

## ***Being a Salmon Friendly Gardener***

*Adapted from the brochure How to be a Salmon Friendly Gardener developed by Seattle Public Utilities and reprinted with permission by SFEG*

It's garden season again, and while beautifying your own lawns and gardens, keep in mind how your actions may affect salmon and their habitat. Our landscaping practices are an important part of the changes around Puget Sound that threaten salmon with extinction. The way we garden can make a real difference in providing our salmon neighbors with a healthy place to come home. Here are just a few things you can do this spring to help keep our streams and salmon healthy.

### **Tip #1**

Did the winter wind blow trees, limbs and branches into your stream? The debris can be important habitat and cover for young fish in your stream. So resist the temptation to take it out, leave that debris in the stream and let nature take its course. The fish will thank you.

### **Tip #2**

As you begin to garden this season if you choose to use fertilizers and herbicides, remember to always use these chemicals as directed. Using more than directed often harms rather than helps your new plants. Rain then collects the extra chemicals applied to lawns and gardens and washes them into nearby storm drains or streams, polluting the water for baby salmon just emerging from the gravel.



### **Tip #3**

Go native! Native plants thrive with little care, in the right conditions. Below are some examples of native riparian plants used in SFEG's habitat restoration, and that you might want to try on your property. These species benefit other animals in addition to salmon:

#### **Redtwig dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) (left)**

This fast-growing deciduous shrub provides wildlife habitat (food, cover, and nesting), stabilizes slopes, prefers moist soil, and will grow in a variety of light exposures. It can be planted as a rooted plant or as a live stake.

#### **Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*)(right)**

This evergreen shrub also provides habitat, flowering and fruiting from spring to summer, and will grow in either moist or dry soil conditions.



**Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*)**

This deciduous shrub provides berries in fall and winter that benefit birds when most other berries are long gone.

For more information, stop by our office and pick up a copy of the brochure How to be a Salmon Friendly Gardener, or we'd be happy to mail it to you. Happy Gardening!

