



Bloom!

CALIFORNIA

Gardener's Guide

Native Plants for a Bright Tomorrow.



**More and more Californians
are choosing native plants
for their gardens.**

Why? Native plants have a beauty unique to California, are climate-conscious, and provide invaluable habitat.

Join the chorus of Californians bringing our state's natural splendor to their backyards, balconies, containers, and beyond.

Look for the *Bloom! California* logo at nurseries around California to discover native plants great for any garden, selected for their:

- **Easy care:** basic maintenance will keep gardens hassle-free
- **Statewide success:** suited for the varying regions of California's diverse ecosystem
- **Habitat power:** attract butterflies, birds, bees, and other wildlife that share our home

In this guide, you will learn about *Bloom! California* plants, discover tips for care and maintenance, and become inspired with style ideas for your space.

Plant Speak

Height and Width: How big will your plant grow? Be mindful to leave space for growth at maturity to avoid overcrowding. It usually takes about 3 years for plants to reach their maximum size.

Sun Exposure: How much sunlight does your plant need?

- Full sun: 6+ hours of direct sunlight per day
- Part sun: 5 to 6 hours of direct sunlight per day
- Part shade is 3 to 4 hours of direct sunlight per day
- Full shade: Less than 3 hours of sun per day

Water Requirement: How much water does your plant need?

- Very low: Once a month or less
- Low: 1 to 2 times per month
- Medium: 1 to 2 times per week
- High: Every day or every other day

Meet the Plants!

For more details on plant groups and selected species, visit bloomcalifornia.org



Clarkia

(*Clarkia* spp.)

Clarkias are easy-to-grow annuals with charismatic flowers. The spring blooms range in color from white, pale pink, salmon, and magenta on stems 1–3 feet tall. They typically bloom at the end of the wildflower season, hence their common name “Farewell-to-Spring”. While drought-tolerant, give it moderate water for the best flowering display. Expect it to reseed.

Height: 1-3 feet

Width: 1-3 feet

Sun Exposure: Full sun to part shade

Water Requirements: Low

Soil: Tolerates sandy and clay soils

Bloom period: Spring

Highlights

- Showstopping flowers
- Easy to grow
- Insta-wildflower meadow



Currants

(*Ribes* spp.)

Currants are stunning shrubs that thrive in shade. Flower tassels adorn the plant in early spring, followed by scalloped, deep green leaves. It has an upright vase shape with arching branches. The flowers are an excellent nectar source for bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds while the deep purple fruits are enjoyed by birds. Its rigorous nature makes it easy to grow, and the berries are edible! Currants are a great understory plant under oaks and can be grown in containers.

Height: 3–8 feet

Width: 4–5 feet

Sun Exposure: Part shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Low

Soil: Tolerates a variety of soils

Bloom Period: Winter, Spring

Highlights

- Perfect for shade
- Hardy shrub
- Pairs well with oaks



Iris

(*Iris* spp.)

Iris are an elegant perennial that naturally grow in the moist ranges of California. Its showy flowers emerge in the spring to add delight and elegance to gardens. They tolerate poor drainage and high moisture. If not planted next to a creek or in a naturally wet area, it likes summer water every 2-4 weeks. It is more drought-tolerant near the coast where it benefits from cooler temperatures and fog. Iris work great as an understory plant, along borders and pathways, and with rocks to create a lush feel.

Height: 1-2 feet

Width: 1-4 feet, clumping

Sun Exposure: Full shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Medium, if not planted near a wet area; low if planted in a wet area

Soil: Prefers heavy soils with organic matter

Bloom Period: Winter, Spring

Highlights

- Lush beauty
- Absolute elegance
- Great for borders and accents



Manzanita

(*Arctostaphylos* spp.)

Manzanitas are beautiful shrubs and trees: their red branching structure, delicate white lantern-shaped flowers, blush-colored berries, and bright foliage provide year-round interest. Use these gorgeous plants as specimen trees and to provide structure. Their graceful, twisting branches add an unbeatable sculptural effect.

Height: 3–10 feet

Width: 3–10 feet

Sun Exposure: Full sun

Water Requirements: Low, prefers summer dry

Soil: Can tolerate heavy soil on slopes, but prefers well-drained soil

Bloom Period: Winter, Spring

Highlights

- Living sculpture
- Winter flowers
- Great for summer-dry gardens



Mint

(*Monardella* spp.)

