

Tending Your Native Garden Through The Years



CA poppy – coastal form
. perennial .

a talk previously known as
Maintaining Your Native
Garden
Year by Year

PREFACE

- Gardens are alive and may not stay as we direct – unlike our home interiors
- Even our native plant gurus sometimes disagree with each other – so can we all
- Rarely there's 'Eureka!' – more often there's 'Hmm.. that's interesting.'
- Everything I share here is based on my observations, experiences, and studies – please adapt according to your own such things
- A garden is never done – don't worry, be happy



Our unavoidable four major sufferings:
Birth, Aging, Sickness, Death

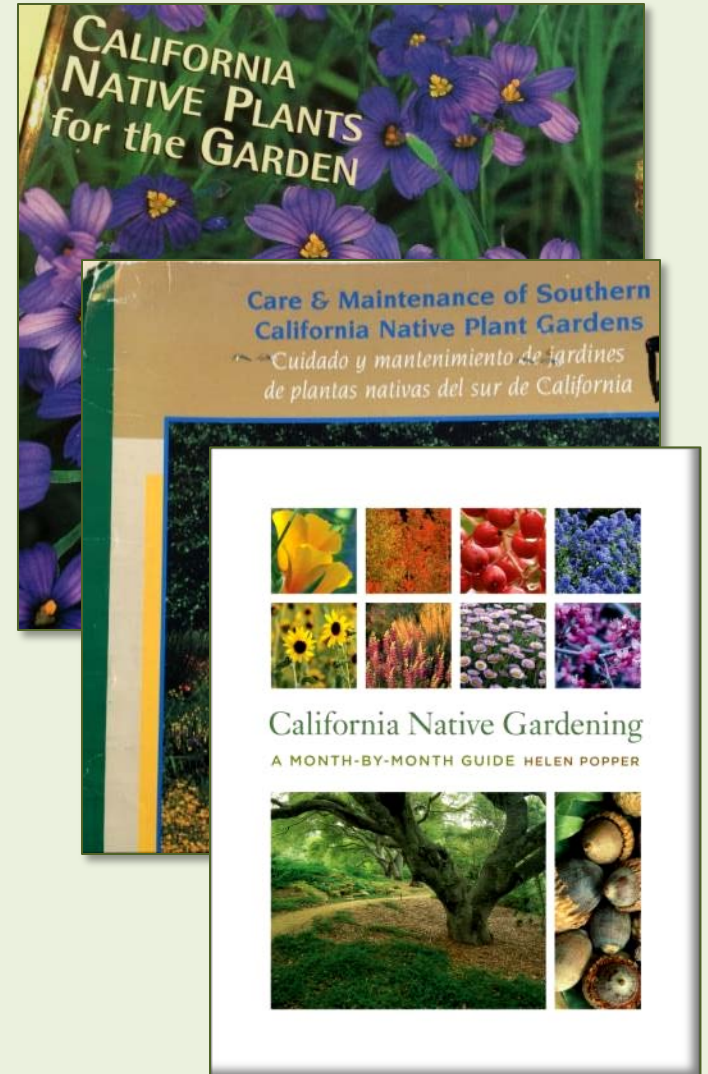
Applies to gardens too

all photos and/or designs credit
peigi duvall/indig design
unless otherwise noted

WE'VE STUDIED AND PRACTICED A BIT OF NATIVE GARDENING

IN EACH OF OUR OWN
UNIQUE CORNERS OF THIS
CALIFORNIA FLORISTIC PROVINCE

- ✓ Rhythm of the CA seasons
 - ✓ Habitat relationships
- ✓ Sustainable practices
 - ✓ Right plant, right place
- ✓ Garbage in, garbage out



We may have already practiced Integrated Garden Tending (IGT) based on our tolerance threshold

