed or used to make cider. They were also used in decorations and as bait to catch fish. The bark was used to make tea and drank for medicinal uses.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> Most noticeable for its cinnamon, red bark which peels in papery flakes. Under the papery flakes is green photosynthetic bark.</p>	<p><b>Dogwood</b> <i>Cornus nuttallii</i> deciduous</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> The branches were used in basketry. The bark was used to make a brown dye and for stomach troubles.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> Leaves are unique because veins curve distinctively as the approach the edge of the leaf.</p>	<p><b>Tanoak</b> <i>Notholithocarpus densiflorus</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> Acorns were collected for food and bark was used to soften hides in leather making.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> Tanoaks are not a true oak but produce nuts which are an important food source for many animals. Tanoaks are named after their tannin-rich bark which was used for tanning leather.</p>	<p><b>Red Alder</b> <i>Alnus rubra</i> deciduous</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> All parts of the tree were used for various reasons. The bark was used to create dyes and ground up into a powder to add to foods. The bark was also used medicinally.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> The bark contains a chemical, salicin, similar to aspirin. This tree grows very quickly and is often used in areas which have been logged or affected by wildfire.</p>
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<p><b>Sword Fern</b> <i>Polystichum munitum</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> Native Americans used many parts of the plant. The fronds were lined in baking pits and piled up to use as a mattress. Parts of the plant were chewed for medicinal use.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> They reproduce by spores on the underside of their leaves. They get their name from a small perpendicular projection at the base of a leaflet that resembles the hilt of a sword. Sword ferns have been around since the time of the dinosaurs and are found in every coast redwood forest.</p>	<p><b>Coast Redwood</b> <i>Sequoia sempervirens</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> Bark was used to cover houses to protect from rain and provide insulation.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> The world's tallest tree is 379ft. Redwoods reproduce from seeds and sprouting at the base. Wood is naturally resistant to insect damage and rot.</p>	<p><b>Thimbleberry</b> <i>Rubus parviflorus</i> deciduous</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> The berries were eaten by natives and the leaves were combined with other berry leaves to make tea.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> Produce red berries in the fall which are easy to pull off and eat. The leaves have tiny hairs which make them soft and fuzzy to the touch. The berries are an important food source for many birds.</p>	<p><b>Douglas Fir</b> <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> The bark was used to make rope and the wood was used to make bowls and utensils.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> They are the second tallest conifer in the world. Their leaves are arranged in a spiral. The seeds are an extremely important food source for small mammals and birds. Their cones have little tails coming out of their scales which are thought to look like mouse tails.</p>	<p><b>Big Leaf Maple</b> <i>Acer macrophyllum</i> deciduous</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> The bark was used to make rope and the wood was used to make bowls and utensils.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> They have "winged seeds" called samaras, which spin rapidly when falling from the tree to slow their descent and distribute more widely. Seeds are important food for squirrels and birds.</p>
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<p><b>California blackberry</b> <i>Rubus ursinus</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> Native Americans ate the berries.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> Produce delicious purple/black berries in May and June. Can be confused with the non-native Himalayan blackberry which has bigger thorns and leaves with 5 leaflets. Berries are an important food source for many animals.</p>	<p><b>Coast Live Oak</b> <i>Quercus agrifolia</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> The acorns were an important food source and ground up into a powder often to make bread.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> The acorns are an important food source for many animals.</p>	<p><b>Redwood Sorrel</b> <i>Oxalis oregano</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> The leaves were eaten with dried fish. Parts of the plant were used medicinally to draw out infections.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> Produce pink flowers with 5 pedals. The leaves will fold down in direct sunlight.</p>	<p><b>Bay Laurel</b> <i>Umbellularia californica</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> The nuts were used to make flour and small cakes. Leaves were used to cure headaches and stomach pain.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> Leaves have a very distinct smell and the European relative is used in cooking.</p>	<p><b>Huckleberry</b> <i>Vaccinium ovatum</i> evergreen</p> <p><u>Native uses:</u> Native Americans stored and ate the berries.</p> <p><u>Interesting fact:</u> Produce edible berries which ripen in October to November.</p>
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If you would like a more information or additional resources please contact the Education & Interpretation Manager, 415-362-2352, [education@savetheredwoods.org/](mailto:education@savetheredwoods.org/)