



WACD Plant Materials Center

WESTERN RED CEDAR

Common Name: Western Red Cedar

Scientific Name: *Thuja plicata*

Distribution: The native range of Western Red Cedar extends along the Pacific coast from Humboldt County, California, north to Southeast Alaska. It occurs inland from the coast up the western slope of the Cascades to 3,500 feet elevation, usually in moist soils. It is also found along the east slope of the Cascade and in Northeastern Washington, where it occurs less than 5,000 feet in moist areas such as creek bottoms.



Growth Habit: Western Red Cedar can grow to over 150 feet tall, and trunk diameter can exceed 6 feet in a good, open site. It also grows in the shade as an understory species, but at a much slower rate.

Adaptability: Western Red Cedar is adapted to grow through out the range mentioned above. It will grow in full sun to shade, although the growth rates can be very slow in deep shade. Western Red Cedar grows in a wide range of soil types, but it is best adapted to soils that are moist and fine textured. It can be abundant in forested swamps, and riparian areas. It can also be found on drier upland sites, west of the Cascades.

Comments: Western Red Cedar is an ecological, economic, and culturally valuable species in the region. It is often a vital component of healthy, functioning riparian habitat. A mature tree provides shade, stream-side stabilization and wildlife habitat. Browsing damage caused by deer, elk, and rodents can result in significant damage to young seedlings and saplings, and may require appropriate protection.

