

# California Natives

Plant natives in your garden to save water, attract a wide variety of pollinators while providing for their habitat, and create a more sustainable garden!



## Making the Right Choice for Your Garden

When it comes to choosing plants for your garden, site selection is an imperative step before we can dig in. Learning the different needs of your favorite natives as you plan your garden will lead you to success in reinvigorating the local biodiversity and creating a drought tolerant landscape. This guide provides Orchard's favorite native selections to make the process of creating a low maintenance and beautiful pollinator garden as simple as possible (Table on pg.2).

## Planting

The best time to plant natives is in the fall, when the soil is warm, and rainfall can help get the plant established. The second-best time is spring! Most natives are adaptable to a variety of soil types but can't tolerate standing water. It is best to either amend your soil to create fast drainage or choose a planting location on a slope where water will never accumulate. Dig a hole twice the width of the pot and only an inch or two deeper. Create a ratio of 70% soil from the garden and 30% **Eureka Planting Mix** and use it to backfill the hole. Position the plant about a half inch above the surrounding soil level.

After planting is done, create a watering basin during new installations to ensure adequate watering; and critical places like slope planting that are subject to run off. The watering basin will be temporary and should be removed before rainfall so it doesn't retain excess moisture which can cause crown or root rot.

## Watering

Watering can be a nuanced and difficult skill to master, especially when pertaining to natives since they can have a low tolerance for correction. When designing your garden, it's important to *hydrozone*, which means to group plants with similar water needs. Make sure your irrigation system has zones that are organized based on those groupings, or hand water accordingly.

In the first three months after planting aim to keep the root ball moist but not soggy. This may mean watering 1-2 times per week. Then start less frequent, but deeper watering, roughly one good soaking every 2-3 weeks if there's no rain. The plant is considered well-established after it has doubled in size, usually in the first 1-2 years, and this is the time to cut watering back to once per month or less. A moderate amount of drought stress will encourage broad and deep root development over time. Some natives are happy with no summer water, although an occasional deep soak can keep your plants more consistently lush through the dry season.

## Fertilizing and Mulching

Another benefit of growing natives is that they can tolerate nutrient poor soils. Fertilize at the time of planting with **EB Stone Sure Start** to encourage strong root growth. Add organic material when you mulch with **EB Stone Organic Compost** or **Bumper Crop Soil Conditioner** to release nutrients slowly over time while also keeping moisture consistent.

## Additional resources

**Calscape.org**: Operated by the California Native Plant Society, a great source with a Bay Area specific garden planner to inspire different habitat plantings.

**San Francisco Botanical Garden**: Excellent garden design with many mature examples of plant material

**EBMUD.com**: Replace your lawn with mostly natives and get double the standard rebate. Check their list of low-water plants and sort by Natives.