High tolerance for a less tended look



Low tolerance for a less tending look



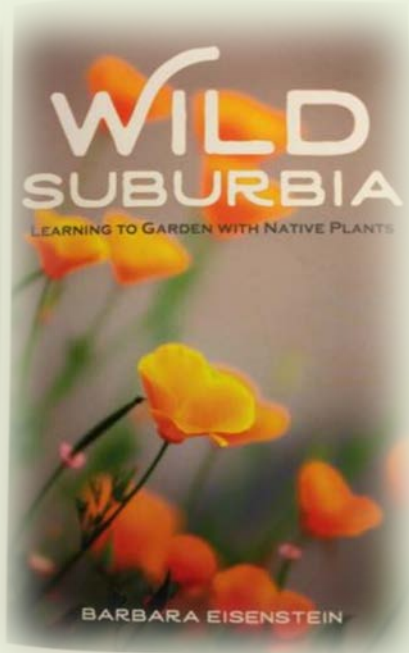
Integrated Pest and Weed Management enable the healthiest gardens



Medium tolerance for a less tending look

NO MAINTENANCE =
A WILDLANDS LOOK

NO WATER =
STRESSED OR DEAD PLANTS



TENDING OUR CA NATIVE PLANT GARDENS will always include consideration of (5) points



- ✓ climate and weather
- ✓ soil
- ✓ plants
- ✓ irrigation
- ✓ personal taste

GOING NATIVE GARDEN TOUR

Going Native Garden Tour 2017

South: Sat, Apr 22, 2017, 10:00am to 4:00pm
North: Sun, Apr 23, 2017, 10:00am to 4:00pm

A free tour of native gardens in Santa Clara Valley & Peninsula, San Francisco Bay Area

*Organized by the California Native Plant Society (Santa Clara Valley Chapter)
in association with UCCE Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County.*

HOME PAGE

NOW LET'S DO THINGS FOR THE LONG HAUL

CA Native Gardens from:

- 1 – 3 growing seasons
- 4 – 8 growing seasons
- > 9 growing seasons



Arctostaphylos (Manzanita) sp.
Santa Barbara Botanic Garden
focused on the flora of CA since 1936
photo by taken 11/2004

1 – 3 growing seasons: Climate and Weather

ambient sun, shade, wind, temperature, moisture/dryness, microclimates

Trees: choose space wisely



Understory
(beneath main canopy): plant for current AND future conditions



Shrubs: pinch or prune after blooming as needed to encourage best shape



Weather creates short term effects
Climate creates long term effects

4 – 8 growing seasons : Climate and Weather

ambient sun, shade, wind, temperature, moisture/dryness, microclimates



Trees: adjust plantings if conditions have changed... or not

Understory (beneath main canopy): replace plants that have done poorly or that you never quite liked



Shrubs: add new plants to fill gaps or remove any that have become bullies

> 9 growing seasons: Climate and Weather

ambient sun, shade, wind, temperature, moisture/dryness, microclimates

Trees: be vigilant to mitigate stress caused by any and all factors

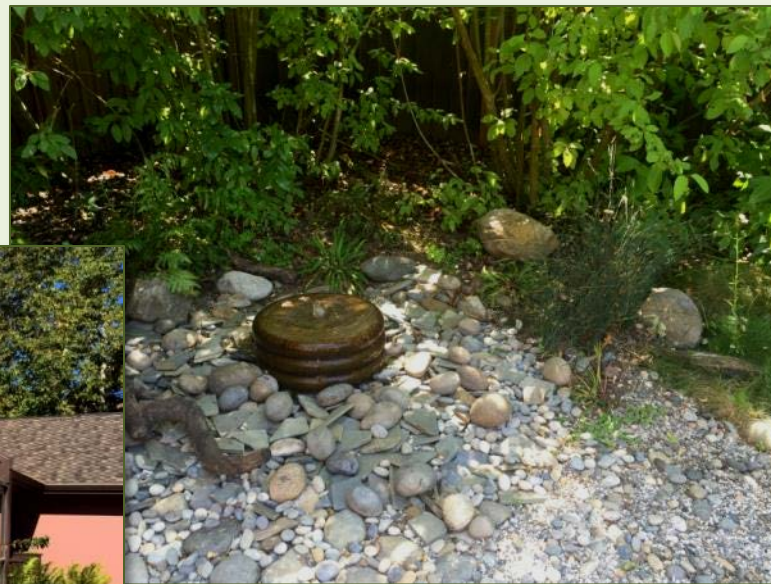
Walk in the wilds to see how natives develop in nature then adapt to your garden setting. CNPS hikes are great for this.



