



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*)



The following short article is from the [Oregon Coast 101 Species](#) collection used by the Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional (GORP) training program. These articles are intended to provide interesting facts you can share with your clientele and add value to your services.

An Interpretive Fact Sheet has been written about each species. We are currently uploading these blogs and creating the links.

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Tourism and Business Development College of Business,
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Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/red-alder-alnus-rubra/

By
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The red alder (*Alnus rubra*) is a deciduous tree native to the U.S. Pacific Northwest that has proven important to both Native Americans and wildlife in the region. Its range extends from southeastern Alaska to southern California, generally within 125 miles of the ocean.

This tree is a pioneer species that establishes rapidly in openings created by forest disturbance, including landslides, logging or fire. It is a host to nitrogen fixing mycorrhizae that lives on its roots. This association allows alder to enrich nitrogen-poor soils which enhances the growth of other trees such as Douglas-fir.



Red Alder (*Alnus rubra*)

Red alder is one of many trees in the U.S. Pacific Northwest used by Native Americans. The bark was used for dyeing basket material, wood, wool, feathers, human hair, and skin.

The wood is low in pitch, which makes it a good wood for smoking meat. Native Americans also used the bark to treat many health problems from insect bites to lymphatic disorders.

For wildlife, red alder provides an important deciduous component in the predominantly coniferous forests found in the region. Most of the seeds remain on the tree well into the fall and winter months, providing valuable resources for birds, insects, and mammals when other foods are scarce.

Beavers eat the bark and build dams and lodges with the stems. Red alder trees also provide valuable nesting for birds and thermal cover for black-tailed deer and other wildlife.