

# Native Plant of the Month



## Landscape Value

Reaching maturity in 60-100 years, Douglas fir is our subclimax tree, providing shelter for slower growing climax forest trees such as red cedar and western hemlock. Though not typically planted in landscapes, it is often an existing feature in Seattle area landscapes.

Vine maple, flowering dogwood, serviceberry, oceanspray, western hemlock, and red cedar grow as understory plants. Groundcovers such as sword fern, deer fern, bleeding heart, trillium, foamflower, and fringe cup add seasonal beauty.

If a Douglas fir must be cut, consider leaving a snag that will quickly become critical habitat for wildlife.

## Douglas Fir *Pseudotsuga menziesii*

- This plant has a rich botanical history and honors, by name, two early botanists who first described it: David Douglas and Dr. Archibald Menzies.
- It is not a true fir so its species name describes it as a "false (pseudo) -fir (tsuga)."
- Its cone has unique "mousetail" bracts that help protect the seeds from being devoured by native Douglas squirrels which harvest this cone in earnest as soon as it forms in fall.
- Thick, furrowed bark protects this tree from fire, and provides habitat for native bats which retire in its crevices during the day.