Healthy, established gardens enable healthy, vibrant habitat for all creatures great and small



Understory (beneath main canopy): shape or thin out as needed to allow for best air circulation



Shrubs: continue to prune for shape and rejuvenation as tolerated by plant

1 – 3 growing season: Climate and Weather

ambient sun, shade, wind, temperature, moisture/dryness, microclimates

Perennials: if happy where they are planted then these shorter lived plants will be exuberant in season



Gilia tricolor: seedlings from last jan-may bloom



Annuals: live for just one year, most want sun, and re-seed easily if happy



Succulents & Potted Plants: can be started small, even grown in doors, then planted out into a planting bed or rock garden

4 – 8 growing seasons : Climate and Weather

ambient sun, shade, wind, temperature, moisture/dryness, microclimates

Succulents: move or pot up if conditions are more favorable elsewhere in your garden



Annuals: if your spot has worked well with them then sow new and varied seeds



Perennials: these are important years for most since you've watched them get established and now want to see them last even longer

> 9 growing seasons: Climate and Weather

ambient sun, shade, wind, temperature, moisture/dryness, microclimates

Grasses: most have sunk their roots deeply by now and can survive even strong fluctuations in the weather



Perennials: the drought and poor tending may not kill the tough ones but they certainly disguise their natural beauty.



Succulents: if temperatures have grown warmer through the years then they most likely have died or need to be moved as soon as possible

1 – 3 growing seasons: Soil for healthy root and shoot development



Trees: this 'St. Helena Manzanita was planted from a 15 gallon container into added healthy soil that was mounded on top of the existing construction -compacted clay soil to give the new tree roots a chance to grow into the new soil while the old was improved by resulting microbial activity

Understory (beneath main canopy) and Shrubs: several old pine trees had died here while two remained creating an acidic layer of decomposing needles. Healthy top soil was brought in mix with or mound on top of the surface while plant selection favored some with greater acid tolerance



Watch this space

4 – 8 growing seasons : Soil healthy root establishment

Trees: here is the same 'St. Helena Manzanita during forth growing season. The irrigation continues to be drip and mulch is replenished in late spring and fall and always kept 6" – 12" away from root crown



Improving soil: adding organic matter of a matched type to your plants and their needs can help revive natural processes that occur to keep your soil alive and healthy but is not always necessary



Understory and Shrubs: a Ceanothus 'Concha' and other shrubs have started establishing themselves well in the mounded, improved soil

>9 growing seasons : Soil established roots, branches, and foliage

Trees: The St. Helena Manzanita was sited for screening from neighbors as seen from a bedroom window. Now at its full size, the purpose is accomplished. Natural leaf drop is allowed to accumulate and now act as the only mulch used within the canopy area



Understory and Shrubs: the Ceanothus 'Concha' and other shrubs and perennials are now established while seasonal wildflowers complete the scene. Natural leaf drop is left around the plants to provide mulch while new pine needle fall is redirected under the canopy of the pines

1 – 3 growing seasons: Soil root development

Succulents: the importance of planting native succulents in well drained soil is paramount and a planting bed behind a dry stacked rock wall is a great, easily drained location



Perennials and Ground Cover: an old lawn was sheet mulched and planted up with native strawberries which are strong enough to withstand the roots of existing Chinese Pistache trees and full coverage was achieved in two years. A dry creek bed helped mitigate the rest of the old clay soil

Bulbs and Potted Plants: native bulbs are fun to grow in pots where you can control the soil and water. Since bulbs will make new bulblets, they can easily be harvested and repotted separately.



