
Vanilla Leaf (*Achlys triphylla*)

Barberry Family

Why Choose It?

Vanilla Leaf forms a lush and lovely carpet of bright green, fan shaped foliage. It springs up in March, and delicate, white bottle brush flowers follow in April, lasting until late spring.



Photo: Ben Legler

In the Garden

No woodland planting should be without this attractive ground cover filling in under trees and shrubs, where it can create dense cover that discourages weeds. Its distinctive fan-shaped foliage and the dainty, upright flowers produce a delightful effect in shady garden areas.

The Facts

The three-lobed, fan-shaped leaflets of this plant appear in early spring, and die back in fall, often leaving a lacy network of veins. The plants require shade, soil with a high organic content, and adequate moisture, although they are often reported to be tolerant of dry shade. They will grow 1 to 1-1/2 feet tall.

Where to See It

Vanilla Leaf is common in shaded woodlands both east and west of the cascades from British Columbia to Northern California. You will find it along many of the popular hiking trails in the Cascades and Olympics.

And what else?

Vanilla Leaf gets its name from the scent of the dried leaves. The sweet vanilla scent led to its use by both native people and pioneers as sachets to perfume their houses. Try it in your car or the laundry room!



Photo: Ben Legler

You can find out more information about native plants, including where to buy them, from the Washington Native Plant Society.

www.wnps.org



Washington Native Plant Society

Native Plant Spotlights

Adapted from writing by Cynthia Spurgeon

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