

Common Plants in the Anchorage Area (updated based on 2020 AK Plant List)

Trees-----3-inch diameter at DBH

Alnus spp. FAC All Alders
Betula papyrifera FCU Paper Birch (FAC¹)
B. neocallaskana FCU/FAC¹ AK Paper Birch; B. kenaica fCU/FAC¹: cones erect/spreading, nutlet wings slightly narrower than body
Picea glauca FCU White Spruce (FAC¹)
Picea mariana FCW Black Spruce
Picea sitchensis FCU Sitka Spruce (needles prick) (FAC)
Populus balsamifera FCU Balsam Poplar, cottonwood, includes P. basamifera ssp. Trichocarpa: black cottonwood.
Populus tremuloides FCU Quaking Aspen
Prunus padus FCU Mayday tree/European Bird Cherry (exotic)
Tsuga spp. FAC Western Hemlock/Mtn. Hemlock

Shrubs-----Less than 3 inch diameter

Andromeda polifolia FCW Bog Rosemary (OBL: Copper RB, IntAK Lwlns+Mnts, Int-Brooks Rng Mnts, Upper Kobuk/Koyukuk)
Arctostaphylos rubra FAC Red Bearberry (FCW: North/West Brooks Rng, N.Seward Penn/Selawik lwlns)
Betula nana FAC dwarf birch (flat at leaf base)/Betula glandulosa FAC Shrub Birch (cuneate at leaf base)
Chamaedaphne calyculata FCW Leatherleaf (coppery lvs, ivory fls)
Empetrum nigrum FAC Crowberry
Rhododendron tomentosum FCW Labrador tea (small lvs, rusty hair/underneath/rolled edge) (FCW: Pebble/Donlin/Aniak)
Rhododendron groenlandicum FAC Labrador Tea (large lvs rusty hair underneath/rolled edges)
Menziesia ferruginea FCU Rusty Menziesia
Myrica gale OBL Sweet Gale (strong smell, clove taste, male & female fls in separate plants)
Oplopanax horridum FCU Devil's Club
Dasiphora fruticosa FAC Shrubby Cinquefoil (old Potentilla fruticosa)
Ribes triste FAC Red currant (FACs: R. glandulosum: white flws, gland-tipped-hair ovary-berry/R. Hudsonianum: white flws, no bloom resin dots/R. bracteosum: white/green flws, resin dots white bloom/R. lacustre: twigs w/ sharp spines, gland tip-hair)
Ribes laxiflorum FCU Trailing currant (laying branches rising at ends, purplish-black fruits w/ stalked glands)
Ribes oxycanthoides FCU Canadian gooseberry (Stems w/ prickles and racemes with only 1-2 fls)
Rosa acicularis FCU Prickly Rose (same Rosa nutkana with thorns, not prickles)
Rubus idaeus FCU Raspberry (white fls, 3-5 leaflets, prickly)
Salix alaxensis FAC Feltleaf Willow (underside lvs densely felty and white, long female catkins attached to stem)
Salix arbusculoides FCW Small Tree Willow (lvs 3-6 times as long as broad w/ toothed edges, lvs green above and silky hairs (white or reddish) beneath)
Salix arctica FCU Arctic Willow (small shrub grow prostrate to ground, lvs oval hairless above, long white hairs beneath w/ a beard at tip) (FAC: Arctic coastal, N.Seward Penn/Selawik lwlns, Seward Penn Hghlnds, West Brooks Rng)
Salix barclayi FAC Barclay's Willow (lvs hairless & green on top, whitish underneath, oval, pointed, and toothed)
Salix bebbiana FAC Bebb's Willow (many-branched from base, lvs are green above w/ impressed veins and below are whitish w/ long wavy white hairs, oval-shaped, minute stipules (appendages where leaf is connected to branch))
Salix fuscescens FCW Alaska Bog Willow (mostly hidden in grass, lvs hairless, and broadest towards the tips (obovate, pointed), lvs green on top and white underneath)
Salix planifolia FCW, Tea-Leaf Willow
Salix pulchra FCW Diamond Leaf Willow (FAC: Pebble/Donlin/Aniak, West Brooks Rng) (stems are glossy, lvs are diamond-shaped, green above and white below, lvs are not toothed)
Salix reticulata FAC Net Vein Willow (lvs are roundish, dark green on top and pale beneath, deeply veined like a net, petioles are long, small shrub (less than 6 inches))
Salix richardsonii FCW Richardson's Willow (stipules are large and persistent, lvs are shiny green above and paler underneath, oval and pointed)
Salix scouleriana FAC Scouler's Willow (gray, smooth bark, white or reddish hair on underside of mature lvs, young lvs covered in white hair, lvs crowded at ends of twigs, obovate to oblanceolate)
Salix sitchensis FAC Sitka Willow (lvs are broader at tip, but still narrow and pointed, margins are not toothed, lvs green on top and pale beneath, underneath side of lvs covered in coarse stiff hairs, giving silky shine)
Spiraea stevenii FCU (small white flowers arranged in a flat-top raceme)
Spiraea douglasii FCW (small pink-to-rose flowers arranged in a long raceme)