Calochortus monophyllus

4 – 8 growing seasons: Soil root establishment

spring



Watch out for long necks



Annuals: when re-seeding make sure the seeds make good contact with soil by tamping and watering lightly. Apply any mulch lightly so not to block new sprouts

Perennials and Succulents: more established plantings in full sun can shade their own roots but monitor for desiccation in plants and soil then mulch with organic or inorganic matter as appropriate



late summer

>9 growing seasons : Soil root, branch, and foliage establishment

Perennials: a parent plant may die but not before re-seeding itself in a more favored location. Let it be if you can since it chose its own favored location

After working in the garden or visiting nurseries and before hiking in wildlands make it a habit to sanitize your shoes by spraying or rubbing alcohol on the soles and sides

Potted Plants: some plants can live a long time in a pot but at some point its best to remove it, reduce the root build up, and replant in partially old and partially refreshed planting mix



Ferns: while periodically removing unwanted, unsightly spent fronds, some ferns can be divided and replanted to increase your stock or share with friends

1 – 3 growing seasons: Plants

1st sleep, 2nd creep, 3rd leap



Shrubs: can grow quickly, medium fast, or relatively fast. Believe what you read regarding ultimate size and space accordingly or be ready to do a lot of pruning



Trees: take the longest to become established. Protecting them as needed while they grow can sometimes be necessary

take photos throughout the seasons and years to 'wow' yourself and friends later



wait for it

Understory: You can see it now but there is a Silk Tassel Tree waiting to grow against the bedroom wall

4 – 8 growing seasons : Plants invested inhabitants

Shrubs: a plant is often considered 'established' if it has grown 3 times larger than its original size and/or the roots feel well attached when pulled firmly but gently



didn't have to wait long to get this



Understory: a Silk Tassel tree may not have catkins in the first several years and only the male plants are as showy as these. Toyons of course are beautiful as they fill in

Read up on your plants to learn their needs and preferred tending procedures then don't be afraid to make mistakes

> 9 growing seasons : Plants invested inhabitants



Shrubs: fully established and maturing these shrubs and vine provide screening to the house from the busy street as well as year-round interest as planned and all by the original plantings

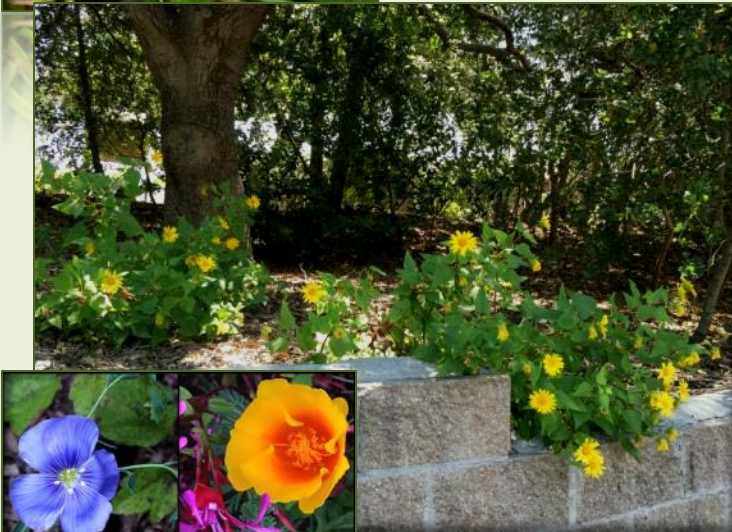
Understory: the Silk Tassel has grown, filling the space and blooming regularly as planned