California mints make wonderful accents and border plants. These evergreen, perennial herbs are low-growing and complement nearly any design. Summer brings rounded clusters of bright lavender or pink flowers. In addition to attracting pollinators, their leaves are often fragrant and edible. Mints do well in containers and as filler in narrow, partly-shady beds, between walls and walkways, or as seasonal ground cover. They are drought-tolerant and do well in a variety of soils, making them a strong option for any native garden.

Height: 2 feet

Width: 3 feet

Sun Exposure: Part shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Very low

Soil: Tolerates a variety of soils

Bloom Period: Summer

Highlights

- Pollinator all-star
- Smells heavenly
- Dynamic beauty



Oaks

(*Quercus* spp.)

Whole cities get named after them (Oakland, Oak Park, Thousand Oaks...) and rightfully so. Native oaks evolved to thrive in dry environments, and many natives can successfully grow underneath them. Oaks are also one of the most important species for biodiversity, with over 270 species relying on them for habitat.

Height: 25–50 feet

Width: 15 feet

Sun Exposure: Part shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Low

Soil: Tolerates a variety of soils but prefers a deep, well-draining loam

Bloom Period: Winter, Spring

Highlights

- Biodiversity superstar
- Thrives in dry environments
- Hardy and easy to grow



Ornamental Grasses

Native ornamental grasses are great as an alternative to lawns, added along pathways, used as groundcover, planted among wildflowers, and as understory plants. They offer both ornamental and restoration value in gardens, are hardy and versatile, and are a great addition to summer-dry gardens.

Height: 1-2 feet

Width: 1-2 feet

Sun Exposure: Part shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Low

Soil: Tolerates a variety of soils as long as adequate drainage is provided

Bloom Period: Spring, Summer

Highlights

- High wildlife value
- Winning lawn replacement
- Year-round beauty



Phacelia

(*Phacelia* spp.)

Phacelias are among the best plants for pollinators. Blooms of purple, lavender, blue, and cream unfurl in early summer and are highly attractive to bees, butterflies, and other beneficial pollinators. A frequent sight in hot, dry places, this charming species has deeply lobed leaves and flower buds that uncoil as the lavender flowers open, one by one.

Height: 1-3 feet

Width: 1-3 feet

Sun Exposure: Part shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Very low

Bloom Period: Winter, Spring

Highlights

- Pollinator-friendly
- Beautiful flowers
- Great for summer-dry gardens



Sage

(*Salvia* spp.)

Native sages are a versatile and vibrant addition to any garden. These plants offer a wide range of forms, textured foliage, and bold blossoms that combine well with most other plants in the landscape. Many species attract hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees, but fortunately, not deer or rabbits. It is the distinctive aroma of their leaves that attracts us yet repels garden pests.

Height: 1-3 feet

Width: 1-3 feet

Sun Exposure: Full shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Low

Soil: Tolerates a variety of soils

Bloom Period: Spring, Summer

Highlights

- Beautiful, long-lasting flowers
- Pollinator all-star
- California fragrance



Toyon

(*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

Toyon is a fabulous and foundational native evergreen for any California garden. Adaptable and very easy to grow, Toyon makes a great privacy hedge, container plant, or specimen shrub with its bright red berries and evergreen foliage. It produces gorgeous white bunched flowers, and their berries are consumed by birds and other wildlife.

Height: 6-30 feet

Width: 10-15 feet

Sun Exposure: Part shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Low

Soil: Tolerates a variety of soils

Bloom Period: Summer

Highlights

- Foundational evergreen
- Summer flowers
- Stellar winter berries



Yarrow

(*Achillea millefolium*)

Yarrow is a durable flowering perennial for any native garden. The plant commonly flowers from May through June, is a frequent component in butterfly gardens, can work in all kinds of soil, and is happy in containers. Yarrow is super easy to grow, looks best with regular water, and can speedily reseed.

