



Water Wise Native Plants

FOR SANTA BARBARA COUNTY



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Imagine beautiful garden, full of life, which saves you water, time and money: a garden full of California native plants! The plants recommended in this booklet are the most beautiful and reliable natives available for our local gardens. Natives are perfectly suited to our summer-dry, winter-wet climate, and are better than plants from other parts of the world at providing habitat for our pollinators and wildlife. And, unlike many exotic plants, natives will not become invasive in our wildlands.

For best success, plant natives in the fall - cool winter rains encourage the growth of the strong root systems natives need to survive. New plantings will need deep water every one to two weeks during the first summer to get them established. Once established, most natives can survive our dry summers on little water, but to thrive, many appreciate some additional irrigation. We recommend deep, infrequent watering for natives. These terms are used to describe dry-season water requirements:

- Very drought tough: needs no summer water
- Drought tolerant: may need some supplemental water for best performance
- Occasional water: every three to six weeks
- Moderate water: every one to two weeks

Natives typically require little maintenance. Well adapted to our conditions, most have few, if any, pests and do not require regular fertilizing. For best results, apply compost and half-strength organic fertilizer to established plants in late winter or spring. A 2-4 inch layer of mulch will slow water loss from the soil and control weeds - avoid piling mulch around woody stems.



(Photo: Saxon Hoyt)

Trees



(Photo: Martin Coral)

California Buckeye (*Aesculus californica*)

Description: Lovely, medium-sized tree up to 30 ft tall and wider. Broad, compound leaves burst forth in spring, followed by large, 6-18 inch long white flower clusters. Drops its leaves in response to drought, exposing handsome, smooth, white-barked trunks. Large, polished brown fruits hang on bare branches in late summer. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Excellent shade tree for the south or west side of a house or use as a specimen. The ornamental fruits are highly TOXIC to humans if eaten. Pollen and nectar are poisonous to honey bees, but not to native bees and butterflies.

Cultural conditions: Full sun best. Any soil, but overwatering can lead to root rot in heavier soils. Occasional deep water during growing season is helpful. No water when leafless.



Western Redbud (*Cercis occidentalis*)

Description: Deciduous, vase-shaped shrub to small tree with multi-trunks to 8-12 ft tall, equally wide. Lovely, rounded leaves emerge bright green, age to bluish green. Brilliant magenta flowers in early spring usually precede the leaves, appear occasionally all season. Long, flattened, purple fruits age to rusty brown in the summer. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Splendid accent or specimen tree that provides year-round interest. Use in woodland gardens, borders and on hillsides.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Best with occasional summer water. Tolerates

most soils. Resistant to oak root fungus. Flowers best inland or in low spots where temperatures are cool. Can be pruned into a single trunked tree.



Desert-willow (*Chilopsis linearis* ssp. *arcuata*)

Description: Summer-blooming, deciduous tree from desert washes. Grows quickly to 15 ft tall and as wide, then more slowly to 25 ft. Large, showy, pink to purple trumpet-shaped flowers appear during the warmest months. Narrow, willow-like green leaves provide dappled shade. Leafless yet handsome in fall and winter.

Landscape use: Smaller tree for hot dry spaces provides shade and color during the summer months. Grow as a large, spreading shrub or prune to a single trunked tree. Flowers attract hummingbirds. Not frost hardy.

Cultural conditions: Performs best in full sun, heat, and well-drained soils. Occasional deep irrigation in summer is helpful but tolerant of long dry periods. Prune for shape when dormant.



(Photo: Dieter Wilken)

Santa Cruz Island Ironwood (*Lyonothamnus floribundus* ssp. *asplenifolius*)

Description: Slender, single or multi-trunked tree grows quickly to 20 ft tall (eventually to 35 ft) and 15 ft wide - canopy broadens in age. Ferny, evergreen leaves are topped by broad clusters of small white flowers in mid-spring. Attractive peeling red bark and reddish leaf litter.

Landscape use: Beautiful specimen tree, but also attractive in larger groves. Useful in narrow spaces and near structures.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. For best results water deeply occasionally in summer, but tolerates long dry periods. Adaptable, but prefers well-drained soils. Can be cut back to its base to encourage new growth.



Catalina Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia* ssp. *lyonii*)

Description: Versatile, fast-growing, large shrub or tree. Typically 12-25 ft tall, 40 ft with age; slightly taller than wide. Glossy, bright green, 2-5 inch long oval leaves. Thumb-sized clusters of yellow-white flowers in spring. Edible, black, cherry-like fruit in summer.

Landscape use: Can be sheared and shaped into a variety of forms. Use as a tall, dense, formal or informal hedge, foundation, or background planting. Provides erosion control on slopes. Flowers attract bees and butterflies, fruits attract birds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Plants are more open and slower growing in full shade. Very drought tough, but accepts and grows rapidly with supplemental water. Any soil.



Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)

Description: Most important habitat and landscape tree in the coastal zone. Picturesque single or multi-trunked evergreen tree, 20-40 ft tall, spreading wider with strong, almost horizontal branches in age. Deep green prickly leaves provide dense shade. Short, chartreuse tassels of flowers appear in spring, acorns are produced in the fall. One of the fastest growing native oaks.

Landscape use: A large tree that casts dense shade and has an aggressive root system, so site accordingly. Use as specimens, in groves or on slopes for erosion control. Provides essential habitat for many wildlife species. Fire resistant.

Cultural conditions: Best within 50 miles of the ocean. Full to part sun. Young trees are more adaptable to garden conditions. Do not water existing or mature trees except in dry winters; avoid watering at base of trunks. Oak moth will occasionally defoliate, but not kill the trees.



Island Oak (*Quercus tomentella*)

Description: Upright, vase-shaped evergreen tree to 40 ft. Distinguished by very large, heavily veined, dark green leaves. Largest acorns of the California oaks. Found in the wild only on the Channel Islands. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Specimen tree, shade tree, wildlife, informal screen, erosion control.

Cultural conditions: Full sun. No water needed, but tolerant of moderate watering, easy in gardens. Any soil.



(Photo: Saxon Holt)

Western Elderberry

(*Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea*)

Description: Deciduous, multi-trunked tree with somewhat rangy habit, 8-20 ft tall and equally wide. Large, bright green compound leaves burst open in early spring followed by clouds of creamy white flowers at branch tips. Masses of purple-black berries in summer are equally showy. Drops leaves in late summer and fall. Fast growth.

Landscape use: Useful as a specimen or informal screen and on slopes for erosion control. An outstanding wildlife plant, it supports bees, butterflies and a great variety of birds. Edible berries used for jams, pies and wine.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Very drought tough, but summer water extends the growing season. Any soil. Pruning to control rampant growth keeps the trees attractive.

Large Shrubs (6-15 feet tall)



Dr. Hurd Manzanita

(*Arctostaphylos* 'Dr. Hurd')

Description: One of the tallest manzanitas, this multi-stemmed shrub grows 10-12 ft or more. Leathery, evergreen, medium green leaves contrast nicely with rich, red-brown bark. Small white flowers in short clusters in mid-winter. Slow to medium growth.

Landscape use: A prized specimen or focal point, long-lived and reliable in most garden conditions. In large gardens can be used as informal hedges or screens.

