Red Alder

Oregon Alder | *Alnus rubra Bong.*



A STREAMSIDE PIONEER

Roots along *the riverbank*

Along coastal salmon streams, red alder's pale, lichen-mottled trunks rise above ferns and moving water. Its leafy canopy provides shade, while fallen leaves help sustain aquatic invertebrates that become food for young fish.

THROUGH THE SEASONS

Male catkins appear in late winter or early spring before leaf-out. Small woody cones mature in autumn and can persist through winter.

WHERE IT GROWS

Across coastal British Columbia, red alder favours sunny, moist streambanks, floodplains and disturbed soils.

STREAMSIDE STEWARDSHIP

Keeping streamside trees and shrubs helps preserve shade, stable banks and food webs that support young salmon and trout.

FIELD NOTES

RECOGNIZE IT

Look for smooth grey bark mottled with lichens, oval leaves with finely double-toothed edges, and small woody cones on short stalks.

ROOTS THAT ENRICH

Red alder partners with Frankia bacteria in root nodules, adding usable nitrogen to forest soils as it grows.

FOR SALMON STREAMS

Its summer shade moderates stream temperatures. Falling leaves support aquatic invertebrates, while insects from foliage can feed young fish.

Sources: BC Ministry of Forests (2025); E-Flora BC (2024); DFO (2001).