

Echo blue



Evans Creek Preserve: Birds & Native Plants Walk

by Linda Shepherd

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The land of the Coast Salish people that is now Evans Creek Preserve was settled and farmed by Calvin & Minnie Galley beginning around 1900. Upon the death of the last of their family, it was willed to several organizations who then sold the farmstead to the City of Sammamish in 2000.

Many birds eat berries produced by native plants in the fall, and they also need soft, high protein food for their nestlings in spring. For them, caterpillars are the perfect baby food. It takes 6000–9000 caterpillars to raise a chickadee family! Below are some native plants at Evans Creek Preserve that act as host plants for caterpillars. Such larvae are baby birds’ breakfast sausages.

Oceanspray: Insects attracted to it provide winter and spring food for birds such as bushtits. Seeds are eaten by songbirds. Provides nesting habitat and cover. Is a host plant for echo blue, brown elfin, pale swallowtail, and Lorquin’s admiral butterfly larvae who eat their leaves.

<https://kingcd.org/2020/12/14/oceanspray-native-plant-spotlight/>

Lorquin’s admiral

Spring azure

Brown elfin



Serviceberry: Flowers supply pollen and nectar for large numbers of bees, as well as hummingbirds and spring azure butterflies. Fruit is relished by many birds, including waxwings, chickadees, woodpeckers, and tanagers. Host plant for pale swallowtail, brown elfin, Lorquin’s admiral, and California hairstreak butterfly larvae. Provides dense cover for birds.

<https://www.wnps.org/blog/plant-profile-serviceberry>

Pale swallowtail

California hairstreak

Zephyr aka hoary comma



Red-flowering currant: Flowers provide nectar for bees, hummingbirds and occasionally bushtits. Leaves provide food for zephyr and other butterfly larvae. Birds eat its berries. Proof our native plants are desirable: When David Douglas, PNW plant explorer, sent seeds of red-flowering currant to London in 1825, the plant became all the rage. The Royal Horticultural Society recouped its investment in Douglas’s 3-year expedition from this plant introduction alone. <https://www.wnps.org/blog/red-flowering-currant>

Red-twigged dogwood: Fruits consumed by birds, including flickers, grosbeaks, crows, thrushes, waxwings, and tree swallows. Some birds, such as band-tailed pigeons and wild turkeys, eat both fruit and buds. Provides cover and nesting habitat for songbirds. It is a host species for echo blue butterfly larvae. <https://www.wnps.org/blog/plant-profile-red-osier-dogwood-1>

Salal: Flowers provide nectar for hummingbirds. Host plant for brown elfin butterfly larvae. Berries are eaten by birds including towhees, robins, grouse, and band-tailed pigeons. Provides year-round shelter for birds. <http://nativeplantspnw.com/salal-gaultheria-shallon/>

Snowberry: Forms dense thickets that provide shelter or nesting sites for many small birds. Fruit eaten by grouse, pheasants, quail and other birds. Host plant for snowberry checkerspot butterfly larvae. Lewis and Clark collected this plant and brought it back to Thomas Jefferson. It was sent to England in 1817 and became a popular garden novelty among plant collectors there. <https://www.wnps.org/blog/an-appreciation-of-snowberry>



Snowberry checkerspot

Ceanothus silkmoth



Kinnikinnick: Flowers provide nectar for hummingbirds. Fruit supplies food for many bird species. Larval host for echo blue and brown elfin butterfly and ceanothus silkmoth. <https://www.wnps.org/blog/plant-profile-kinnikinnick>

Maple (bigleaf, vine, Douglas): Seeds eaten by birds including grosbeaks, nuthatches, finches, and woodpeckers. Host plant for western tiger swallowtail, pale tiger swallowtail, and mourning cloak butterfly larvae. <https://www.wnps.org/blog/plant-profile-vine-maple-acer-circinatum>

Western tiger swallowtail

Mourning cloak



Black hawthorn: Flowers attract hummingbirds. Host plant for pale swallowtail and mourning cloak butterfly larvae. Birds eat fruit, including thrushes, robins, waxwings, woodpeckers, and band-tailed pigeons. Thorny thicket provides brooding cover and nesting for birds.

<https://www.wnps.org/native-plant-directory/335-crataegus-douglasii>

Bitter cherry: Birds eat the fruits, including tanagers, waxwings, bluebirds, towhees, & flickers. Host species for pale tiger swallowtail, two-tailed tiger swallowtail, spring azure, and Lorquin's admiral butterfly larvae. <https://www.wnps.org/native-plant-directory/207-prunus-emarginata>

Resources:

- *Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard* by Doug Tallamy (also google for YouTubes of his presentations)
- *Real Gardens Grow Natives* by Eileen M. Stark
- Sammamish Stewards <https://sammamish.galaxydigital.com/stewardship-programs/> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sammamishsteward/>
- Washington Native Plant Society <https://www.wnps.org>
- Wildflowers Northwest—native plant nursery in Maple Valley <https://www.wildflowersnw.com>
- Tadpole Haven Native Plants in Woodinville <https://tadpolehaven.com/>
- KCD Native Plant Nurseries <https://kingcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/KCD-Native-Plant-Nurseries-List-2020.pdf>
- Watch for plant sales by WNPS <https://www.wnps.org/cps-programs/plant-sale>
- King Conservation District <https://kingcd.org/publications/native-plants/>
- *Pacific Northwest Insects* by Merrill Peterson
- Common Butterflies of the Puget Sound Region and Their Food Plants <http://www.greenseattle.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/ButterflyHabitat.pdf>
- Some Washington Caterpillars <https://www.wnps.org/blog/some-washington-caterpillars>
- “How to Support Your Local Caterpillars” (fall/winter 2020, p. 21) by Regina Johnson https://www.wnps.org/index.php?preview=1&option=com_dropfiles&format=&task=frontfile.download&catid=188&id=913&Itemid=1000000000000