Cultural conditions: Very drought tough shrub for full sun to part shade. Tolerates rich, heavy soil and occasional summer water better than many manzanitas. Sporadic branch die-back or fungal spotting on leaves usually related to over-watering.

Cultivars: A hybrid selection of *A. manzanita*; other worthy selections include 'Byrd Hill', 'Saint Helena' and 'Monica'.



Howard McMinn Manzanita

(*Arctostaphylos* 'Howard McMinn')

Description: Howard McMinn manzanita is celebrated for its beauty and ease of growth. Multi-stemmed, evergreen shrub with attractive, reddish-brown bark and glossy green leaves that reaches 5-6 ft tall and up to 7 ft wide. Delicate white to pale pink, urn-shaped flowers cover the plant in late spring. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Good massed on a slope or in the background, as foundation planting, or informal hedge.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to very light shade. Can tolerate much drought especially along the coast, but best with a deep soak once a month in dry season. Tolerates a wide range of soils but prefers well-drained. Susceptible to branch dieback fungus, reddish leaf galls (disfiguring but harmless), and root rot if overwatered in heavy soils.



(Photo: David Foss)

Louis Edmunds Manzanita

(*Arctostaphylos* 'Louis Edmunds')

Description: Upright, elegant vase-shaped habit showcases its smooth, incredible dark purple-mahogany bark. Multi-stemmed to 8 ft tall, with handsome gray-green leaves. Clear pink flowers adorn the plants in spring. Medium growth rate, long-lived.

Landscape use: Fine specimen or focal point in gardens, especially against dark backgrounds or use as an informal screen. Copious flowers attract hummingbirds, berries relished by a variety of wildlife.

Cultural conditions: Full sun. Needs little or no supplemental water, but more tolerant of occasional deep watering than many manzanitas. Loose, rocky or fast-draining soil. Susceptible to branch dieback and other fungal diseases, as are all manzanitas, but less so than most.



Paradise Manzanita

(*Arctostaphylos* 'Paradise')

Description: A selection of the rare and variable *A. pajaroensis*. Robust and showy, with shaggy cinnamon-red bark to 8 ft tall

and wide. Brilliant copper-red new foliage matures to a lovely blue-green that contrasts well with abundant, deep rose-pink flower clusters that appear in mid-winter. Slow to medium growth.

Landscape use: Lovely specimen plants or massed as informal hedges and screens. Fruits attract birds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Well-drained soils best, but adaptable to heavier soils if not over-watered. Very drought tough. Sporadic branch die-back or fungal spotting on leaves usually related to over-watering. Prune yearly just after flowering to encourage a flush of brilliant new growth the next fall.



Big Saltbush (*Atriplex lentiformis*)

Description: Broadly mounding evergreen shrub grown for its silvery foliage. Grows quickly to 6-8 ft tall and wide with triangular 1-2 inch long leaves. Tiny flowers in terminal spikes in late spring turn tan by late summer. Plants have a musky smell that some find displeasing.

Landscape use: Great in difficult situations - tolerates heat, wind, salt-spray, alkaline soils, eroded sites. Excellent for seaside plantings. Use as an informal hedge or screen. Fabulous habitat plant for birds and other wildlife.

Cultural conditions: Full sun best. Very drought tough and adaptable to most soils. Withstands high salt situations better than most plants.

Cultivars: 'Naomi' is upright with yellowish stems and very silvery leaves.



Nevin's Barberry (*Berberis nevinii*)

Description: Rare, evergreen shrub with lovely blue-green leaves, masses of bright yellow flowers in spring and brilliant red berries in summer. It grows 5-8 (12) ft tall and wide with rigid upright stems. Very prickly, 1 inch-long leaves. Medium growth rate, long-lived.

Landscape use: Attractive, colorful shrub for back of the border or on slopes. Prickly leaves make it a very effective barrier or screen. Flowers attract bees and butterflies; berries relished by birds. Hardy to 0° F.

Cultural conditions: An easy plant for full sun to part shade. Not fussy about soils or watering frequency. Very drought tough.



Concha Ceanothus (*Ceanothus* 'Concha')

Description: Dependable, deep green, evergreen shrub with arching branches that form a dense 6-8 ft mound. Flowers heavily beginning in late winter producing masses of reddish buds followed by deep blue, knuckle-sized flower clusters. Fast growing.

Landscape use: One of the best California-lilacs for hot areas. Use as a specimen or focal point, an informal barrier or hedge, or in the back of borders. Hardy to 10° F.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Drought tough, accepts monthly summer water. Wide soil tolerance, alkali tolerant.



Ray Hartman Ceanothus (*Ceanothus* 'Ray Hartman')

Description: Tried and true cultivar grown for its significant height and garden tolerance. Large, bright green leaves on fast growing 8-15 ft shrub provide dappled to full screening. Profuse bloomer with large, 2-3 inch clusters of medium blue flowers in late winter/spring.

Landscape use: Specimen, informal hedge or screen, slopes, erosion control, espalier. Attracts bees and butterflies.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Tolerant of some summer water, but very drought tough. Adaptable to most soils. Prune in late fall to maintain shape - from small tree to medium sized shrub - and stimulate new growth.



Snow Flurry Ceanothus (*Ceanothus* 'Snow Flurry')

Description: Unusual, white-flowered selection of the typically blue *C. thyrsiflorus*. Vigorous evergreen shrub that grows quickly to 10-18 ft and as broad. Dark green leaves set off thumb-sized clusters of true white flowers in late winter/spring

Landscape use: Use at back of large borders or as an informal hedge. Provides erosion control on slopes. Attracts bees and butterflies. Hardy to 15° F.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Adaptable to most soils. Very drought tough but accepts occasional summer water. Prune to control rapid growth.



Mountain-mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides* var. *betuloides*)

Description: Extremely tough, narrowly upright shrub with silvery trunks to 10-12 ft tall. Small yellow flowers are inconspicuous but masses of corkscrew-shaped, feathery fruits, are especially beautiful when backlit. Medium to fast growing - sometimes spreads to form colonies.

Landscape use: Useful in narrow spaces along walls and walks. Can be pruned into a formal hedge, or used as an informal screen. On slopes, provides erosion control. Hardy to 0° F.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Very drought tough with wide soil tolerance. Regular light pruning helps maintain shape; prune hard to rejuvenate.



Desert-lavender (*Condea emoryi*)

Description: A plant from desert washes; upright shrub with open, airy habit, 6-12 ft tall. Fuzzy ash-grey foliage has a sweet sage-lavender scent. Masses of short clusters of small lavender-colored, woolly blossoms in spring and summer. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Silver-gray accent for large borders and hot, dry places. Useful in narrow spaces. A great source of nectar for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Hardy to about 20° F.

Cultural conditions: Full sun and well-draining soil best, but tolerates heavy soils. Very drought tough but accepts occasional summer water. Prune to encourage pleasing shape and force new growth.

Cultivars: 'Silver Lining' has smaller, almost white leaves.



Island Bush-poppy
(*Dendromecon harfordii*)

Description: Showy, ornamental shrub with upright, somewhat open habit. Fast growing to 6-10 ft tall and equal width. Waxy, bluish-green leaves and large sunshine-yellow poppy flowers in spring; flowers occasionally nearly year-round.