Height: 1-3 feet

Width: 1-3 feet

Sun Exposure: Full shade to full sun

Water Requirements: Low

Soil: Tolerates a variety of soils except for wet

Bloom Period: Year-round

Highlights

- Durable and dynamic
- Long lasting flowers
- Feather-like foliage

Know Before You Grow

- **Scope:** Define the area for your planting project. Will it be a few pots? A narrow strip next to the sidewalk? An entire yard?
- **Light conditions:** Observe sun and shade on your site throughout the day. Keep in mind, the sun is at its highest angle during summer and lowest during winter, so exposure will vary across seasons.
- **Wet spots:** Identify low points (if any) where water might accumulate.
- **Zones:** Based on your observations, divide your site into smaller zones of like conditions.
- **Cost:** What is your budget for the project? Adjustments to plant sizes/plant quantities or a phased approach to the design can help keep costs manageable.
- **Involvement:** How much time and energy are you willing to spend taking care of your plants? Some plants don't need as much attention as others, but all plants require some basic maintenance!

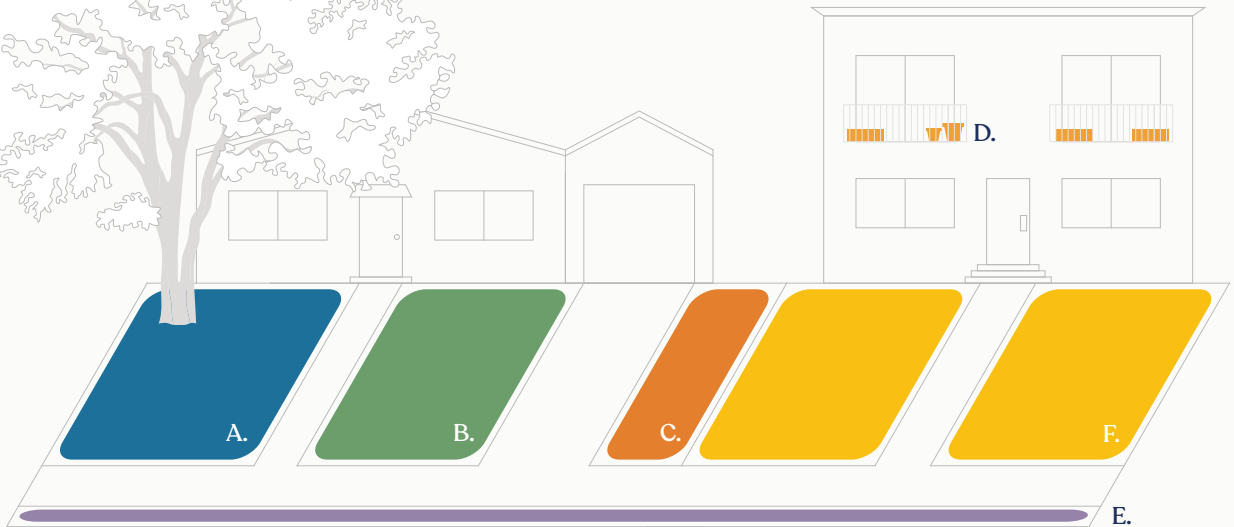
Design Tips

- Rather than buying one of everything, plant fewer species in higher quantities for a more modern and calming effect.
- Plant in drifts and swaths of like plants, rather than a sprinkling of different plant species, for a simple but powerful visual effect.
- Try to plant in groups of odd numbers.
- Give plants room to grow into their mature dimensions! Always note the mature sizes on the container labels and space plants accordingly.
- Give structure to your yard with evergreen shrubs that will remain green year-round and that will act as a backdrop to more colorful perennials and annuals.
- Select a larger species, such as a Manzanita or Oak, as a single specimen for the landscape. Give it space so that it can grow to its full, mature form.
- If a particular view is important, imagine planting in layers of increasing height from front to back.

Let's Get Growing

California native plants are suited for every space. The following designs show a range of garden solutions for different styles and circumstances. Go to bloomcalifornia.org/garden-inspiration for specific plant quantities for each design!

- A. Shady Refuge
- B. Sunny Pollinator Patch
- C. Privacy Hedgerow
- D. Pots + Planters
- E. Linear Strip + Swale
- F. Welcoming Entry





A. Shady Refuge

Planting in shade is all about choosing plants that are suited to low-light conditions.

