



RIPARIAN SHRUBS FOR BIRD HABITAT

The following shrubs and perennials all have one thing in common: they provide fruits that are relished by a variety of local and seasonal birds and waterfowl. They also provide habitat and food for other wildlife such as amphibians, small and large mammals, even people! Fall and winter berries are a crucial food source to our songbirds like chickadees, waxwings, robins, and flickers. Most of these plants prefer to grow in moist soils. All of them can be added to riparian zones or boggy areas, and many of them can be grown in shady areas in oak woodlands or evergreen forest. All of these plants (except California blackberry) will do best with deer protection for about two years following planting. In addition to your shrubs, add in a variety of other plant types such as vines, perennials, grasses, sedges and rushes to create excellent habitat.

Cornus sericea, **Creek Dogwood** 9' h x 12' w

Known for vibrant red stems, which provide bright color in the winter. Grows happily along the toe and lower banks of creeks, spreading to form thickets. Deciduous. Loves water and doesn't tolerate drought. Grosbeak, northern oriole, spotted towhee, western bluebird, robins, mockingbirds, waxwing and quail eat the fruits.



Frangula californica, **Coffeeberry** 6' h x 10' w

A very adaptable shrub, can tolerate full sun and handles drought well, requires good drainage. Deer may browse foliage. Pale Swallowtail and Gray Hairstreak butterflies use it as a host plant for larvae. Blue-black berries in autumn are relished by thrushes, jays, mockingbirds, robins, band tailed pigeons and purple finches.



Lonicera involucrata, **Twinberry** 8' h x 8' w

Thrives in areas that have summer water; often found low on creek banks or in damp areas. Deciduous. Berries favored by many birds, including quail and grouse, songbirds such as thrushes, and small mammals and bears. While prized by wildlife, they are not edible by humans.



Myrica californica, **Pacific Wax Myrtle** 20' h x 20' w

A deer-resistant shrub that makes an excellent hedge, often used to create wind-breaks. Typically grows in coastal areas in full sun, does well inland if planted in shade and given occasional summer water. Tolerant of clay, sandy, and loamy soils. Late autumn berries attract flickers, robins and finches.



Oemleria cerasiformis, **Osoberry** 6' h x 6' w

An attractive deciduous shrub common to coastal areas in Marin. Not picky about soil conditions but requires partial shade inland and does best in moist areas. The fruit is a dark purple-colored drupe that matures in the late spring or early summer. An important source of food to birds and mammals including deer and foxes.



Ribes spp., **Gooseberry** 5' h x 5' w

Most common in Marin are *Ribes menziesii* (Canyon Gooseberry), *Ribes divarticum* var. *pubiflorum* (Spreading Gooseberry), and *Ribes californicum* (Hillside Gooseberry). All are similar in appearance, and bear delicious fruit through the summer, edible to people as well as birds. Tolerate sandy, loam, and clay soils, but need good drainage.



Ribes sanguineum var. *glutinosum*, **Pink-Flowering Currant** 6' h x 6' w

Will grow in oak woodlands, evergreen forest, and riparian areas. One of the first to set flowers in late winter. Berries develop late spring/early summer, and are a favorite of songbirds including grosbeaks and mockingbirds. Grows best in partial shade, but can tolerate full sun if given summer water.



Rubus parviflorus, **Thimbleberry** 5' h x 5' w

A multi-stemmed plant with large, velvety leaves shaped like a maple leaf. Requires good drainage; usually found on upper banks of riparian areas. Has edible, delicious berries that ripen in late summer, prized by both people and birds.



Rubus spectabilis, **Salmonberry** 5' h x 5' w

Grows into a dense hedge in wet areas; typically grows in ditches and low on stream-banks with spiny canes that stand perfectly straight. Does best in partial shade inland, thrives along the coast. Requires moist soil. The orange-red berries are enjoyed by people and other mammals, and birds.



Rubus ursinus, **California Blackberry** 3' h x 6' w

A spreading vine that creates thickets; Many species of wildlife use the thickets for cover. Late-summer berries are eaten by songbirds, deer, bears, other small and large mammals, and people. Blackberry vines spread quickly, tolerate a wide variety of soil conditions, and do well in both full sun and shade.



Sambucus nigra ssp. *caerulea*, **Blue Elderberry** 20' h x 15' w

Easy to grow, not fussy about soil or drainage, tolerates both sun and partial shade. Appreciates some summer water and will produce more berries, but will also do well without summer water once established. Has large clusters of blue berries in the late summer, relished by a variety of bird species. Cooked berries are also used as a source of food and medicine by people.



Sambucus racemosa, **Red Elderberry** 15' h x 15' w

A coastal plant, thrives in cool temperatures and loves moisture, but can do well in shady areas of inland gardens. Produces clusters of red berries in late spring or early summer that contain substances that are considered toxic to people unless cooked. One of the earliest fruits to form in the springtime, the berries are an important source of food for songbirds.



Symphoricarpos albus, **Snowberry** 5' h x 5' w

A deciduous shrub that grows well in wooded areas, on upper banks of riparian zones, and along shaded north slopes. This shrub forms dense thickets, providing excellent habitat. Has drooping clusters of creamy white berries in autumn, palatable to hermit thrush, swainson's thrush, robins and other species.