Landscape use: Lovely specimen or focal point, also use as an informal screen or barrier.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Very drought tough, withhold summer water once established. Tip prune to encourage dense growth; cut to 1 ft every 3-5 yrs to rejuvenate. Be gentle when planting to avoid disturbing its brittle roots.



St. Catherine's Lace (*Eriogonum giganteum* var. *giganteum*)

Description: This big buckwheat from Catalina Island is a real show-stopper. A bold, gray-leaved, evergreen shrub that forms 6 ft tall mounds topped with enormous, delicate, flat sprays of white flowers in summer. Flowers age to a deep chocolate brown. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Distinctive plant to use as a specimen, an informal hedge or in the back of large borders. Dried, cut-flower sprays last many years. Provides habitat for bees, butterflies and birds. Can bear brief frosts.

Cultural conditions: Full sun. No water. Prefers fast-draining or sandy soil. Tip prune but avoid cutting into hard wood which does not reliably resprout. Will re-seed freely.



Gran Cañon Bush Snapdragon
(*Gambelia* 'Gran Cañon')

Description: From Cedros Island in Baja CA, this evergreen shrub is the taller cousin of the island snapdragon. Long, nearly leafless stems grow 4-6 ft tall forming lovely blue-green mounds. Bright red, narrowly-tubular flowers are held on the stem tips over a long season. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Large size and red flowers make this a dramatic focal or specimen plant. Combines well with succulents. Mass for informal barriers or screens. Not frost tolerant.

Cultural conditions: Full sun and drought tough. Best with occasional summer water. Cut back to 1 ft every 4-5 yrs to rejuvenate.



Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

Description: Upright, multi-trunked shrub to small tree 8-15 ft tall (25-ft with age). Large leathery leaves topped by fist-sized clusters of small white flowers from June-July. Bright red berries follow in Nov-Jan. Slow to establish, then medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Long-lived garden backbone. Fall berries provide color when little else is in bloom. Use as a specimen or informal hedge. Flowers attract bees and butterflies, berries eaten by birds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Very drought tough but tolerates occasional summer water. Provide good air flow to reduce occasional leaf blights; remove any affected leaves or branches promptly. Prune lightly yearly to maintain shape. Quickly re-grows if very occasionally cut back to base of trunk.



Lemonade Berry (*Rhus integrifolia*)

Description: Versatile, long-lived shrub to 15 ft tall and wide. Evergreen leaves and small clusters of creamy white flowers in early spring are attractive. Clusters of reddish, sticky fruits were traditionally used to make a beverage. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Garden workhorse that can be sheared or shaped to any size. Use as a hedge, foundation, or screen plant. Provides erosion control on slopes. Salt and wind tolerant. Frost tender.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Very drought tough but tolerates moderate summer water. Excellent in any soil from mid-elevation to the beach.

(Photo: Alan Weisskopt)



Sugar Bush (*Rhus ovata*)

Description: Adaptable, evergreen shrub closely related to lemonade berry. Grows 12 ft or more tall and wide with a rounded shape. Glossy, oval-shaped, 3-4 inch leaves are folded down the middle. Showy, pointed clusters of reddish flower buds followed by small white to pink flowers in spring. Sticky, hard fruits can be soaked to make a sugary drink. Slow to medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Handsome shrub for sheared or informal hedges and screens. Provides outstanding erosion control on slopes. A variety of wildlife consumes its fruits. More frost hardy, and better suited to inland areas than lemonade berry.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade and tolerant of any soil type. Drought tough.

Small Shrubs (1-6 feet tall)



Carmel Sur Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* 'Carmel Sur')

Description: Prostrate, evergreen woody manzanita under 1 ft high and up to 6 ft across. Small 1 inch deep green leaves are leathery. A shy bloomer with clusters of small white flowers in late winter followed by red-brown fruits in summer. Medium-fast growing.

Landscape use: A very garden tolerant manzanita for use as a large or small scale groundcover, front to mid border.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast to part shade inland. Very drought tough but may need occasional summer water inland. Tolerates heavier soils if watered infrequently.



John Dourley Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* 'John Dourley')

Description: Low, evergreen shrub mounding to 2 ft tall and spreading 6-10 ft. Bronzy new 1-2 inch leaves turn slate gray by mid-spring. Clusters of small pink-white flowers in late winter are followed by red-brown fruit in summer.

Landscape use: Large scale groundcover, mid border, hot spots, attracts wildlife.

Cultural conditions: Full sun. Well-drained sites best, but has shown garden tolerance. Drought tough.



Pacific Mist Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* 'Pacific Mist')

Description: Fast-growing, 1-3 ft tall evergreen shrub, sprawling 6 ft. Twisting, reddish branches bear silvery-gray, 1 inch leaves, pinkish-white 1/2 inch flowers in winter and small brown fruits in spring/summer.

Landscape use: Lovely large scale groundcover for coastal gardens. Also use as an informal barrier, in large borders and containers.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast, light shade inland. Very drought tough on coast, needs moderate summer water inland. Well-drained soils best, but has shown tolerance for heavier soils. Tip prune to encourage a dense, low habit.



Canyon Gray Sagebrush (*Artemisia* 'Canyon Gray')

Description: Fast-growing, spreading evergreen shrub, mounding to 3 ft in center, trailing to 6-8 ft across. Soft, needle-like, 1-2 inch grey leaves have a distinctive fragrance. Insignificant spikes of tiny yellow flowers in the winter and spring.

Landscape use: Large scale groundcover, mid border, informal barrier, fragrant. Virtually deer proof.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast to part shade inland. Very drought tough, tolerates most soils. To keep it flat, remove upright or arching growth from the plant's center as soon as it appears.

Cultivars: Prostrate selection of *A. californica* from San Miguel Island.



Pigeon Point Coyote Brush (*Baccharis* 'Pigeon Point')

Description: Fast growing mounding evergreen shrub under 3 ft tall and 6-8 ft wide. Small, toothed, bright green foliage forms a dense canopy. Tiny, white flowers.

Landscape use: Excellent, tough ground cover that stays bright green year round. Use in masses on slopes for erosion control. Adds significant habitat value to the garden.

Cultural conditions: Full sun. Very drought tolerant but performs best with occasional summer water. Best in well-drained soils, but adaptable to most soils. Cut back when plants become leggy.



Bush-anemone (*Carpenteria californica*)

Description: One of our finest natives, loved for its brilliant white flowers and deep green leaves. In gardens, this evergreen shrub is typically 4-6 ft tall and 4 ft wide. Handsome, 3-5 inch long leaves will shrivel during summer drought when kept dry. Large, 4-6 inch, fragrant white flowers have a central cluster of bright yellow stamens.

Landscape use: Use as a specimen or in

the back of shady mixed borders. Useful in narrow plantings due to its upright shape. Performs well in containers.

Cultural conditions: Blooms best in good light, but protect from hot afternoon sun. Survives with little water but looks best with occasional deep water in summer. Wide soil tolerance. Fungal spotting on leaves, some branch die-back is common, especially in summer. Cut back hard to rejuvenate.

Cultivars: 'Elizabeth' is a fine selection, more compact and with smaller flowers.



