

Salal

Scientific: Gaultheria shallon Pursh

Primary category: Shrub

Habitat: Brushfields, Forests

Description (by Bosky Dell Natives):

This low evergreen shrub (to 4 feet) is an abundant groundcover in western Oregon forests. It can be found along the coast from British Columbia to California. Leaves are large, alternate and eggshaped, lined with fine teeth on the margin.

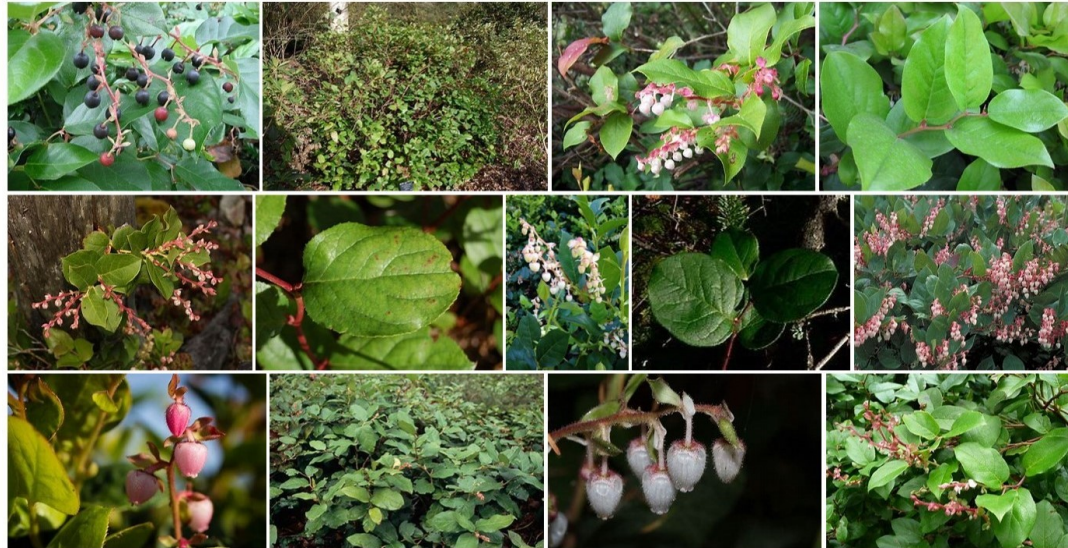
Flowers are pink clusters of dainty urn-shaped goblets, appearing from late spring into early summer. These are followed by purplish fruits, which were used by coastal Indians and are enjoyed by a wide variety of wildlife. Salal berries are used today for preservatives. Salal stems can root when reclining, and underground stems may create a rapidly increasing colony.

Salal is used effectively in gardens as massed plantings under evergreen trees; it will make a dense evergreen cover in a woodland garden.

Salal is versatile enough to also serve well on open, sunny banks; it will remain low in stature in open settings.

Images of Gaultheria shallon

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Lewis and Clark's journal entries (by Bosky Dell Natives):

Lewis and Clark collected Salal near Fort Clatsop on January 20, 1806. From Lewis' journal entry of February 8, 1806: "The Shallon is the production of a shrub which I have heretofore taken to be a species of loral and mentioned as abounding in this neighbourhood and that the Elk fed much on it's leaves. it generally rises to the hight of 3 feet . . . it grows very thick . . . the bark of the older or larger part of the stock is of a redish brown colour while that of the younger branches and succulent shoots are red where most exposed to the sun and green elsewhere . . . the leaf is oval four & 3/4 inches in length and 2 1/2 in width . . . the fruit is a deep perple berry about the size of a buck short or common black cherry . . . these to the number of ten or twelve issue from a common peduncle or footstalk which . . . forms the termination of the twig of the present years growth."