SITE-TO-SOURCE / SAMPLE CONSULTATION

A landscape for wet winters and dry summers

Portland, Oregon

$349 Enhanced Consultation • Four site environments

Illustrative report for a fictional client and site; no real property inspection or purchase. Sample edition: 7 Nov 2026 | PHY-SAMPLE-005_Portland_Wet_Dry_Edges

Your recommended direction

Use four related but distinct plant communities. Retain the canopy, favor thornless shrubs near the dog route, convert a small meadow area, and defer plants requiring steady moisture until the low spot is monitored.

The client behind the question

Fictional client: Nick Burkhardt

"I have a little over an acre, but it does not act like one yard. The big firs make a shady edge, I mow too much in the sun, there is a narrow path to the gate and a low spot that is muddy every winter. I want native habitat and spring-to-fall interest without maintaining four totally unrelated gardens. Our dog checks everything out, so the plants near the path need to be easy to live with. I'd like to talk through the tricky bits before buying anything."

Illustrative mock submission, not an actual customer testimonial. Adapted from the fictional intake originally prepared for this example.

Selected answers from the client intake

Intake question	Client's answer
Main goal	Connected native habitat for birds and pollinators with less mowing, fewer invasives and manageable upkeep.
Site described	About 1.35 acres; mature fir shade, sunny lawn strip, narrow gate path and winter-wet depression.
Most difficult conditions	Summer dryness under trees, winter ponding, weed competition and uncertain clay-like soil.
Plant preferences	West-Cascades/Portland native choices, flowers and an evergreen presence in winter.
Avoid	English ivy, thorny path planting and plants presenting unresolved ingestion concerns for the investigating dog.
Budget and rhythm	Illustrative $2,000-$4,500 phased plant/material budget; fall starter phase and expansion in 2027.

How we answered the client's questions

Client asked	How this report responds
Can one plant palette handle shade, sun and wetness?	Yes as a coordinated set of four separate site zones. The report does not prescribe the same species everywhere.
What happens near the dog and gate?	Path widths and contact risks change the recommendations: shinyleaf spirea (Spiraea lucida) replaces a thornier rose.
Which summer-flowering meadow plant remains useful?	Meadow checkermallow (Sidalcea campestris) replaces the earlier lupine choice following the dog-exposure concern.
Should I plant the winter-wet corner this year?	Not yet. Zone D is deferred until drainage duration, possible water pathways and site constraints are better understood.

What we clarified in the simulated consultation

Follow-up question	Client reply and resulting decision
Does the dog investigate seed pods and stems?	Client: Yes, sometimes he chews or mouths them. Report decision: Withhold the lupine selection and check all dog-access sites more conservatively.
Is the gate path wide enough for thorny or sprawling shrubs?	Client: It is narrower than I first estimated. Report decision: Replace the original rose with lower thornless spirea; protect passage.

How the project developed through feedback

Point in the example	What changed in the recommendations
Initial draft	Meadow lupine and woodland rose were possible; the lower depression was being considered for an early phase.
Simulated 30-minute call	Dog chewing, narrower gate, uncertain stormwater duration and the request for a smaller starter list were clarified.
Consolidated in-scope revision	Replace Lupinus polyphyllus with Sidalcea campestris, Rosa gymnocarpa with Spiraea lucida, and defer the wet-depression installation.

The plant recommendations and next steps that follow show the result of these client-specific choices. Site observations remain fictional, and conditions must be confirmed before real installation.

How we interpreted this project

A fictional 1.35-acre wooded Portland residence with a shaded canopy, flowering shrub buffer, sunnier lawn strip and low ground that receives winter runoff. A dog and footpath affect planting placement.

The $349 Enhanced Consultation models one 30-minute remote discussion and one in-scope consolidated refinement. The result is a site-informed selection strategy, not construction drawings.

Three decisions that matter most

01 Map shade, summer dryness, wet-season water and animal circulation.

02 Start with a manageable first phase rather than buying all 32 plants.

03 Keep thorny shrubs off the path and reserve genuinely wet-site species for confirmed habitat.

What an enhanced consultation adds

In addition to plant choices, this example shows coordinated site interpretation, practical alternatives and the effect of a client discussion on the final selection. The palette remains a decision tool, not a scaled construction plan.

What changed after the consultation discussion

The sample demonstrates one in-scope refinement: a thorny path-side rose was replaced by shinyleaf spirea, and a lupine choice near a dog-use area was replaced with meadow checkermallow. The low spot remains conditional pending drainage observations. These revisions are reflected in the final 32-choice palette.

Plant recommendations

32 screened plant choices are presented below. They are alternatives organized by planting environment and use—not a shopping list you must buy in full. Mature dimensions and growing conditions remain approximate; confirm the supplied plant form, actual site light and water before purchase.