Hearst's Ceanothus
(*Ceanothus hearstiorum*)

Description: Hearst's ceanothus is a rare, mat-forming woody shrub, under 1 ft tall that spreads up to 6 ft across. Small, deep green, 1 inch long leaves have a crinkled texture. Masses of medium blue, rounded flower clusters smother the plant in the spring. Fast growing.

Landscape use: A beautiful small scale groundcover, front of border, and on slopes.

Cultural conditions: Fully drought and sun tolerant along the immediate coast; otherwise provide part shade and occasional summer water. Performs well in all soils. Tip prune to encourage dense, solid cover. Hardy to at least 15° F.



Joyce Coulter Ceanothus
(*Ceanothus* 'Joyce Coulter')

Description: Excellent mounding form of California-lilac. Sprawling up to 12 ft wide but rarely more than 3 ft high. Textured 1 inch leaves are deep green. Sky blue, 1-3 inch flower clusters are produced for weeks in spring. Medium to fast growing.

Landscape use: Mid to back of border, informal barrier, large scale groundcover, slopes, erosion control, wildlife habitat.

Cultural conditions: A particularly garden and water tolerant plant for full sun to part shade. Tolerates heavier soils. Drought

tough but can tolerate occasional summer water.



Maritime Ceanothus
(*Ceanothus maritimus*)

Description: Rare plant from the coastal bluffs of central California. A low, woody shrub about 3 ft tall, 3-4 ft wide. Small, thick, leathery olive green leaves held on rigid stems. Flowers range from white to purple and blue, appear early to late winter. Medium grow rate.

Landscape use: Front of border, mid-border, focal point, specimen, massing, groundcover, slopes, erosion control, edging. Deer resistant.

Cultural conditions: Full sun in cool areas on coast to part shade inland. Requires modest summer water on coast to moderate water inland. Prefers heavier soils than most California-lilacs.

Cultivars: 'Valley Violet' is more upright and vase-shaped, to 3 ft with lavender-purple flowers. 'Point Sierra' has medium blue flowers, low, spreading habit. 'Popcorn' is low, spreading, with white flowers.



Yankee Point Ceanothus
(*Ceanothus* 'Yankee Point')

Description: Yankee Point is the most extensively used low form of California-lilac. This woody shrub grows 3 ft tall and 8+ ft wide; if crowded it will grow taller. Plants have large glossy green leaves and sky blue flowers. Not a profuse bloomer. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Durable, large scale groundcover, shade gardens, seaside gardens, slopes, erosion control, mid to back of border.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Very drought tough but will accept occasional summer water. Any soil. Prune to maintain lower height. Tolerates strong winds and salt spray.



California Bush Sunflower
(*Encelia californica*)

Description: Under-used vigorous shrub that produces masses of bright yellow, 2-3 inch daisy flowers all spring. Dome-shaped, 3 ft high by 4 ft wide, with medium green, 2-3 inch leaves. Fast growing. Semi-deciduous during summer dormancy.

Landscape use: Use as a colorful filler between larger shrubs in borders or as large scale ground cover. Lovely foil for grey-leaved plants.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast to part shade inland. Perfectly drought tough on coast but performs better with occasional summer water. Any soil. Remove spent flowers to promote continued bloom. Cut back hard to under 1 ft in late summer to maintain a dense compact habit.

Cultivars: 'El Dorado' has larger, more golden yellow flowers on robust plants.



California Buckwheat
(*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)

Description: Highly variable evergreen shrub with both upright and prostrate forms. Grows 2-4 ft high and up to 6-8 ft wide; branches root where they touch the ground. Stems are clothed with small needle-like, deep green leaves. Clusters of creamy white flowers are abundant early summer through fall. Flower heads turn an attractive red-brown with age and hold on plant into winter.

Landscape use: Tough plant that serves many functions in gardens. Use in large borders, on slopes for erosion control or as a large scale ground cover. Important habitat plant for native bees, butterflies and birds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Very drought tough. Any well-drained soil. Can be sheared, shaped. Deadheading optional.

Cultivars: 'Dana Point' is very robust, 4-5 ft tall and 12 ft wide. 'Warriner Lytle', 'Bruce Dickenson' and 'Theodore Payne' are relatively prostrate, generally 1-2 ft tall and up to 6 ft across.



(Photo: Carol Bornstein)

Coffeeberry (*Frangula californica*)

Description: Variable evergreen shrub adaptable to many conditions, 4-10 (15) ft tall and wide depending on variety and growing conditions. Three inch long, glossy, dark green leaves are borne on reddish stems. Small, whitish flowers are followed by attractive shiny, red to black berries. Medium to slow growth rate.

Landscape use: Reliable shrub that provides lush, year-round greenery. Use in shady woodland gardens, as foundation plants, informal hedges and screens, in containers. Flowers are a good source of nectar for bees and butterflies, fruits attract a range of birds.

Cultural conditions: Sun, part shade in warm areas. Tolerates summer drought, but selected varieties will do best with occasional deep soaking. Any soil. No pruning needed, but can be pruned hard to control size.

Cultivars: 'Mound San Bruno' mounds to 3 ft high, 5 ft wide; 'Eve Case' is compact, 4-8 ft tall and wide with larger leaves; 'Seaview' is 2 ft tall, spreading to 6-8 ft; 'Leatherleaf' to 6 ft, with dark, black-green leaves; 'Bonita Linda' to 8 ft has lovely grey leaves.



Island Snapdragon (*Gambelia speciosa*)

Description: Mounding 3 ft tall shrub that spreads to 5 ft or more. Distinguished by lipstick-red, 1 inch long tubular flowers that peak in spring but appear sporadically all year. True green, glossy leaves are thick, evergreen and slightly succulent. Easy and fast growing.

Landscape use: Use in masses as a large-scale groundcover, under oaks, spilling over walls, in containers and shade gardens.

Attracts hummingbirds. Frost hardy to about 20° F.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to full shade - but blooms more modestly in shade. Tolerant of most soils. Drought tough in shade, occasional summer water helpful in full sun. Consistent light pruning encourages bushy habit. Cut to ground to rejuvenate.

Cultivars: 'Firecracker' has fuzzier leaves, is slightly more vase-shaped in habit, and happier in full sun.



Our Lord's Candle (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*)

Description: Nearly round rosettes of 2-4 ft long, silver-white leaves that are tipped with dagger-like spines. Older plants (3-15 years old) send up a spectacular, 8-10 ft tall spike of white flowers, then die. New plants sprout from the base of the spent rosette.

Landscape use: Plant away from paths. Wonderful specimen or focal point in large borders and around boulders. Use on slopes for erosion control. Forms an impenetrable barrier.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to light shade. Adaptable, but excels in sharply drained soils. Very drought tough.



(Photo: Steve Junak)

Fragrant Pitcher Sage (*Lepechinia fragrans*)

Description: Evergreen shrub with an open habit that grows 4-7 ft tall and almost as wide. Large, velvety, glandular leaves have a strong fruity fragrance. Showy lavender-colored, tubular flowers hang from lax 1-2 ft long spikes in spring and early summer. Fast growing, but can be short-lived in gardens.

Landscape use: Scented garden, shade garden, informal barrier, back of border, focal point. Loved by hummingbirds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast to full shade inland. Most soils. Drought tolerant in shade, occasional deep water in full sun. Pinch back young foliage to produce fuller plants.

Cultivars: 'El Tigre' is a selection from Santa Cruz Island with darker, almost purple flowers.