## Some of our favorite native perennials and shrubs!

Plant Name	Favorite Varieties	Habitat and Range	Water	Uses
<b>Arctostaphylos</b> <b>Manzanita</b>	<b>Upright:</b> Howard McMinn, Dr. Hurd <b>Prostrate:</b> Emerald Carpet	Chaparral, coastal bluff, and low mountain range	Drought tolerant to occasional. Must have moisture when new growth is tender	Versatile; groundcover or specimen plant. Treasured for dramatic form and contrasting bark coloration. Beneficial to birds and mammals. Blush pink urn- shaped flowers with warm honey like fragrance.
<b>Achillea millefolium</b> <b>Common Yarrow</b>	Sonoma Coast, Lost Coast, Island Pink	Found in most plant communities except deserts, Can handle full sun or partial shade	Occasional to moderate watering	Bright perennial for border; great lawn replacement. Spreads via rhizomes and seed. Tolerates light foot traffic. Also good for stabilizing slopes. Dead head to lengthen flowering. Great in meadow gardens
<b>Ceanothus</b> <b>California Lilac</b>	<b>Upright:</b> Ray Hartman, Sierra Blue <b>Prostrate:</b> Carmel Creeper, Diamond heights, Joyce Coulter, Anchor Bay	Dry slopes of coast scrub, chaparral, open woodlands, and low range forests.	Drought tolerant to occasional watering	Great slope specimen. Beautiful range of flower colors from blues and purples to white. Best to research specific varieties for habitat simulation. Intolerant of wet summer environments. Cornerstone plant for insects and mammals
<b>Cercis occidentalis</b> <b>Western Redbud</b>	Claremont	Dry slopes and canyons, streambanks	Drought tolerant to occasional watering	Great natural form; deciduous. Accent for woodland garden or perennial border. Easy to cultivate with minimal pest issues. Responds well to pruning. Four seasons of interest in one specimen
<b>Dudleya</b> <b>Dudleya / Live forever</b>	Britton Dudleya, Canyon Dudleya, Chalk Dudleya	Rocky, sandy, clay-based sites in coastal scrub, chaparral, and deserts	Drought tolerant to infrequent; essential to avoid summer watering	Best as a container display or in rock gardens. Intolerant to summer watering and susceptible to root rot. Plant at an angle for water to run off and provide ample air circulation
<b>Erigeron</b> <b>Seaside Daisy</b>	Cape Sebastian, Wayne Roderick	Coastal bluffs, dunes, beaches in coastal scrub	Drought tolerant to moderate watering	Great in mixed borders, meadows, or containers. Performs best in coastal gardens Typically pest free but are susceptible to spider mites and mealybug in heat/ drought. Lilac colored blooms
<b>Eriogonum</b> <b>Buckwheat</b>	Red Flowered buckwheat, California Buckwheat	Coastal region and intermediate and interior valleys, dry slopes, canyons, chaparral	Drought tolerant to occasional watering	Great in dry well drained sites; sculptural focal point in container, rock garden, garden bed. Tolerant of salt spray. If copper flowers age to seed, volunteer seedlings can germinate. Ideal for slope control
<b>Heuchera maxima</b> <b>Island Alum root</b>		Rocky outcrops and woodlands, Great for dry shade	Occasional to moderate watering	Effective in mixed borders, path edgings, and in containers. Great under deciduous trees, oaks or redwoods. Can grow and flower in dense shade unlike hybrids. Benefits from trimming of long stems to maintain vigor and performance.
<b>Iris Pacific Coast Hybrids</b> <b>Iris</b>	Canyon snow, Kings Salmon, Native Warrior	Woodlands, Great for dry shade	Drought tolerant to occasional; moderate in intermediate and interior valleys	Can be difficult to maintain in ground. Great container subjects and dependable bloomer. Better candidate for transplanting in Fall and Winter. Divide rhizomes every 1-3 years
<b>Muhlenbergia rigens</b> <b>Deer Grass</b>		Dry or moist places in many plant communities	Drought tolerant to moderate watering	Dramatic form, easy to grow and carefree. Best choice for difficult transition areas between regularly watered lawns and drier sites. Useful for erosion control on banks and slopes
<b>Polystichum munitum</b> <b>Western Sword Fern</b>		Moist, shaded forests and wooded slopes, Great for dry shade	Occasional to regular watering	Tolerant of tree root competition. Good choice for deep shade areas and northern sides of buildings. Tolerant of sun in immediate coastal areas in central and N. California.
<b>Penstemon heterophyllus</b> <b>Penstemon</b>	Margarita BOP, Electric Blue, Catherine del la Mare	Dry places in grasslands, chaparral, inland coastal ranges to Sierra Nevada	Drought tolerant to occasional watering	Works well in rock gardens and in the foreground of mixed border; Vibrant blue and purple blooms. Greater tolerance for heavy soils and summer watering. Needs good air circulation
<b>Romneya coulteri</b> <b>Fried Egg Poppy</b>		Chaparral, Ventura County to NW Baja	Drought tolerant to occasional watering	Effective in erosion control; difficult to establish. Great in large roaming areas and slopes. Large blooms and fragrant to boot. Susceptible to root rot and terminal wilt
<b>Salvia</b> <b>Sage</b>	White Sage, Cleveland Sage, Allen Chickering	Dry slopes in coastal scrub, chaparral	Drought tolerant to occasional watering	Great in dry border planting, informal hedge, focal point, or in an herb garden. Performs well in hot, dry, well-draining sites. Easy to grow and pollinator magnet with extravagant colors