

Conifers, Trees, and Shrubs require the least maintenance of any group of plants. As long as their mature size is accommodated by the space they are in, little to no maintenance should be expected once established.

Andromeda *Pieris* **DT**

Aucuba

Azalea (evergreens) **DT**

Azara *microphylla* **DT**

Bottle Brush *Callistemon* **DT**

Box Honeysuckle *Lonicera nitida* **DT**

Broom *Genista* **DT**

Butterfly Bush *Buddleia* (sterile hybrids) **DT**

California Lilac *Ceanothus* **DT**

Camellia

Cedar *Calocedrus* (dwarf varieties) **DT**

Cedar *Cedrus* (dwarf varieties) **DT**

Cinquefoil *Potentilla* **DT**

Cotoneaster **DT**

Crape Myrtle *Lagerstroemia* **DT**

Daphne **DT**

Escallonia **DT**

False Cypress *Chamaecyparis* (dwarf varieties)

Fatshedera

Fothergilla

Fringe Flower *Loropetalum* **DT**

Heavenly Bamboo *Nandina* **DT**

Hebe **DT**

Hemlock *Tsuga* (dwarf varieties) **DT**

Japanese Aralia *Fatsia japonica*

Japanese Cedar *Cryptomeria*

Japanese Maple *Acer palmatum*. **DT**

Juniper *Juniperus* **DT**

Lilac *Syringa* (dwarf types) **DT**

Manzanita *Arctostaphylos* (hardy varieties) **DT**

Mexican Orange *Choisya* **DT**

Mimosa Tree *Albizia* ‘Summer Chocolate’ **DT**

Oregon Grape *Mahonia* **DT**

Osmanthus **DT**

Pine *Pinus* (dwarf varieties) **DT**

Rhododendron **DT**

Rock Rose *Cistus* **DT**

Silverberry *Eleagnus* **DT**

Silverbush *Convolvulus cneorum* **DT**

Smoke Bush *Cotinus* **DT**

Spruce *Picea* (dwarf varieties) **DT**

Strawberry Tree *Arbutus unedo* **DT**

Tea Tree *Leptospermum* **DT**

Twiggy Dogwood *Cornus*

Viburnum (tinus and davidii)

Witch Hazel *Hamamelis*

Yew *Taxus*

Yucca **DT**

NW Natives have a reputation as being uniformly low maintenance. Here are some of the easiest to grow.

Deer Fern *Blechnum spicant* **DT**

Kinnikinnick *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* **DT**

Oregon Grape *Mahonia* **DT**

Oregon Myrtle *Umbellularia californica* **DT**

Oregon Stonecrop *Sedum oreganum* **DT**

Pacific Wax Myrtle *Myrica californica* **DT**

Red Flowering Currant *Ribes sanguineum* **DT**

Red Osier Dogwood *Cornus sericea* **DT**

Salal *Gaultheria shallon* **DT**

Silk Tassel *Garrya elliptica* **DT**

Sword Fern *Polystichum munitum* **DT**

Vine Maple *Acer circinatum* **DT**

Yucca filamentosa **DT**

Grasses are a remarkably uniform group with respect to the amount of maintenance required. Deciduous grasses need to be cut back once a year in February. Most years, evergreen grasses need at least some grooming at the same time. Grasses which reseed readily should be avoided to minimize weeding.

Blue Oat Grass *Helictotrichon* **DT**

Feather Grass *Stipa* **DT** (short lived)

Fescue *Festuca* **DT**

Fountain Grass *Pennisetum* (not ‘moudry’) **DT**

Maiden Grass *Miscanthus* **DT**

Pampas Grass *Cortaderia*

Pheasant Grass *Anemathele* **DT**

Rush *Juncus*

Sedge *Carex*

Perennials as a group require generally more maintenance. They will likely need some deadheading during the growing season, cutting back in the fall, and dividing of vigorous spreaders. That being said, here are some sturdy perennials which require very little tending while still

looking good over a long season.