Pink-flowered Currant (*Ribes sanguineum* var. *glutinosum*)

Description: Semi-deciduous shrub that puts on quite a show of pendant, pink flower clusters in early spring. Vase-shaped habit, 5-10 ft tall and 4-6 ft wide. Textured 1-3 inch wide leaves may drop during periods of summer drought. Dark blue-black berries in summer. Medium to fast growing.

Landscape use: Lovely plant for woodlands or shadier parts of the garden and in narrow spaces. One of the earliest flowering shrubs, it is a good late winter focal point. Berries attract birds.

Cultural conditions: Light shade to sun on coast. Drought tolerant in shade, but performs best with moderate summer water. Wide soil tolerance. Rust occasionally disfigures leaves in spring but not fatal to plant.

Cultivars: 'Claremont' tolerates warmer, drier conditions; 'King Edward VII' flower clusters are smaller but an intense deep fuchsia; 'Inverness White' has large white flower clusters.



(Photo: Saxon Holt)

Catalina Currant (*Ribes viburnifolium*)

Description: Sprawling evergreen shrub with stems that arch to about 3 ft tall and spread up to 6 ft. Fragrant, lemon-scented leaves are a glossy dark green, rounded and about 2 inches wide. Reddish stems echo small brick-red flower clusters in spring. Small, inconspicuous fruits. Colonies can spread outward indefinitely as stems root, but are easy to control. Fast growing.

Landscape use: One of the best plants for dry shade areas such as under oaks. Use as a groundcover, foundation planting, informal barrier, cascading over walls, on slopes for erosion control, in containers, low trellises.

Cultural conditions: Shade to part sun on coast. Very drought tough in full shade, some summer water helpful in sun. Any soil. Tip prune to produce a dense cover; cut back hard to rejuvenate.



Allen Chickering Sage
(*Salvia* 'Allen Chickering')

Description: This vigorous evergreen shrub quickly reaches 4 ft tall and wide. Loose mounds of fragrant, silvery-grey leaves sport masses of bright lavender-blue, foot-long, flower spikes April through June. A hybrid of purple sage (*S. leucophylla*) and Cleveland's sage (*S. clevelandii*).

Landscape use: Dependable performer for the mid to back border, focal point, massing, slopes, informal barrier, containers. Native sages are important sources of food for bumblebees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other birds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Drought tough but accepts some summer water. Adaptable to most soils. Shear lightly in the fall to remove spent flower stalks and encourage dense growth.

Cultivars: 'Aromas', 'Whirly Blue' and 'Pozo Blue' are similar hybrids.



Bee's Bliss Sage (*Salvia* 'Bee's Bliss')

Description: Fast-growing, silver-grey shrub that stays under 2 ft tall and spreads to 6-8 ft across. Bears a profusion of lavender-blue flower spikes in late spring. Drops some leaves during summer dormancy.

Landscape use: An outstanding large scale, fragrant groundcover for front to mid flowering borders. Use to control erosion on slopes. Attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and is deer resistant.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to bright shade. Very drought tolerant in coastal gardens but looks best with occasional deep watering. Well-drained soil best but has a wide soil tolerance. Occasional problems with powdery mildew.



(Photo: Saxon Holt)

Cleveland's Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*)

Description: Cleveland's sage, from the dry mountains of San Diego, is loved for its sweetly scented leaves and whorled spikes of tubular, blue flowers. Rounded shrub, 2-5 ft tall and wide, with textured, 1 inch long, medium green leaves. Blooms Mar-May, longer if watered. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Performs best in the hottest, driest spots in the garden. Use mid-border, against rock walls, in containers. Flowers attract hummingbirds; seeds eaten by a variety of wildlife.

Cultural conditions: Full sun best. Very drought tough but accepts some summer water. Adaptable, but best in well-drained soils. Protect from frost. Shear lightly in the fall to remove spent flower stalks and encourage dense growth.

Cultivars: 'Winnifred Gilman' is a vigorous selection with reddish stems. 'Deer Springs Silver' is shorter with strongly silver leaves. 'Arroyo Azul' has silvery leaves and shorter, more compact flower stalks.



Purple Sage (*Salvia leucophylla*)

Description: Perhaps the easiest shrubby sage to grow. Semi-deciduous shrub that has both upright (4-5 ft tall) and prostrate forms (3 ft tall by 10 ft wide). Leaves are strongly aromatic, light green to silvery grey. Masses of light to rosy pink, tubular flowers in whorled spikes are held above the plant from spring to early summer. May drop spring leaves during summer dry season. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Depending on selection use in large borders, on slopes, as specimens, or in containers. Lower forms are excellent large scale groundcovers and provide erosion control on slopes. Attracts bees, butterflies and hummingbirds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast to part shade inland. Low water needs, but

tolerates moderate summer watering. Cut back by a third in winter to maintain shape and vigor, but avoid cutting into mature woody stems.

Cultivars: 'Point Sal Spreader', 'Tilden Prostrate' and 'Amethyst Bluff' are lower, wider growing selections. 'Figueroa' is taller with very white leaves.



De la Mina Verbena
(*Verbena* 'De la Mina')

Description: Evergreen shrub that seems to be always in bloom. Forms tidy, 2-3 ft tall and wide mounds of medium green, delicately dissected leaves. Ball-shaped clusters of fragrant, bright purple flowers cover the plant for months. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Use mid to back of borders, in masses, as a specimen or in containers. Prefers a warm spot. Hardy to about 20° F. Can be grown as an annual in cold-winter areas. Highly attractive to butterflies.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Drought tolerant to occasional water on coast, moderate water inland. Adaptable, but prefers well drained soils. Shear plants when they exhaust their bloom; cut back by a third in fall to rejuvenate. Replace every 5-6 years.

Cultivars: The similar 'Paseo Rancho' is slightly taller, paler in bloom and more strongly scented.

Perennials



(Photo: Carol Bornstein)

Island Pink Yarrow
(*Achillea* 'Island Pink')

Description: Spreading perennial to 2 ft in bloom that forms indefinite colonies. Ferny foliage is 2-6 inches long and bright green. Stems hold broad flat clusters of dark pink flowers which fade to almost white above foliage. Flowering peaks in late spring, but will bloom modestly if kept watered. Fast growing in prime conditions.

Landscape use: A very showy flowering perennial for borders, rain gardens and bioswales, meadows, herb gardens. Also used as a lawn substitute. Valuable habitat plant for bees, butterflies and ladybugs. Deer resistant.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Thrives with moderate water; will die to ground in summer if given no water. Best in heavier soils.



Western Columbine
(*Aquilegia formosa*)

Description: Fast-growing, semi-deciduous perennial, 1-4 ft tall in flower, under 3 ft wide. Delicately divided, true-green leaves are 6-12 inches long. Brilliant scarlet and yellow blooms dangle from ends of arching stems in late winter through spring. Self-seeds readily.

Landscape use: A wonderfully showy flower for mid to back of flowering borders and in moist spots. Flowers are a rich source of nectar for hummingbirds, butterflies and bees; seeds attract birds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun if regular water is available, more drought tolerant in bright shade. Adaptable to many situations but thrives in rich, heavy, but not waterlogged soils.