1 – 3 growing seasons: Plants sleep, creep, leap



Perennials, succulents, and annuals:
everything still looks new, fresh,
sometimes with the gangliness of
youth, less resistant to pests, and
sometimes forgetting to fully bloom.
Light or strategic trimming can help
certain plants fill in and bush up



Healthy plants resist
pests and pathogens
best



4 – 8 growing seasons : Plants invested inhabitants

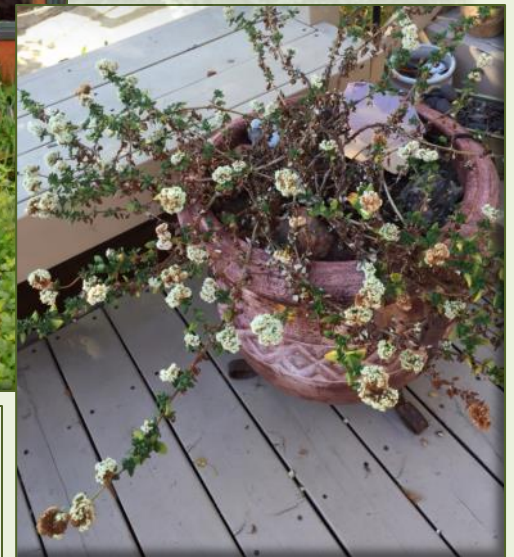


Perennials, grasses,
succulents, potted plants:
In full form and character,
the garden can be put
on periodic cruise control,
especially in summer



Most herbaceous perennials
can be cut back hard to
refresh while other types can
be divided and replanted.
Removing spent blooms can
help make an extended or
second bloom time

Sequential trimming can tidy things
up while leaving some blooms or
seed heads for wildlife



>9 growing seasons : Plants invested inhabitants

Perennials, wildflowers, fruit, grasses:
some things have matured
beautifully, fruiting plants have
become viable, some plants have
taken over whether invited or not, or
maybe, again, you'd like to refresh
the look of some sections



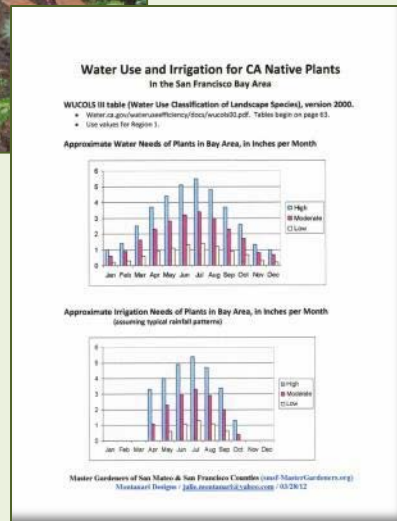
Whether from drought or poor tending or life's been too busy to notice, major rework of the garden may be wanted or needed at this stage. A tending in time saves nine.

1 – 3 growing seasons: Irrigation

help your plants become established

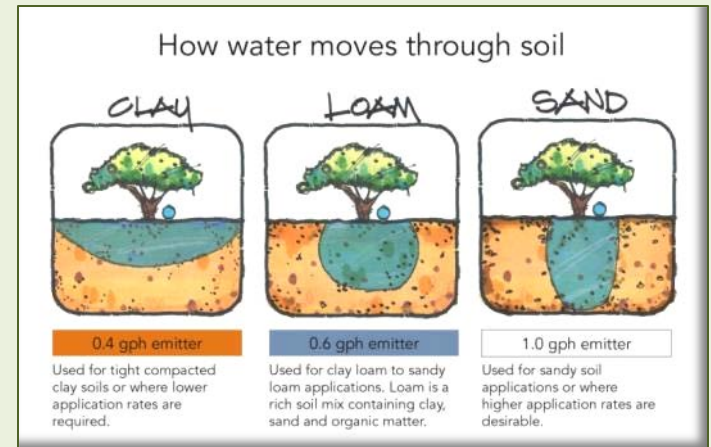


Trees, understory, shrubs:
depending upon the plant, consider irrigating to medium gauge then waning in the first year while knowing you'll be transitioning nursery grown plants that have been watered daily to thriving on less frequent and lower quantity



