The American goldfinch is the Washington State bird. These are common birds to see at bird feeders and are year-round residents in the Puget Sound.

During the spring males are brilliant yellow, while the females and winter birds are duller. This is the only finch that molts twice a year.

Their main habitats are weedy fields and floodplains, but they have adapted to the human landscape and are common along roadsides, in orchards, and in backyards.

Goldfinches are the strictest of vegetarians, so they breed later than many birds to wait until plants have seeded.
Red Alder

Red alder is a tree that grows to 60 feet and is excellent for waterside and boggy sites. Since these trees are fast growing, but short-lived, it is best not to plant them too close to buildings. They rarely live past 100 years. Red alder is an excellent nitrogen fixer and good for reclaiming bare land; it also grows in poor soil, as long as the soil is moist.

This tree can provide habitat for a wide range of songbirds, such as warblers, chickadees, sparrows, finches, wrens, and vireos.

Red alder is monoecious, meaning that separate male and female parts occur on the same plant. The long, reddish (male) catkins produce copious amounts of pollen (a major allergen) from February through April. The female part looks like a cone and produces small, scale-like seeds, which are eaten by a variety of birds, such as finches. These remain on the tree throughout the winter.

This tree may also be called Oregon alder.