Narrow-leaved Milkweed
(*Asclepias fascicularis*)

Description: Clump-forming, winter deciduous perennial with gangly, upright 2-3 ft high stems and thin, strap-like 3-4 inch long leaves. Large clusters of white flowers in late spring/summer. Spreads easily underground and is difficult to maintain in one spot. Inflated seed pods burst in summer dispersing fluffy, wind-blown fruit. Fast growing.

Landscape use: An important host for monarch butterfly larvae which will defoliate the plant as they feed; leaves re-grow from tough green stems. Use in informal landscapes or in back of border.

Cultural conditions: Full sun best. Disturbed soils great, but not fussy about soil type. Very drought tough but can be watered occasionally in summer. Cut back to ground when brown.



Yerba Buena (*Clinopodium douglasii*)

Description: Gloriously fragrant, evergreen herb under 1 ft high that spreads slowly outward. Bright green, slightly triangular leaves are under 1 inch long; can be used for tea or potpourri. Tiny pure white flowers are held under leaves; often unnoticed except by hummingbirds. Stems root where they touch bare ground.

Landscape use: Shade, herb gardens, moist spots, small or large scale groundcover, edging, effective in containers.

Cultural conditions: Part to full shade. Can take long dry periods but best with occasional water in summer. Any soil. Aphids or thrips are occasional but not serious problems. Cut back to rejuvenate.



(Photo: Bradley Dyruff)

Silver Carpet Beach Aster
(*Corethrogyne* 'Silver Carpet')

Description: Prostrate, perennial groundcover under 1 ft high and up to 6 ft across. Attractive gray foliage forms a dense mat adorned by a profusion of 1 inch lavender flowers with yellow centers in late summer to fall. Medium to fast growth.

Landscape use: An effective groundcover in perennial borders or spilling over walls. For seaside gardens, containers, slopes. Attracts butterflies.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast to part shade inland. Adaptable, but best in well-drained soil. Very drought tough but occasional summer water is best. Periodic light pruning at tips helps maintain a dense shape.



Monkeyflower (*Diplacus*)

Description: The amazing variety and adaptability of hybrid monkeyflowers make them prized garden subjects. Often short-lived, these fast-growing woody perennials are 2-4 ft tall and as wide. Slightly sticky 1-2 inch leaves are medium green, lance-shaped. Flowers are tubular, very showy, in a range of colors from orange, red, white, yellow, pink to almost violet. Flowers over a long period from late spring through summer.

Landscape use: Use in flowering borders as punctuation or in masses. Perform well in containers. Deer-proof.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Well-drained soils best but can succeed in heavier soils. Drought tough, but performs better with weekly or bi-monthly water. Aphids occasionally on new buds. May die back to smallest leaves during summer dormancy. Tip prune to promote re-bloom.

Cultivars: Hybrids in the Jelly Bean series are excellent garden plants along with the selections 'Jack' and 'Trish'.



Live-forever (*Dudleya*)

Description: Diverse group of succulents that range from mat-forming to solitary rosettes. Tubular flowers on long stalks range in color from white to yellow to orange/red in spring. Medium to fast growing. *Dudleya hassei* from Catalina Island forms easy-to-grow mats of chalky-gray leaves, 6 inches high by 2 ft wide. *D. brittonii* has strikingly beautiful, 6-12 inch solitary rosettes of silver leaves.

Landscape use: Often grown in containers, but can be used in borders, among rocks, in succulent gardens, and as ground covers. Hummingbird pollinated.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast to part shade inland. Drought tough, but appreciates some summer water. Well-drained soils preferred but will tolerate heavier soils

if not over-watered. Plant solitary types on angle to prevent water from pooling in rosettes. Gravel mulch helps prevent rot.



California-fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*)

Description: Semi-deciduous, herbaceous to woody perennial. Size varies from 6 inch high mounds to 4 ft tall depending on variety. Leaves are soft and range from silvery-grey to dark green. Copious, two inch tubular, orange to red flowers are produced mid-summer to fall.

Landscape use: Prized for late summer bloom, it is a choice plant for informal gardens, edging, and mid-border. All varieties spread by underground runners; some vigorously. Can be contained with a root barrier. Hummingbird pollinated.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to light shade. Tolerates any soil. Very drought tough but performs best with spring irrigation. May lose leaves toward end of summer and often becomes leafless in center of plant. Cut back to ground after bloom to rejuvenate.

Cultivars: 'Catalina', 'Everett's Choice', 'El Tigre', 'Carmen's Gray', and 'Hurricane Pt.' perform well in gardens.



Seaside Daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*)

Description: Easily grown evergreen perennial. Cultivars vary from 1-2.5 ft tall, spreading to 3 ft wide or more. Foliage in low clusters is medium green. Daisy-like flowers, lavender with yellow centers, are at peak bloom in spring and summer. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Performs best in coastal gardens as a bedding plant, small area ground cover, front of border, edging.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Tolerant of regular watering in well-drained soils, but can take drought. Most soils. Will repeat bloom near coast if deadheaded.

Cultivars: 'WR', 'Ron's Pink', 'Sea Breeze', 'Bountiful', 'Cape Sebastian' perform well in gardens.



Red-flowered Buckwheat (*Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens*)

Description: Evergreen perennial 1-3 ft tall and about as wide. Foliage is dark gray-green, felted white beneath. Tiny flowers in ball-shaped clusters vary from light pink to dark rose. Blooms over long period in spring and summer. Medium-fast growing.

Landscape use: Small area ground cover, rock gardens, front of border, edging, massing.

Cultural conditions: Full sun. No water required, but will tolerate some summer water. Almost any well-drained soil. Prune to keep dense. Typically short-lived (3-5 yrs), but reseeds freely.



Sulfur Buckwheat (*Eriogonum* 'Shasta Sulphur')

Description: Beautiful woody perennial that forms compact mounds under 1 ft high and 1-2 ft wide. Roundish, 1 inch leaves are slightly hairy and medium green with lighter undersides. Brilliant, sulfur-yellow flower heads, 1-2 inches across, in early summer. Heads turn rich brown after bloom. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Wonderful, long-lived additions to the front or mid-border, or anywhere associated with rocks.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to light shade. Drought tolerant. Over-watering can be a problem in heavier soils but accepts occasional summer water.



California Poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*)

Description: No garden should be without California's iconic wildflower. Easy, short-lived perennial with big, bright orange flowers over a long season – cream, yellow, lavender and red strains are also available. Variable in size from mat-like to 2 ft tall in bloom. Lacy, nearly succulent, gray-green leaves. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Adds color to bare areas between shrubs or in mixed borders. Re-seeds readily. Attracts bumblebees.

Cultural conditions: Prefers open areas in full sun. Poor, well-drained soils best, but adapts to heavier soils. Very drought tough; occasional summer water prolongs bloom. Cut back or mow after flowering to encourage re-bloom.



Beach Strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*)

Description: Fast-growing perennial that covers the ground with low mats of glossy green leaves and bright white flowers. Established plants throw off red runners that form new plants where they touch ground. Produces small, edible strawberries in late spring and summer.

Landscape use: Small scale groundcover, meadows, front of border, cottage and seaside gardens.

Cultural conditions: Full sun on coast to part shade inland. Tolerates dry periods but best with moderate water. Any soil, especially sandy. Divide older plantings occasionally to maintain vigor.