Perennials grow quickly, making a garden appear mature sooner.

Barrenwort *Epimedium* **DT**

Blanket Flower *Gaillardia* **DT** (lives 2-3 years)

Candytuft *Iberis* **DT**

Cone Flower *Echinacea* **DT**

Cyclamen (coum and hederifolium) **DT**

Daffodil *Narcissus* **DT**

Daylily *Hemerocallis* **DT**

Dusty Miller **DT**

Elephant Ears *Bergenia* (**DT** in shade)

False Indigo *Baptisia* **DT**

False Plumbago *Ceratostigma plumbagnoides* **DT**

Gayfeather *Liatris* **DT**

Geranium

Hosta

Hyssop *Agastache* **DT**

Iris

Jerusalem Sage *Phlomis* **DT**

Lenten Rose *Helleborus* **DT**

Libertia **DT**

Lithodora **DT**

Mondo Grass *Ophiopogon* **DT**

Parahebe **DT**

Peony *Paeonia*

Pincushion Flower *Scabiosa* **DT**

Sage *Salvia* **DT**

Spruce *Euphorbia* (not reseeder) **DT**

Stonecrop *Sedum* (short varieties) **DT**

Wall Flower *Erysimum* **DT**

Edibles as a group require a lot of maintenance and should be avoided if low maintenance is a priority, however, the following ones may be left alone and harvested from as desired.

Alpine Strawberry **DT**

Artichoke **DT**

Asian Pear*

Asparagus (cut back in fall)

Bay Laurel **DT** (protected site)

Blueberry **DT**

Cardoon **DT**

Chives

Evergreen Huckleberry **DT**

Feijoa (pineapple guava) **DT**

Fig **DT***

Goji Berry **DT**

Lavender **DT**

Opuntia **DT** (plant in gravel or sand)

Ostrich Fern

Parsley

Persimmon*

Rhubarb

Rosemary **DT**

Sage **DT**

Seaberry **DT**

Thyme (upright varieties) **DT**

* These are the lowest maintenance fruit trees for the PNW, however they still require annual pruning, climbing a ladder to harvest all the fruit, and may require spraying.

Establishing Low Maintenance Plants

The future success of a low maintenance planting is heavily dependent on the growth of deep roots during the first couple seasons. Some prep work is essential, and the following are required in order to grow plants that can survive on their own in the future.

- Choose plants carefully; the right plant grows to an appropriate size for the space and thrives in the amount of light and water found there.
- Prior to planting, turn a couple inches of compost and some slow release fertilizer into the planting area.
- The first season, new plantings have no deep roots and need water about once a week in warm, dry weather, delivered by a slow drip (soaker hose) over several hours (this is an estimate, never water if the soil hasn't dried out at least a couple inches down). If drought tolerant plants have been chosen, then second year plantings may only need water 5 or 6 times, and the third year little or none.
- Spread 1-3" of compost on the soil surface every year to hold in moisture and keep improving the soil.

Low Maintenance

Plants for gardens which require minimal care



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Getting Started

Low maintenance suggests plants characterized by their **ability to look good without much input from the gardener**. These plants are **adaptable to a variety of soils and light levels**, and require **minimal pruning, grooming, deadheading, staking, fertilizing, and dividing**. This is the definition used to choose the following plants; neither the definition nor the plant list is intended to be complete. **Drought tolerance** is of paramount importance in some low maintenance gardens, but in others water is readily available, therefore, drought tolerant plants will be marked with **DT**.

All plants need good care at planting time and through the first season at least, see the back panel for more info.

Choosing low maintenance plants is one way to minimize garden maintenance, but there are also other considerations, including the following.

- Replace lawn with hardscaping or less demanding ground covers.
- Use tough spots like dry shade or boggy areas for garden ornaments or patio space.
- Carefully designed hardscaping can help make a statement with fewer plants, which means less maintenance.