A - Shaded woodland edge

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Vine maple *Acer circinatum* Conditional	Light canopy and autumn color beneath higher trees. **Best fit:** Part shade; Fresh/moist; about 15-25 ft **Check:** Avoid hot, dry exposure; allow tree-sized spread and first-summer water.
Indian plum *Oemleria cerasiformis* Core	Very early bloom and native understory structure. **Best fit:** Part shade; Dry to fresh; about 8-15 ft **Check:** Can sucker; keep back from a narrow footpath.
Evergreen huckleberry *Vaccinium ovatum* Conditional	Evergreen texture and bird habitat. **Best fit:** Part shade; Fresh, organic; about 4-8 ft **Check:** Confirm humusy acid-to-near-acid soil and summer moisture; not for a baked root zone.
Salal *Gaultheria shallon* Core	Persistent low shrub layer under canopy. **Best fit:** Shade to part shade; Fresh to dry after establishment; about 2-5 ft **Check:** Can expand; first-year watering and soil surface mulch are important.

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Cascade oregon-grape *Berberis nervosa* Core	Evergreen ground-level framework and early flowers. **Best fit:** Shade to part shade; Dry to fresh; about 1-3 ft **Check:** Spiny leaf margins: set back from contact/dog routes.
Western sword fern *Polystichum munitum* Core	Durable evergreen fern texture. **Best fit:** Shade to part shade; Fresh; about 2-4 ft **Check:** Provide first-summer deep watering; avoid very dry compacted pockets.
Inside-out flower *Vancouveria hexandra* Conditional	Lacy native ground layer under tree canopy. **Best fit:** Shade; Fresh/moist; about 0.5-1.5 ft **Check:** Do not assume dry fir-root competition suits it; monitor summer moisture.
Fringecup *Tellima grandiflora* Core	Long flowering stems add soft texture to a woodland edge. **Best fit:** Shade to part shade; Fresh/moist; about 1-2 ft **Check:** Reseeds and performs best with some dry-season moisture.
Small-flowered alumroot *Heuchera micrantha* Conditional	Textural rosettes at a brighter woodland margin. **Best fit:** Part shade; Fresh/moist, well-drained; about 1-2 ft **Check:** Needs rich aerated root zone; not a dry shaded root mat or saturated trough.
Piggyback plant *Tolmiea menziesii* Conditional	Ground-layer foliage in consistently cool shaded pockets. **Best fit:** Shade; Moist; about 1-2 ft **Check:** Withhold from summer-dry tree-root zones unless moisture is reliable.

B - Shrub and path buffer

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Red-flowering currant *Ribes sanguineum* Core	Early hummingbird and pollinator flowering, deciduous structure. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Dry to fresh; about 6-10 ft **Check:** Give ample width; maintain at least one unobstructed access route.
Oceanspray *Holodiscus discolor* Core	Summer flowers and airy habitat screen. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Dry after establishment; about 6-12 ft **Check:** Broad shrub, not a clipped fence hedge; leave free development room.
Mockorange *Philadelphus lewisii* Core	White summer flowering and soft seasonal screen. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Dry to fresh; about 6-10 ft **Check:** Some form/size variation; avoid narrow foundation or doorway locations.
Tall oregon-grape *Berberis aquifolium* Conditional	Evergreen visual screen and early yellow flowers. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Dry to fresh; about 4-8 ft **Check:** Leaf spines, berries and dog access favor a rear buffer location.

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Common snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus* Conditional	Low shrub mass and fruit for birds. **Best fit:** Sun to shade; Dry to fresh; about 3-6 ft **Check:** Rhizomatous spread; white berries not for human consumption; keep out of dog traffic.
Shinyleaf spirea *Spiraea lucida* Core	Low, thornless flowering shrub for path transition. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Dry to fresh; about 2-4 ft **Check:** Trade labels may still read S. betulifolia var. lucida; avoid dense shade.

C - Sunny meadow conversion

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Oregon sunshine *Eriophyllum lanatum* Core	Silver leaves and yellow nectar-rich flowers near the dry margin. **Best fit:** Full sun; Dry, well-drained; about 0.5-1.5 ft **Check:** May decline in heavily irrigated winter-wet soil; do not crowd.
Oregon iris *Iris tenax* Core	Spring flowers and long-lived grassy clumps. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Dry to fresh; about 1-2 ft **Check:** Maintain open soil; avoid summerlogged or heavily irrigated clumps.
Western yarrow *Achillea millefolium* Core	Long flowering season and pollinator support. **Best fit:** Full sun; Dry to fresh; about 1-3 ft **Check:** Spreads and may cross into paths; seek regional plant material over named cultivars.
Meadow checkermallow *Sidalcea campestris* Core	Tall pink-white native flowers for the back of the meadow strip. **Best fit:** Full sun; Fresh to seasonally moist; about 2-6 ft **Check:** Too tall for a front path edge; provide seasonal water if dry before flowering.
Farewell-to-spring *Clarkia amoena* Core	Late spring/summer annual flower for self-renewing patches. **Best fit:** Sun; Dry to fresh; about 1-2 ft **Check:** Annual, not perennial. Seedling emergence and reseeding vary with season and competition.
Globe gilia *Gilia capitata* Core	Annual blue flower to diversify pollen and nectar timing. **Best fit:** Full sun; Dry; about 1-2 ft **Check:** Prepare modest seedbed; seeds require species purity and origin confirmation.
Sea blush *Plectritis congesta* Conditional	Low spring annual splash in meadow openings. **Best fit:** Sun; Seasonally fresh to dry; about 0.5-1.5 ft **Check:** Often sold by seed; protect bare soil from invasive grasses.
California oatgrass *Danthonia californica* Core	Compact bunchgrass structure for an open native meadow. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Dry to fresh; about 1-2 ft **Check:** Not a maintained-lawn replacement; confirm seed lot origin and weed-free status.