Cultivars: 'Aulon', 'Green Pastures', 'Chavel'.

(Photo: Lynn Watson)



Gumweed

(*Grindelia stricta* var. *platyphylla*)

Description: Evergreen, semi-woody perennial under 1 ft high and 2-3 ft wide. Two inch long, succulent leaves are held on short, prostrate stems. Gummy, bright yellow daisy flowers up to 3 inches across bloom over a long period in summer. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Groundcover, front to mid border, slopes, seaside gardens.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Any soil. Very drought tough. Deadhead after bloom. Hard pruning in fall or winter can rejuvenate leggy or woody plants.

Cultivars: 'Ray's Carpet'



(Photo: Saxon Holt)

San Bruno Mtn Golden Aster
(*Heterotheca* 'San Bruno Mtn')

Description: Versatile, tough, herbaceous perennial that forms compact mats 6-8 inches tall by 2 ft wide. Fuzzy, green, 1 inch leaves held close to ground. Small, yellow 1-2 inch flowers peak in spring but occasional through the year. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: For rock gardens, front of the border, edge of path, or as a small scale groundcover. Habitat plant for bees and butterflies.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Any soil. Performs best with moderate to occasional water. Shear plants several times a year to remove old flowers and stimulate re-bloom.



Coral Bells (*Heuchera*)

Description: Native coral bells are the star of the spring garden with bright, delicate flowers in a variety of shades from white to dark pink. These lush perennials range in size from tiny, compact plants to 1.5 ft - 3 ft tall in bloom. All have appealing, large, roundish leaves. Bloom can last more than a month.

Landscape use: Excellent additions to perennial borders, shade and woodland gardens. Particularly effective massed. Attracts hummingbirds.

Cultural conditions: Best where they receive full winter sun and part shade in summer. Any soil. Moderate water winter through spring; occasional water through the summer. Rust may appear in early spring; aphids and powdery mildew can be problems in spring or fall.

Cultivars: 'Canyon Delight', 'Canyon Pink', 'Opal', 'Wendy', 'Rosada', 'Old LaRochette', 'Santa Ana Cardinal' are all excellent selections.



Pacific Coast Hybrid Iris
(*Iris* 'Pacific Coast Hybrids')

Description: Clumping, evergreen perennial to 2 ft tall, 2-3 ft wide. Leaves are strap-shaped, leathery and dark green. Hybrid selections feature large, gorgeous flowers in nearly every color, but most commonly in shades of blue and purple. Blooms once in spring. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Front of shady borders, adjacent to lawns, massing.

Cultural conditions: Part shade to sun near the ocean. Water occasionally in summer near coast, more regularly inland. Best in rich, well-drained soil. Won't tolerate waterlogged conditions, hard freezes, or hot roots in bone-dry soils. May cut back foliage to 2 inches in summer before new growth emerges.

Cultivars: The white-flowered Iris 'Canyon Snow' has proven to be a heavy flowering, long-lived selection.



Russian River Coyote Mint
(*Monardella* 'Russian River')

Description: Compact, woody perennial that mounds to 1-2 ft tall and spreads slowly to 4 ft. One inch leaves have a pungent, minty fragrance. Ball-like clusters of bright purple 1 inch flower heads appear over a long season late spring through summer.

Landscape use: Excellent summer-bloomer for mixed borders, small-scale groundcover or in any dry, sunny spot. Deer resistant, and especially attractive to butterflies and bees.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Wide soil tolerance. Drought tough but accepting of occasional summer water.



(Photo: Saxon Holt)

Foothill Penstemon
(*Penstemon heterophyllus*)

Description: Herbaceous perennial reaching 1-2 ft in bloom and about as wide. Loose mounds of thin, narrow, medium green leaves produce masses of flower stalks in spring. Tubular, 1-2 inch long flowers are yellow in bud, electric blue to violet once open. Fast growing, although sometimes short-lived.

Landscape use: Works well in foreground of dry borders or in rock gardens. Attracts hummingbirds; a bee favorite.

Cultural conditions: Full sun. Well-drained soils preferred. Drought tough, but occasional summer water helpful.

Cultivars: 'Margarita BOP' and 'Blue Gem' are garden-worthy selections.



(Photo: Tricia Wardlaw)

Coulter's Matilija Poppy
(*Romneya coulteri*)

Description: Matilija poppy, with its cheery, fried-egg flowers, is one of California's signature natives. It is both difficult to establish, then hard to contain. It grows to 8 ft tall and spreads aggressively by runners once established. 6-12 inch, crepe-papery, white flowers with yellow centers appear atop stems in early summer. Bluish-green foliage on tall stems is deeply cut. Fast growing once established.

Landscape use: Best in larger spaces or where its exuberant growth can be contained by hardscape or a dry area. Use in back of large borders, as an accent, for erosion control, massed planting, cottage gardens. A bee magnet.

Cultural conditions: Full sun best. No water once established - it will find and invade watered areas. Prefers good drainage but will take almost any soil. Best planted in early fall; be very gentle and minimize root disturbance when planting. Cut to ground in the fall.



Hummingbird Sage (*Salvia spathacea*)

Description: Easily grown herbaceous plant that reaches 3 ft tall in bloom; spreads by underground rhizomes to form colonies. Large, soft, slightly sticky leaves are wonderfully fragrant. Deep magenta flowers grow in clustered whorls on 30 inch upright stalks from late winter into summer.

Landscape use: A great plant for dry shade conditions such as under oak trees. Can be used as a groundcover, as a bold addition to mixed borders, in containers, or on slopes for erosion control. Good cut flower. Beloved by hummingbirds.

Cultural conditions: Full shade to part sun. Wide soil tolerance. Dies back to the ground in summer if kept dry; will stay green and

flower over longer period with supplemental water. Cut back flower stalks after bloom. Powdery mildew common in summer, not serious.



Blue-eyed-grass
(*Sisyrinchium bellum*)

Description: Deciduous or semi-deciduous perennial that resembles a coarse grass. Fan-shaped clumps grow 4 inches to 1 ft tall. Lovely blue-purple, half inch, star-shaped flowers with yellow-eyes in spring. Blooms occasionally through much of the year if watered. Plants die to the ground in late summer. Reseeds freely.

Landscape use: Meadows, informal borders, swales, and rain gardens.

Cultural conditions: Sun to part shade. Needs no water but stays green longer with occasional summer watering. Thrives in heavier soils. No pruning beyond deadheading in end of season.



(Photo: Saxon Holt)

California Goldenrod
(*Solidago velutina* ssp. *californica*)

Description: Fast growing perennial that is fairly nondescript until it blooms in the summer. Fuzzy, 1-2 inch lance-shaped leaves spread by runners to form indefinite colonies. Slender, 3-4 ft tall flower stalks sport masses of tiny golden yellow flowers in pyramid-shaped spikes.

Landscape use: A carefree summer bloomer for meadows, informal borders and on slopes for erosion control. An important nectar source for bees and butterflies.

Cultural conditions: Best in full sun; less robust in shade. Any soil. Adaptable to dry or moist sites - but can spread aggressively if well-watered. Dies to ground in late summer. Cut back to ground when finished blooming.