74-125 TOTAL PLANTS

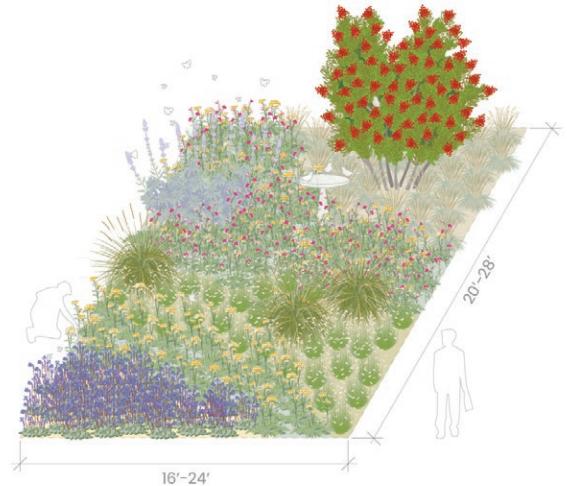
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|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Valley Oak | 15-25 Douglas Iris |
| 3-4 Red Flowering Currant | 15-25 Hummingbird Sage |
| 10-20 California Fescue | 15-25 Coyote Mint |
| 15-25 Common Yarrow | |

B. Sunny Pollinator Patch

Areas with full sun are perfect for drought-adapted native flowering plants, which also serve as important sources of food and shelter for pollinators and birds.

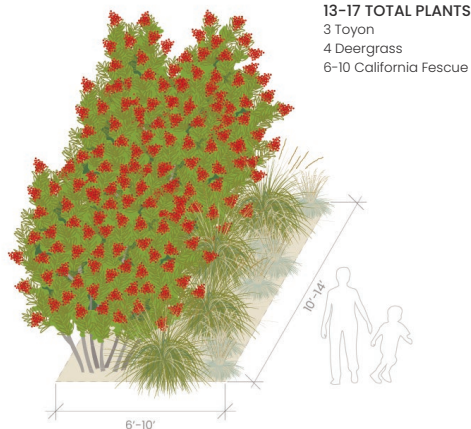
80-140 TOTAL PLANTS (plus seed)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Purple Clarkia (seed) | 10-20 Desertbells |
| 1 White Sage | 15-25 Blue Grama |
| 1 Toyon | 20-30 California Fescue |
| 3 Deergrass | 30-60 Common Yarrow |



C. Privacy Hedgerow

Native shrubs such as the dense, evergreen Toyon, can be a more beautiful and ecologically beneficial alternative to conventional fencing.



D. Pots + Planters

You can create a native plant oasis on your patio or balcony by using pots and planters!

1-5 TOTAL PLANTS (per pot)

1 White Sage	Fescue
1-3 Purple Clarkia	1-3 Common
1-3 California	Yarrow



E. Linear Strip

No space is too small or narrow to add at least a few native plants. For tough spots like curbsides and medians, try resilient grasses mixed with annually seeded flowers.

8-12 TOTAL PLANTS (plus seed)

Purple Clarkia (seed)
4-6 Blue Grama
4-6 California Fescue

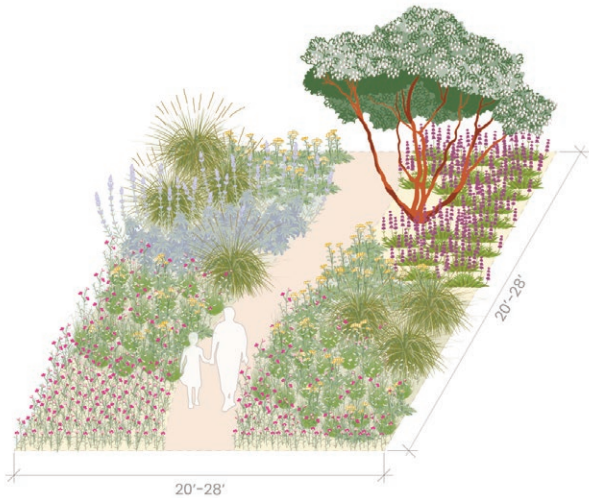


E. Swale/Low Spot

For drainage depressions or low spots in your garden, look for species like Douglas Iris or Yarrow that don't mind excess moisture from time to time.

