



Oregon Sea Grant Extension
Sustainable Tourism &
Outdoor Recreation Program

Interpretative Fact Sheet

Myrtlewood (*Umbellularia californica*)



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,
Oregon State University Extension - Oregon Sea Grant at**

<http://tourism.oregonstate.edu/>

Guide and Outfitter Recognized Professional Program

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For more information about the GORP training program see:

<https://www.gorpguide.org/become-a-gorp-certified-guide>

Myrtlewood (*Umbellularia californica*)

 tourism.oregonstate.edu/myrtlewood-umbellularia-californica/

By
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The Myrtlewood Tree is a very special broadleaf hardwood which is also an evergreen species. This is not to be confused with the Pacific Myrtle shrub which also grows along the coast.

The Myrtlewood tree grows to heights of 60 to 120 feet, growing at a slow pace of 1- to 12-inches during each of its first few years of life. At this pace, the Myrtlewood tree may take from 80 to 120 years to reach its full size.



Myrtlewood tree (*Umbellularia californica*)

Range

The range of Myrtlewood tree, also known as the California-laurel, extends from Reedsport, Oregon to San Diego, California within 160 miles of the Pacific Ocean.

Myrtlewood comes in a wide variety of colors and is well-known for being one of the world's most beautiful woods. The colors that appear are often a result of the minerals in the soil where it grows.

Products

Making furniture, home decor and other gifts out of the Myrtlewood tree became popular in the early 1900s and has continued ever since. Woodworkers in Oregon love working with the wood because of the beauty and many types of finishes it provides.

In addition to being appreciated by humans, Myrtlewood provides food and cover for various animals. Its seeds are an important food source for squirrels, woodrats, mice, and birds. Deer browse young shoots during the summer.

Good as gold

There is a very interesting story about Myrtlewood back in 1933. "The Oregon town where money grows on trees and wood is as good as cash" describes how the wood was used as money on the Oregon coast. See

<https://www.opb.org/artsandlife/series/history/myrtlewood-money-north-bend-oregon-great-depression/> for more details.

When visiting the southern coast of Oregon be sure to stop in one of the “Myrtlewood Factories” that sell Myrtlewood products. Some even give tours of wood working operations.

Take the opportunity to experience walking through Myrtlewood trees yourself at forest trails and roadside parks near the southern Oregon coast.