(Photo: Steve Junak)

Desert Mallow
(*Sphaeralcea ambigua*)

Description: Striking, woody perennial with grey leaves and wands of bright orange flowers. Loose, 1-4 ft tall mounds of fuzzy, textured leaves. Can flower year-round in mild climates. Dies back a bit in dry season. Medium growth rate.

Landscape use: Use as a specimen or massed in dry borders, good in containers. Butterflies and bees love this plant.

Cultural conditions: Thrives in hot, dry conditions: full sun best but tolerates part shade. Wide soil tolerance. Very drought tough but accepts occasional summer water. Adapts to many garden environments, but cold, wet, heavy soils are fatal. Prune regularly to prevent woodiness.

Grasses



Thin Bentgrass (*Agrostis pallens*)

Description: Bright green, perennial grass to 1 ft tall that spreads slowly into indefinite colonies. Goes somewhat dormant in mid-summer.

Landscape use: Drought tolerant lawn substitute, will take moderate foot traffic. Left unmown to flop, creates the look of a natural, informal meadow.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. More drought tough in full shade. In full sun it requires occasional to moderate summer water to stay green. Any soil.



Purple Three-awn (*Aristida purpurea*)

Description: Upright bunchgrass to 3 ft in bloom. Medium green leaves, 1-2 ft long, bending toward tips. Showy, maroon-purple flower heads fade to light tan. Fast growing, reseeds freely.

Landscape use: Purple color adds drama to meadow gardens and perennial borders. Useful in narrow beds and decorative pots.

Cultural conditions: Full sun best. Very drought tough but accepts occasional summer water. Adaptable to most soils if not over-watered. Cut to the ground in fall every other year to rejuvenate.



Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*)

Description: Slowly spreading, warm season bunchgrass with fine-textured blue-gray foliage. Grows 6-12 inches tall with dainty flowers that resemble eyelashes held perpendicular to stalk. Blooms late spring to summer.

Landscape use: A long-lived, dependable turf substitute or large scale groundcover, in borders as specimens or in drifts. Withstands moderate foot traffic and regular mowing.

Cultural conditions: Extremely adaptable. Full sun to part shade. Drought tough but requires bi-monthly water in summer to stay green. Any soil.

Cultivars: ‘Hachita’ is a commonly available seed strain. ‘Blonde Ambition’ is a lovely, robust hybrid selection reaching 3 ft with dense flower heads.



(Photo: Steve Junak)

Leafy Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis foliosa*)

Description: Beautiful, rare bunchgrass from the northern California coast. Symmetrical, rounded clumps are 1 ft tall and 2 ft wide with arching blue-green leaves. Showy, whitish, 6-9 inch long flower stalks in spring. Flower heads turn brown and stay on through summer looking attractive. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Flowering borders, front to mid-border, edging, containers, cut flowers.

Cultural conditions: Full sun along coast to part shade inland. Moderate to occasional water, more in full sun. Tolerates heavy soils.



Clustered Field Sedge (*Carex praegracilis*)

Description: Running, grass-like perennial forming indefinite colonies. Deep green leaves under 1 ft tall remain upright or flop if unmown.

Landscape use: This excellent lawn substitute handles substantial foot traffic. Use as a large scale groundcover or bank stabilizer, and in bioswales, meadows, shade, and narrow beds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Summer dormant but stays green with occasional water. Any soil. Vigorous even with modest water and will spread unless contained.



California Grey Rush (*Juncus patens*)

Description: Forms 2 ft tall clumps of upright, rigid evergreen stems. Clumps expand slowly; growth rate depends on water availability. Loose clusters of small, brown flowers emerge near the top of the stems in spring.

Landscape use: Grey rush’s strong vertical shape contrasts well with rounded forms. Attractive accent in front to mid-border, in ponds and bioswales; excellent in containers.

Cultural conditions: Highly adaptable plant that tolerates constant water but can be remarkably tolerant once established. Shade to part sun.

Cultivars: ‘Carmen’s Gray’, ‘Elk’s Blue’, ‘Occidental Blue’ have been selected for stem color.



Canyon Prince Giant Wild Rye (*Elymus* ‘Canyon Prince’)

Description: Larger, evergreen grass with stunning, icy-blue foliage and tall, bold flowers. Forms an attractive rounded clump that rarely exceeds 5 ft in flower. Reaches full height quickly then spreads at moderate rate by runners.

Landscape use: Provides a bold, blue accent in borders, also effective in masses.

Cultural conditions: Extremely easy grass that tolerates most soils and requires little watering. Bluest color in full sun. Cut to ground in fall when plants need rejuvenating.



Deer Grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*)

Description: Fine-textured, warm-season, 3 ft high and 3-4 ft wide bunch grass. Long, narrow, evergreen leaves create an oversized mound. Narrow flower stalks are almost white when emerging but turn tan with age. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Effective as a dramatic specimen or in large drifts. Allow enough space between plants for them to develop their beautiful shape. Large enough to use as an informal barrier. A great habitat plant that attracts birds and butterflies to the garden.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to light shade. Tolerates long dry periods but stays greener with monthly watering. Any soil. Pull out dead leaves and flowers stalks with a hard-tined rake or cut back to 3 inches every third year.



Virgin's Bower (*Clematis ligusticifolia*)

Description: Flowery, climbing vine to 20 ft or more. Compound leaves drop in mid-winter. Leaves clasp and help plant to climb. Large clusters of 2 inch yellow-white flowers in late spring/summer. Showy seed heads resemble long-haired cotton balls in summer.

Landscape use: Trellis, fences, pergolas, wet spots.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to shade. Adapts easily to gardens and occasional irrigation. Heavy, saturated soil OK. Needs summer water to maintain vigorous growth.



California Wild Grape (*Vitis californica*)

Description: Fast growing, deciduous vine climbs by tendrils to 25 ft or more. Broad, rounded leaves, 6 inches across or more turn bright yellow to red in fall. Leafless from Nov-Feb. Small grape clusters are edible, sweet and relished by wildlife.

Landscape use: Use to cover trellises, fences, pergolas, or as a clambering groundcover over large areas. Provides fall color in even the mildest winter temperatures. Important late winter food for birds.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade. Tolerant of any soil. Requires occasional summer water. A vigorous vine that can engulf other trees and shrubs unless controlled with regular pruning.

Cultivars: Selections and hybrids include: 'Roger's Red' is very robust to 40 ft with bright crimson fall foliage. 'Russian River' has plum red fall color. 'Walker's Ridge' is smaller to 15 ft with yellow to orange fall color.

Vines



Anacapa Morning Glory (*Calystegia* 'Anacapa Pink')

Description: Vigorous, twining vine with long, thin stems that climb with support to 20 ft. Bright green leaves topped by 3-inch-wide, funnel-shaped, white flushed with pink flowers over a very long season. Fast growing.

Landscape use: Wonderful over a chain-link fence or trellis. Makes a dense, rambunctious groundcover.

Cultural conditions: Full sun to part shade, tolerant of any soil. Dies back to ground in summer heat; moderate water keeps it green and growing. Occasional deer browse.

Grow

Native Plants

To learn more about native plants or to shop the largest selection of native plants on the central coast, visit Santa Barbara Botanic Garden or access its library of resources online at SBBotanicGarden.org

To learn about water-wise landscaping and irrigation, visit WaterWiseSB.org

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