Woody Berries

Sambucus racemosa FCU Red elderberry (shrub w/ opposite lvs with 5-7 leaflets, white yellowish fls, red fruits)
Vaccinium caespitosum FCW dwarf blueberry (8-in tufted shrub, round twigs, lvs w/ densely serrated margin & shiny on both sides).
Vaccinium uliginosum FAC Alpine blueberry, similar to V. caespitosum but lvs w/ entire margin & dull on top pale beneath
Vaccinium ovalifolium FAC & V. alaskaense FAC shrubs 8-inch to 3 ft. tall, angular twigs
Vaccinium oxycoccos OBL (old Oxycoccus microcarpus) small cranberry (tiny lvs, red berry, running thread-like stems on sphagnum)
Vaccinium vitis-idaea FAC Lowbush cranberry (evergreen, leathery lvs, distinct indented center vein)
Viburnum edule FCU Highbush cranberry (opposite simple lvs, white fls, tall bush)

Forbs

Achillea millefolium FCU Common yarrow
Aconitum delphinifolium FAC Monkshood
Artemisia sp. FCU Wormwoods except Artemisia biennis FAC
Castilleja unalaschcensis FAC Yellow Paintbrush
Cornus canadensis FCU Dwarf Dogwood (stem w/ 1 pair small lvs + broad whorled lvs at tip, yellowish/green fls)
Cornus suecica FAC Swedish Dogwood (stem w/ 3+ whorl/opposite larger lvs + tip-whorled lvs)
Drosera sp. OBL Sundews
Chamaenerion angustifolium FCU Narrowleaf Fireweed, old Epilobium angustifolium (tall herb w/ lanceolate lvs)
Chamaenerion latifolium FAC Broadleaf Fireweed, old E. latifolium (low-grow herb w/ broad lvs)
Epilobium palustre OBL Willowherb (lvs linear-narrow & sessile) (several willowherbs w/ various status indicator)
Epilobium hornemannii FCW Willowherb (lvs oval-shaped) (several willowherbs w/ various status indicator)
Fragaria chiloensis FCU Beach strawberry (white 5-petal fls, leathery lvs w/ 3 leaflets)
Galium triflorum FAC Fragrant Bedstraw (6 pointed lvs in whorl, fruit w/ stiff hook hairs, 3-fls)
Galium trifidum FCW (4 blunt lvs in 4 in whorl, weak stem, 1-3 fls, fruit smooth) FCU: G. aparine & G. boreale
Geocaulon lividum FCU Pumpkinberry (oval lvs alternate membranaceous, lateral fls sessile)
Geranium erianthum FCU Crane's bill (lvs palmate, petals rose or violate w/ hairs at base)
Geum macrophyllum FAC Largeleaf Avens (yellow fls, stems stout thick, lyre-shape large basal lvs)

***FAC¹: 50% individual w/ morphological adaptations & positive hydrology+soils

WD Refresher: June 1, 2023

Heracleum maximum FCU Cow Parsnip, old Heracleum lanatum
Iris setosa FAC Iris
Lupinus nootkatensis FCU Lupine
Lysichiton americanum OBL Skunk Cabbage
Maianthemum dilatatum FAC Two-leaf False Solomon's-Seal (All False Solomon Seal species are FAC)
Menyanthes trifoliata OBL Buckbean
Mertensia paniculata FCU Chiming Bells, Tall Bluebells
Parnassia palustris FCW Grass of Parnassus
Platanthera dilatata FCW Orchid, fragrant white/green fls, lvs up stem (several spp. different status indicator)
Polemonium acutiflorum FAC Tall Jacob's ladder (small sp. also FAC)
Comarum palustris OBL Marsh Five Finger (old Potentilla palustris) purplish brown fls
Pyrola asarifolia FCU Pink Wintergreen (pink fls) P. chlorantha FCU (greensh-white fls small lvs style protruding)
Pyrola grandiflora FAC Arctic Wintergreen (large lvs, style protruding, fls greensh-white)
Pyrola minor FAC snowline wintergreen (white-pinkish fls, style no protruding no ring under stigma)
Rubus arcticus FCA Nagoonberry (FCU: CopperRB, IntAK Hghlnds+Lwlnds+Mnts, Int-Brooks Rng Mnts) branches from rootstock, 3-leaflets, 1-3 pink/red/magenta fls, palatable deep red/dark purple fruit
Rubus chamaemorus FCW Cloudberry (runners/rootstock, no leaflets, 1 white fls on erect stem, dioecious-2 homes, orange fruit)
Rubus pedatus FAC Strawberry-leaf Raspberry (white fls, 5 small leaflets, and runners)
Sanguisorba canadensis FCW (white fls, long stamens)
Sanguisorba officinalis FCW Burnet (purple fls) Sanguisorba menziesii FAC hybrid, small-headed, purple long stamens
Spiranthes romanzoffiana OBL Orchid Hooded Ladies' Tresses (white fls, lvs at base, bracts above)
Streptopus amplexifolius FCU Watermelon Berry/ Twisted Stalk
Thalictrum sparsiflorum FCU Meadow Rue T. alpinum FAC single stem leaf, fls in single raceme, rarely branched
Triantha glutinosa FCW Sticky Tofieldia, 10 inch-tall, sticky, basal lvs 1/3-2/3 length fls-stem, yellowish fls
Trientalis borealis FAC Starflower (pink fls, no stem lvs below whorl instead bracts)
Trientalis europaea FCU (white fls, several larger stem lvs below whorl)
Viola palustris FCW Dwarf Marsh Violet lilac fls, lower petals w/dark veins (FAC: AKInt, IntAKHghlnds+Lwlnds+Mnts, Int-Brooks Rng Mnts, Pebble/Donlin/Aniak)
Viola glabella FCW yellow violet, Viola biflora FCW yellow violet
Viola langsдорфii FCW (bluish/violet fls, oval w/point to kidney-shaped lvs, thick rootstock, serrate margin)
Viola adunca FAC, limited distribution, tiny heart-shaped lvs, hook spur