Julie Montanari Design

Know your soil and how it might change . **Choose** your preferred watering method(s) . **Monitor, adjust and change** as needed throughout the seasons



Water Wise Santa Clara County

Saving water is not just for droughts any more

4 – 8 growing seasons : Irrigation aka 'irritation', keep your plants alive

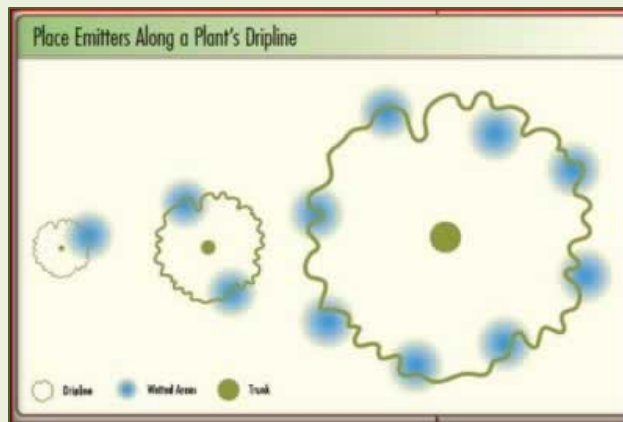


Monitor for efficiency, **double check** for leaks and breaks, look beneath the mulch, **flush** before turning off or on for the seasons, a **fix** in time saves gallons and \$, **deep water** individual plants by hand if needed, **learn** from nature and **adjust** as needed, **add** your wisdom here _____.



Trees, understory, shrubs: 'grow' your emitter spacing with the growth of your plants. Water the canopy not the trunk.

There is not much 'green' about the irrigation industry



ewingirrigation.com

> 9 growing seasons : Irrigation to do or not to do

Windy Hill in September



No supplemental water in your landscape can work depending upon your tolerance threshold

Continue vigilant system monitoring



Trees, understory, shrubs: too much water at any stage makes plants grow too fast and is not a sustainable practice for both the plant as well as our water budgets. Calibrate your regime year by year for optimum balance of growth, bloom, and efficiency

1 – 3 growing seasons: Irrigation

help your plant become established

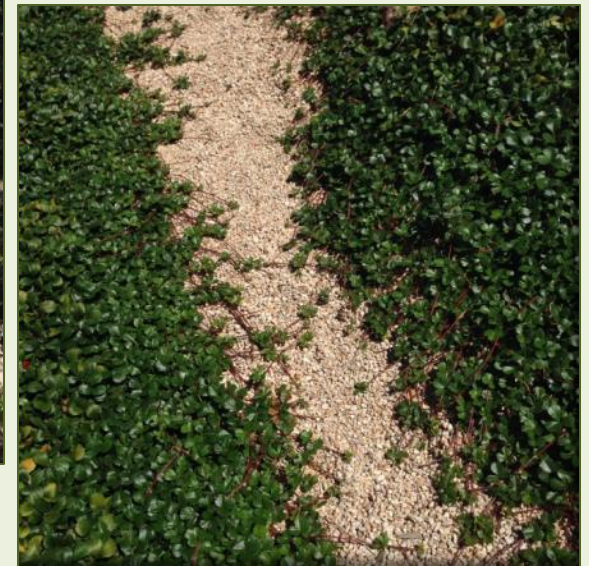


Green roof soil is shallow and more easily dries out until plant roots are more established

Perennials, succulents, annuals: water to enable plants to fill in and out and make sure to monitoring frequently to prevent problems and plant loss. Drought tolerance does not apply until roots are established.