8-12 TOTAL PLANTS (plus seed)

Purple Clarkia (seed)
8-12 Douglas Iris



F. Informal/Naturalistic

For a wilder and more natural look, work with curves instead of lines. Layer and weave drifts of species together.

57-100 TOTAL PLANTS (plus seed)

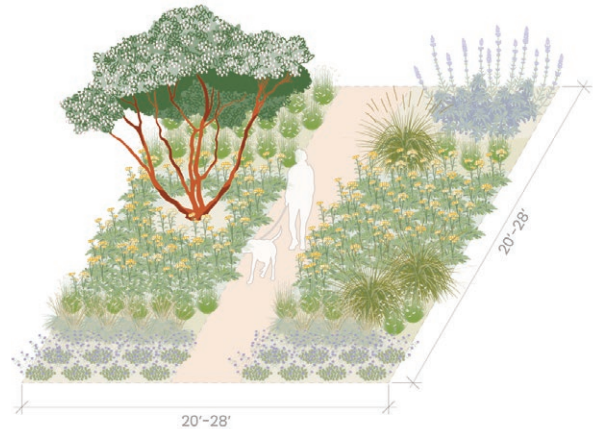
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|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Purple Clarkia (seed) | 10-20 Hummingbird Sage |
| 1 Common Manzanita | 20-35 Blue Grama |
| 1-2 White Sage | 20-35 Common Yarrow |
| 5-7 Deergrass | |

F. Modern/Contemporary

For a more contemporary look, stick with straight lines and interrupt single-species planting areas with a specimen Manzanita or Deer Grass. For a more minimalist look, cut back on the total number of plants.

65-135 TOTAL PLANTS

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Common Manzanita | 10-20 Coyote Mint |
| 1 White Sage | 20-35 Blue Grama |
| 3 Deergrass | 20-60 Common Yarrow |
| 10-15 California Fescue | |



California Native Plants for Every Space

ANNUALS



Purple Clarkia
Clarkia purpurea



Desertbells
Phacelia capanularia



Deergrass
Muhlenbergia rigens



Blue Grama
Bouteloua gracilis



California Fescue
Festuca californica



Common Yarrow
Achillea millefolium



Douglas Iris
Iris douglasiana



Hummingbird Sage
Salvia spathacea



Coyote Mint
Monardella villosa

30'

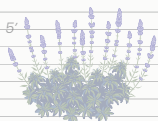
SHRUBS

20'

15'

10'

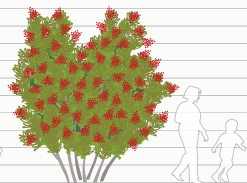
5'



White Sage
Salvia apiana

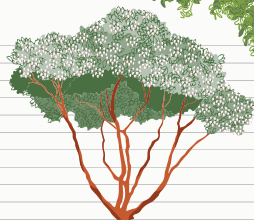


Red Flowering Currant
Ribes sanguineum

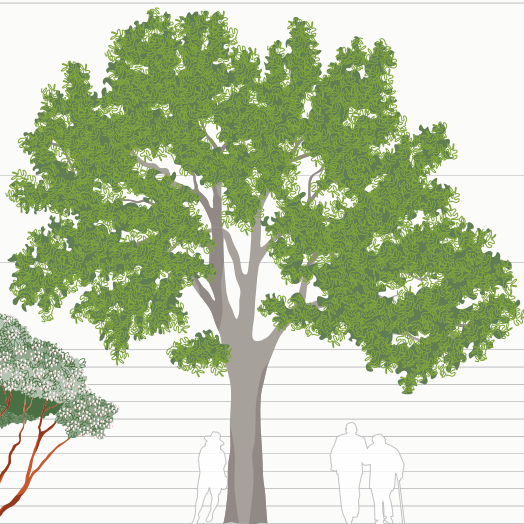


Toyon
Heteromeles arbutifolia

TREES



Common Manzanita
Arctostaphylos manzanita



Valley Oak
Quercus lobata

Explore More

Continue your native plant journey at bloomcalifornia.org.



Plant Care

Dig into the details of our plant profiles.



Garden Inspiration

Discover more ideas for your native plant garden.



Participating Nurseries

Find *Bloom! California* nurseries near you.



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