

Recommended Plants for Pollinators & Beneficial Insects

California Deserts & Southern Nevada



FIGURE 1: Common buckeye butterfly (*Junonia coenia*) on California buckwheat¹ and small carpenter bees (*Ceratina* spp.)⁶ on narrowleaf milkweed.

Plant Selection

The plants on this list are recommended for use in pollinator habitat restoration and enhancement projects in urban, rural, natural, and agricultural landscapes. These species have been selected because they are attractive to a diversity of different bee species and provide pollen and nectar resources throughout the season, provided that a minimum of three different plant species from each blooming period (early, mid, and late season) are selected. A majority of plants recommended are native, drought tolerant, easy to establish, and don't serve as alternative hosts to crop pests or diseases.

Native Species for Pollinators and Beneficial Insects

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	BLOOM	LIFE FORM	SUN	WATER	SOIL TEXTURE	ADDITIONAL DETAILS ^①
<i>Asclepias fascicularis</i>	Narrowleaf milkweed	MID-LATE	P F	☀	M	ANY	🦋🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Asclepias subulata</i>	Rush milkweed	EARLY-LATE	P F	☀	L	MEDIUM-COARSE	🦋🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	Fourwing saltbush	EARLY-MID	P W	☀	L	ANY	🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>	Mulefat	EARLY-MID	P W	☀	M-H	ANY	🦋🐝🌿
<i>Baileya multiradiata</i>	Desert marigold	EARLY-MID	A, P F	☀	L	MEDIUM-COARSE	
<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>	Desert willow	MID	P W	☀	L	ANY	🦋🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Encelia actoni</i>	Acton encelia	EARLY-MID	P F	☀	L	COARSE	🌿
<i>Encelia farinosa</i>	Brittlebush	EARLY-MID	P F	☀	L	COARSE	🌿
<i>Epilobium canum</i>	California fuchsia	LATE	P F	☀	L	ANY	🐝🍷🚫
<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>	Rubber rabbitbrush	LATE	P F	☀	L	COARSE	🦋🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>	California buckwheat	MID-LATE	P F	☀	L	ANY	🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>	Sulphur flower buckwheat	MID-LATE	P F	☀	L	COARSE	🦋🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Eriophyllum confertiflorum</i>	Golden yarrow	EARLY-MID	P F	☀	M	ANY	🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>	California poppy	EARLY-MID	A, P F	☀	L	ANY	🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Fouquieria splendens</i>	Ocotillo	EARLY	P S	☀	L	COARSE	🐝🍷🚫
<i>Hyptis emoryi</i>	Desert lavender	EARLY-MID	P F	☀	L	COARSE	🐝🌿🍷🚫
<i>Keckiella antirrhinoides</i>	Chaparral beard tongue	MID	P W	☀	L	ANY	🌿
<i>Larrea tridentata</i>	Creosote bush	MID	P W	☀	L	COARSE	🐝🌿

KEY

LIFE CYCLE—Annual; Biennial; Perennial

FORM—Forb; Woody; Grass; Succulent

WATER NEEDS—Low; Medium; High

SUN

☀ Full sun

☀☀ Full sun—partial shade

☀☀☀ Partial shade

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

🦋 Monarch nectar plant

🐝 Larval host (butterfly, moth, specialist bee)

🌿 Attracts beneficial insects

🍷 Bumble bee plant

🌿 Nest site

🍷 Fire resistant

🚫 Deer resistant

Native Species for Pollinators and Beneficial Insects *continued*

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	BLOOM	LIFE FORM	SUN	WATER	SOIL TEXTURE	ADDITIONAL DETAILS ①
<i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i>	Deer grass	—	P G	☀	L-M	ANY	☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Opuntia basilaris</i>	Beavertail cactus	EARLY-MID	P S	☀	L	COARSE	☒ ☒
<i>Parkinsonia florida</i>	Blue paloverde	MID	P W	☀	L	COARSE	☒
<i>Penstemon palmeri</i>	Palmer's beardtongue	MID	P F	☀	L	COARSE	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Penstemon pseudospectabilis</i>	Showy penstemon	EARLY-MID	P F	☀	L	COARSE	☒ ☒
<i>Peritoma arborea</i>	Bladderpod	EARLY	P W	☀	L	ANY	☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Phacelia campanularia</i>	Desert bells	EARLY	A F	☀	L	COARSE	
<i>Phacelia tanacetifolia</i>	Tansy phacelia	EARLY	A F	☀	L	ANY	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i>	Honey mesquite	MID	P W	☀	L	COARSE	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Prosopis pubescens</i>	Screw bean mesquite	EARLY	P W	☀	L	COARSE	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Prunus ilicifolia</i>	Hollyleaf cherry	MID	P W	☀	M	ANY	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Purshia tridentata</i>	Antelope bitterbrush	MID	P W	☀	L	COARSE	☒ ☒
<i>Rhamnus ilicifolia</i>	Hollyleaf redberry	EARLY-MID	P W	☀	L	ANY	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Salvia columbariae</i>	Chia sage	EARLY-MID	A F	☀	L	ANY	☒ ☒
<i>Salvia dorrii</i>	Desert sage	MID	P F	☀	L	COARSE	☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Salvia mellifera</i>	Black sage	MID-LATE	P F	☀	L	ANY	☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Senegalia (Acacia) greggii</i>	Catclaw acacia	MID	P W	☀	L	COARSE	☒ ☒
<i>Sphaeralcea ambigua</i>	Apricot mallow	EARLY	P F	☀	L	ANY	☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒ ☒
<i>Sporobolus airoides</i>	Alkali sacaton	—	P G	☀	L-H	ANY	☒ ☒ ☒

KEY	LIFE CYCLE—Annual; Biennial; Perennial	SUN ☀ Full sun	ADDITIONAL DETAILS	☒ Monarch nectar plant	☒ Attracts beneficial insects	☒ Nest site
	FORM—Forb; Woody; Grass; Succulent	☀ Full sun-partial shade		☒ Larval host (butterfly, moth, specialist bee)	☒ Bumble bee plant	☒ Fire resistant
	WATER NEEDS—Low; Medium; High	☀ Partial shade				☒ Deer resistant

NRCS Conservation Planners, PLEASE NOTE: Before purchasing or installing any plants for a project, check each species' suitability for different CA-NRCS Conservation Practices by using the NRCS California eVegGuide (<https://www.calflora.org/nrcs/>).

FIGURE 2: California dogface butterfly (*Zerene eurydice*) on chaparral beard tongue⁵ and American hoverfly (*Eupeodes americanus*) on desert lavender⁶.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This list was developed with funding from the NRCS and General Mills. California range map based on data provided by the NRCS-WNTC. California range map based on data provided by the NRCS-WNTC. Special thanks to Dwain Daniels (TX-NRCS) for creating the range map, and to Ken Lair (CA-NRCS) & Madena Asbell (Mojave Desert Land Trust) for their review. **PHOTOS**—John Kehoe [[flickr.com/johnjkehoe_photography](https://www.flickr.com/photos/johnjkehoe/)]: Figure 1; Ben Lowe [[flickr.com/squamatomologist](https://www.flickr.com/photos/squamatomologist/)]: Figure 2. For more information on installing pollinator habitat, visit: <http://xerces.org/pollinator-habitat-installation-guides>.