If irrigation is too generous during plant establishment it can result in wasted water and the extra work and green waste to cut things back



4 – 8 growing seasons : Irrigation aka 'irritation', keep your plants alive



Perennials, grasses, annuals: most native grasses want at least some of their naturally evolved period of 'down time' in which they keep their roots alive while 'browning out' on top. Irrigating too much at this time only stresses the plants more and creates extra thatch build up. No matter what the Jones' say, let it happen. Mitigate the dry look with summer, fall, and winter blooming natives.



Some pet peeves:
(1) irrigation tubing left uncovered to heat up and deteriorate sooner
(2) plants needing emitters but have none



> 9 growing seasons : Irrigation to do or not to do



For naturally drought tolerant but smaller native plants, the choice to keep the irrigation on or rip it out is all yours to consider while weighing the benefits and pitfalls.



Perennials, grasses, groundcover, and some shrubs:
established and well kept native plant gardens have form and function – structured and attractive to birds, bees, butterflies, good bugs, and humans alike. Providing supplemental water is an ongoing consideration.

1 – 3 growing seasons: Personal Taste

“never give up!” vs. “change it yet again!”



Understory (sub shrubs): are so useful in gardens. After planting 'go togethers' it's best to decide earlier than later if you like the combo since transplanting can cause undue stress



Trees: when you fall in love with this type of life form, buy it big, and plant it in any empty spot, it may be necessary to consider moving it or even removing to gift another plant nut



Shrubs: although shrubs have typical woody stems, some re-sprout from old wood and some do not. Learn which before you prune.

4 – 8 growing seasons : Personal Taste

“ never give up!” vs. “ change it all!”



Shrubs: some like to create thickets. It's best to know before you grow and take full responsibility

Understory: as some smaller trees start achieving greater heights you hopefully already have a planned max or decide to let it go. Check which seasons are best to prune various trees and shrubs



Trees: more tree lust inspired by walks around the neighborhood but believe it or not the spacing will work and the homeowner is saving their water to use on these new sequoias by all other plantings for drought tolerance. The customer is always right.

It's great to heart
your garden



> 9 growing seasons : Personal Taste

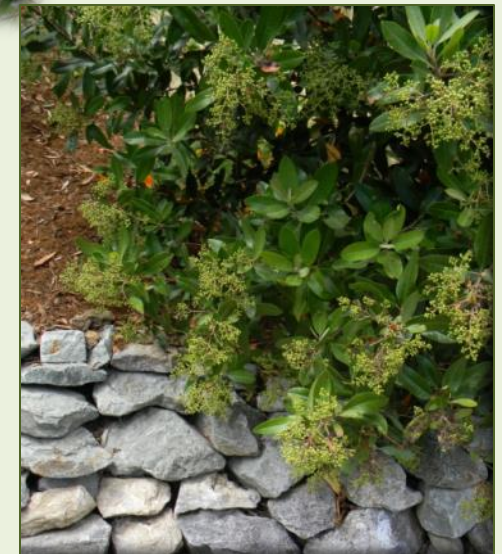
simply “never give up!”

Trees: their true grace and grandeur can now just begin to be grasp. Tending well from the beginning and beyond, even if you need to hire a professional arborist from time to time, is well worth it.



Shrubs: as tall, deciduous ones grow, you may need to continue pruning for shape and purpose

Understory:
allowing the space
and keeping
healthy conditions
will enable these
important habitat
players to provide
their maximum
benefit



1 – 3 growing seasons: Personal Taste

“never give up!” vs. “change it yet again!”

Potted Plants: you'd like a native grape but have no room? Pot it!



