

Winter Twig Identification of Woody Species Native to Western Oregon that Root Easily from Live Stakes

Willows (*Salix* species) – Small to large trees or multi-stemmed bushes. **Twig ID:** Buds are alternate and covered or capped with a single bud scale as opposed to layers of scales. Young bark may be green, yellow, reddish-brown or greenish grey depending on species. Young twigs are flexible and smooth. Match willow type to your planting habitat. Willow ID to species must occur in spring when catkins (male and female flowering-fruiting structures found on separate plants) can be keyed out to exact species. Buds, leaves, and other physical traits may not be enough for ID. **Perfect cutting:** ½" - 1" in diameter 3 ft long.

Black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera* ssp. *trichocarpa*) – Very large tree with a narrow, rounded, open to pointed crown, grows up to 160 feet tall. **Twig ID:** Medium to large conical, elongate alternate buds are often curved and very pointed. Young twigs are smooth and green to tawny in color, sometimes with vertical ridges. Older bark is rough and deeply grooved. May be confused with quaking aspen. **Perfect cutting:** ½" - 1" in diameter 3 ft long.

Redosier dogwood (*Cornus sericea* ssp. *occidentalis*) – Open, rounded, multi-stemmed medium to large shrub, 7 to 10 feet tall. **Twig ID:** Slender, very pointed opposite buds. Bark on younger twigs turns reddish or red-green in winter and lenticels are raised and prominent. May be confused with vine maple in winter. **Perfect cutting:** ½" - 1" in diameter 3 ft long.

Pacific ninebark (*Physocarpus capitatus*) – Medium sized, upright shrub 6 to 14 feet, multi-branched from a central base. **Twig ID:** Medium sized, alternate buds. Buds dark red or brown, pointed and covered in layered scales. Famous for brown, orange, to reddish orange, thin peeling bark that reveals lighter colored or newer bark beneath. Drooping clusters of dark brown remnant fruiting structures often remain all winter. **Perfect cutting:** ¼" - ½" in diameter at least 18 inches long.

Douglas spirea (*Spirea douglasii*) – Rhizomatous, deciduous shrub with erect spreading cane like stems 3 to 6 feet tall. **Twig ID:** Small, silvery-white alternate buds, often distinctly tipped with white hairs, on twigs that are smooth and brown or tawny or reddish brown when young (becoming smooth grey with age). The bark may split to reveal elongate streaks of lighter bark beneath, but it doesn't peel back or fold out. Stiff, upright, conical shaped, dense flower clusters that occur at the end of new growth will appear dried and dark brown in winter. May be confused with oceanspray, but the remnant flower clusters of oceanspray are not dense and they droop or curve downward. This is a suckering shrub that can be weedy (even more so from seed). **Perfect cutting:** ¼" - ½" in diameter at least 18 inches long.

Black twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*) – Small to medium sized deciduous shrub 3 to 12 feet tall with an erect to straggly or arching form; more compact at higher elevation. **Twig ID:** Small opposite buds on twigs that are smooth and light tan to brown; young twigs are golden colored. May be confused with snowberry or mock orange, but prefers, wet, almost swampy areas or immediate shorelines of streams and ponds, and the white pith occupies a smaller proportion of the stem than in mock orange. **Perfect cutting:** ¼" - ½" in diameter at least 18 inches long.

Mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) – 4.5 to 12 feet tall, multi-stemmed shrub. 2- to 4-inch diameter fragrant white flowers in summer. **Twig ID:** Inconspicuous opposite buds on dull grey to brown twigs with bark that shreds with age. Soft, white “pithy” interior of stems. May be confused with snowberry and black twinberry. **Perfect cutting:** ¼”- ½” in diameter at least 18 inches long.

Common Snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*) – Shrub 2 to 5 feet tall, slender erect new shoots, and very branched older stems, sometimes vining growth as a response to deep shade. **Twig ID:** Tiny opposite buds on grey twigs that are often very fine and brittle. Pith or center of stems is often dark brown or black, sometimes appearing hollow. Look for the old fruit (soft berry) clusters at the end of twigs; they may be white, yellow, or decayed (black). May be confused with mock orange or black twinberry twigs. Suckering shrub. **Perfect cutting:** ¼”- ½” in diameter at least 18 inches long.

Red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*) – Deciduous shrub or small tree 10 to 30 feet tall, broad and arching with cane-like stems. **Twig ID:** Buds large, egg-shaped to pointy, opposite, purple to green scaled that swell in late winter. Soft “pithy” inner wood of stems, raised lenticels (pores) on stems, “shield” shaped leaf scar with 3 bundle scars. Easily confused with blue elderberry (lingering flat-topped berry cluster is a sign of blue elderberry). Red elderberry may also be confused with young big leaf maple saplings or shoots. Propagates easily from cuttings with at least 2 sets of buds. **Perfect cutting:** ½”- 1” in diameter 3 ft long with at least 3 sets of nodes.

Blue elderberry (*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *cerulea*) (**Not easily rooted from cuttings, but to help with distinguishing from red elderberry**) – Deciduous shrub to small tree up to 25 feet in height. **Twig ID:** Opposite branching; buds smaller, more narrow, pointed, and scaly than red elderberry; leaf scar has 5 bundle scars; bark thin, brown, often reddish, furrowed, ridged in older plants; twigs stout, lenticels large and numerous, orange, slightly raised, pith very large, white or discolored in water sprouts; lingering flat-topped berry cluster may be present.

Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*) - Small to medium caneberry shrub 3 to 12 feet tall. **Twig ID:** Alternate pointed buds, weakly attached thorns, reddish-gold bark on 1st year wood, peeling with age, zigzag branching pattern, soft “pithy” inner wood of stems, scattered elongate lenticels (pores) on stems. May be confused with blackberry, thimbleberry. This is a suckering shrub. **Perfect cutting:** ¼”- ½” in diameter at least 18 inches long. Take cuttings from 1- or 2-year-old wood.

Indian plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*) – Small tree to multi-stemmed deciduous shrub up to 15 feet in height. **Twig ID:** Alternate round twigs; bark smooth and purplish brown to tawny with round white lenticels; chambered pith (with partitions). Bud scales more rounded and layered than in redflower currant. Crushed leaves and swollen buds have a “cucumber” scent. **Perfect cutting:** ¼”- ½” in diameter at least 18 inches long.

Redflower currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)– Deciduous, thornless shrub with upright spreading form, up to 9 feet tall. Tubular red flowers. **Twig ID:** Rosy red alternate buds that swell in late winter to expose green “leaves”. Buds are often on short spur branches on second year wood. Bark on younger twigs is red to grey, bark often peeling and brown to grey on older branches. May be confused with Indian plum, which breaks bud very early (late winter) but the partitions in the pith (cut the stem lengthwise to see) of Indian plum will clearly set it apart. Redflower currant also lacks the obvious lenticels that Indian plum has. **Perfect cutting:** ¼”- ½” in diameter at least 18 inches long.