Weeds

Most of these are introduced, often our only annuals, growing on fill, rapid colonizers.

Chrysanthemum leucanthemum NI Oxeye Daisy
Hieracium sp. NI Hawkweed
Hordeum jubatum FCU Fox Barley
Matricaria discoidea FCU Pineapple Weed (Old Matricaria matricarioides)
Plantago lanceolata FCU Plantain
Rhinanthus minor FCU Rattlebox, used to be Rhinanthus arcticus
Taraxacum officinale FCU Dandelion
Trifolium repens FCU White Clover
Vicia cracca NI Bird Vetch

Grasses and Grass-Like

Calamagrostis canadensis FAC Bluejoint Grass
Carex Sedges (sedges have edges on flower stalk, i.e. triangular in x-section, lvs have deep groove, few are FCU)
Carex aquatilis OBL Terminal spike upright, lateral spike sessile
Carex canescens FCW Hoary Sedge (FAC: CopperRB, IntAK Lwlnds+Mnts, Int-Brooks Rng Mnts, Upper Kobuk/Koyukuk)
Carex lenticularis OBL used to be C. kelloggii
Carex livida OBL Short, lateral spike sessile, lowest bracts equal or exceed infl.
Carex limosa OBL Short, lateral spike peduncled, lowest bracts do not pass infl.
Carex lyngbyei OBL Terminal and lateral spikes drooping
Carex utriculata OBL used to be Carex rhyncophysa
Carex rostrata OBL Found in standing water, Lateral spike upright
Eriophorum brachyantherum OBL Closed Sheath Cotton Grass, tufted, 2-sheaths, filiform lvs, dark scales, whitish fls
Eriophorum russeolum FCW (bristles rust-colored, anthers 1.5+mm, broad dark scales w/ pale margin)
Eriophorum scheuchzeri OBL White Cottongrass (bristles white, anthers 0-1.5mm, narrow grayish-black scales)
Trichophorum caespitosum OBL Tufted Leafless Bulrush (smaller heads than Eriophorum, many) Tufted Leafless Bulrush
Juncus Rushes (all are FCW or OBL)
Juncus alpinoarticulatus OBL (old Juncus alpinus)
Juncus biglumis OBL Two-Flower Rush
Juncus bufonius OBL Toad rush Annual, very short, spreading, in disturbed areas
Juncus stygius OBL
Juncus triglumis subsp. albescens FCW Three-Flower Rush (single head with 3-5 fls, few heads)
Triglochin maritima OBL Arrow Grass (mainly tidally influenced areas)

Ferns

Athyrium cyclosorum FAC Western Lady Fern-old A. filix-femina (lower frond-segmnts shorter than middle frond segmths)
Dryopteris expansa FCU (old Dryopteris dilatata) Wood Fern (frond broadest at base)
Gymnocarpium dryopteris FCU Oak Fern

Horsetails

Equisetum arvense FAC (1st segment longer than sheath at node of main stem, separate fertile shoot)
Equisetum fluviatile OBL (tendency not to have side branches, cone on terminus)
Equisetum palustre FCW Marsh Horsetail (top of stem usually lacking branches, cone on terminus, first sheath of branches very short, next sheath shorter than corresponding sheath of stem)
Equisetum pratense FCW (numerous thin branches, 3-angled, 1st branch sheath shorter than stem's)
Equisetum sylvaticum FAC Woodland Horsetail (many branched, feathery, cone on terminus)

Club Mosses

Spinulum annotinum FCU (old Lycopodium annotinum) (spore cone solitary sessile, i.e. not on a little stem)
Lycopodium clavatum FCU (spore one on long peduncle, several cones at each terminus)