Perennials: moist shade or dry sun, matching conditions to your site makes this stage relatively easy



Annuals and Bulbs: if you plant them they might bloom

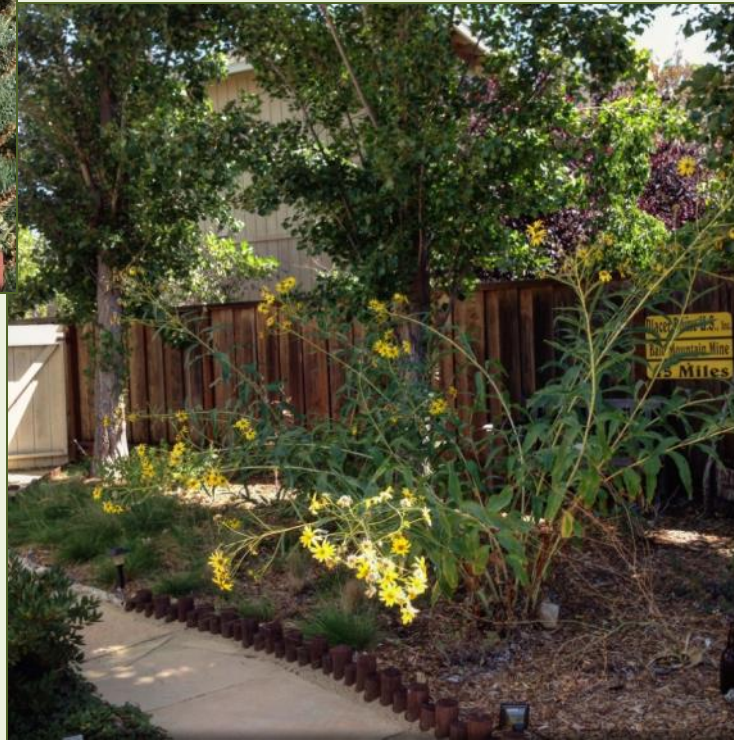


4 – 8 growing seasons : Personal Taste

“never give up!” vs. “change it all!”



Perennials: small or large, some may last longer or disappoint more or have you replanting the same after the original has spent its natural life



Annuals and wildflowers:
keep them coming by letting them seed themselves or continue to add new



Succulents & Potted Plants:
repot and repot and repot
if needed

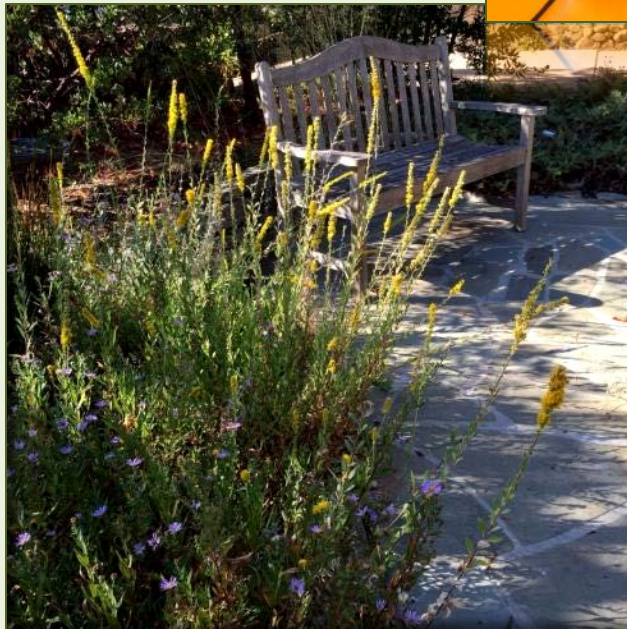
> 9 growing seasons : Personal Taste

simply "never give up!"

Annuals:
some move
in and never
leave.
Embrace it
or forever
fight it



Vines: can last a
very long time and
some bloom better
when they do. Let
them show you
where they want to
go although
trimming and
guiding also helps



Perennials and
grasses: some
strong will survive
this long or re-
seed. You can
decide when
and which to
replant,
reposition, or not



Because of your TLC, may you and your garden coexist for a very long and happy time!



Anza Borrego Desert in spring [www.fullcreditunknown](http://www.fullcreditunknown.com)