Native Plant of the Month

Vine Maple

Acer circinatum

- This maple often has a “vine-like” appearance as it works its way through the forest understory and may even lay along the ground as it reaches towards the sun.
- Its strong, yet flexible, branches make it ideal for basket rims, snowshoes, and strong, flexible bows. These were favored uses of this plant by native people in this region.
- The winged nutlets persist on the tree and are sought after by evening grosbeaks, nuthatches, chickadees, and Douglas squirrels during the long winter months.

Landscape Value

This is one of the premier landscape plants for the Northwest gardener. It is widely adaptable to sun or shade, and will grow in compact form in the sun, or be more open and spreading in the shade.

Hanging red flower clusters in spring change to red-green, then brown winged nutlets which adorn the tree. Deciduous leaves unfold in spring, cover the tree in summer and change to brilliant reds and yellows in the fall.

Grow in a moist woodland garden along with native conifers, Madrone, red alder, paper birch, hazelnut, serviceberry, Indian plum, salal, Oregon grape, sword fern, lady fern and deer fern.

Text by Heidi Bohan
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