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Blue-eyed grass *Sisyrinchium idahoense* Conditional	Small blue spring flower on the cooler lower meadow edge. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Fresh, some winter moisture; about 0.7-1.7 ft **Check:** Not the driest mound; Portland list uses var. idahoense.
Pearly everlasting *Anaphalis margaritacea* Conditional	White summer flower clusters and host value for insects. **Best fit:** Full sun; Dry to fresh; about 1-2 ft **Check:** Can spread aggressively in moist/fertile soil; restrict to drier open section.

D - Seasonally moist depression

Plant / selection status	How it may work and what to check
Spreading rush *Juncus patens* Core	Fine-textured rush in reliably wet winter/spring lows. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Moist to seasonally wet; about 1-3 ft **Check:** Check how long water stands before purchase; do not treat the area as engineered rain garden.
Slough sedge *Carex obnupta* Conditional	Dense native sedge for a genuine wet pocket. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Moist to wet; about 2-4 ft **Check:** Robust and spreading; only where there is room and verified prolonged moisture.
Tufted hairgrass *Deschampsia cespitosa* Core	Clumping grass linking moist depression with open meadow. **Best fit:** Sun; Moist to fresh; about 2-4 ft **Check:** Requires some summer moisture; not suitable for dry-slope upland alone.
Red-osier dogwood *Cornus sericea* Conditional	Winter twig color and wildlife function at the rear edge. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Moist to wet; about 6-12 ft **Check:** Large multistem shrub; root spread and clearance require room.
Pacific ninebark *Physocarpus capitatus* Conditional	Flowering shrub that can fill a broad wet lower boundary. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Moist to fresh; about 6-12 ft **Check:** Needs width; not for a drain outlet, foundation or narrow path.
Yellow monkeyflower *Erythranthe guttata* Conditional	Yellow flowers where seasonal seepage persists. **Best fit:** Sun to part shade; Moist to wet; about 0.5-2 ft **Check:** Can spread, and may fail if the pocket dries completely in early summer.

How to put the recommendations to work

01 Confirm shade patterns and dog movement; check the suspected seasonal seep.

02 Build a small shrub/woodland grouping and a sunnier meadow trial.

03 Revisit drainage through the season before placing wetland-dependent plants.

Important site and safety considerations

- City plant-list nativity and documented Multnomah County provenance are not the same claim.
- The demonstration includes one revised palette after an illustrative consultation call; real supplier stock was not reserved.

A few things we would hold back

large-leaved lupine: Present in preliminary sunny-area list; removed in simulated revision because dog investigates/chews seed pods; Lupinus species contain reported alkaloid poisoning hazards. Do not generalize across all Lupinus or promise other plants are safe.

baldhip rose: Present in preliminary shrub buffer; thorny stems conflict with the newly reported narrow dog/foot route. It may suit a more distant natural area, not the shared passage.

nodding onion: A regionally native bulb but Allium-group ingestion is an avoidable concern where a dog chews stems and bulbs. Withheld as a contact/exposure precaution; not a generalized yard prohibition.

Plant sourcing and expectations

Ask growers for the exact scientific name (including any trade synonym), the plant or seed format, the propagation source and whether stock is suitable for the local climate. A nursery listing is a lead for shopping, not proof of current inventory, correct provenance, or guaranteed establishment.

Examples of places to inquire

Sparrowhawk Native Plants. Fall 2026 sales wrapped; Spring 2027 preorder planned late February; many pages show sold-out; NO stock confirmed for client

Portland Nursery. species-specific in-store inventory not checked

Bosky Dell Natives. species-specific inventory and price not checked

Sources consulted

The references below support the regional botanical, gardening, or regulatory decisions in this illustration. Published range, nursery listings and generalized soils information do not prove parcel-scale conditions, county indigeneity or seed-lot origin. Check dated rules and availability before making real purchases.

Portland Plant List (2016), native species and plant communities

Fall 2026 native plants catalog

Pacific Northwest native plants for the woodland garden

Native plants for Willamette Valley yards

Spiraea lucida accepted; Spiraea betulifolia var. lucida synonym

City of Portland: official Portland Plant List

Gardening with Oregon Native Plants West of the Cascades (2022)

Incorporating Pacific Northwest native plants into your water-wise landscapes (reviewed 2025)

Residential Rain Gardens: limits and site checks

Berberis nervosa accepted; Mahonia nervosa synonym

Erythranthe guttata accepted; Mimulus guttatus synonym