Easy-to-Grow and Drought Tolerant Native Plants:

20+ Proven Winners for Your Garden

Nancy McClenny, revised from the original version written by Arvind Kumar, Past President, CNPS-SCV chapter
Tonight's Agenda

• Introduction
• Myths
• Benefits of native plants
• 20 + easy, California native plants
Introduction: The Mission of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is...

To conserve California native plants and their natural habitats.

To increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants.
Frontyard in 1998
Backyard in 1998
Myth: Native plants are unattractive.

• Early settlers wrote glowing accounts of California flora.

• Plant hunters, including David Douglas, started visiting California in the 18th century, documenting its flora and taking seeds back to Europe.

• Appreciation of our native flora was lost to development, agriculture, water-intensive lawns and the imported plants we had learned to love.
Wildflower bloom at
Carrizo Plain National Monument

http://theodorepayne.org/education/wildflower-hotline/

This image by Lloyd Chambers:  http://diglloyd.com/previous/FlowerMedley.jpg
Grasses can be gorgeous?

Paseo de Peralta St, Santa Fe, NM, October, 2015
Local Field Hikes: The Best Education

MILK MAIDS, Pinnacles, Feb. 2011

CHECKERBLOOM, Bean Hollow Beach, May, 2014

MARIPOSA LILY, Pinnacles, April 2014

TIDY TIPS, Edgewood Park, May, 2014

LARKSPUR, Edgewood Park

Photos on this slide by N.McClenny
Myth: Native plants are hard to grow.

Any plant does poorly if its needs aren’t met!

Plants should be EASY to grow in the ecosystem in which they evolved.

Discover the plants that belong in your local ecosystem:

- CNPS-SCV field trips
- www.Calflora.org, click on “What grows here”
- Corelli, Checklist of...Vascular Plants of SCCo/SMCo

Photo by Arvind Kumar
Myth: Native plants are hard to find…and expensive.

Local CA native nurseries:
- Acterra Nursery, Palo Alto (See http://www.acterra.org/programs/stewardship/native_plant_nursery.html)
- Middlebrook Gardens, 76 Race St., San Jose, call for hours
- Native Revival Nursery, 2600 Mar Vista Drive, Aptos
- Yerba Buena Nursery, 12511 San Mateo Rd. (Hwy 92), Half Moon Bay

General nurseries with some CA natives:
- Almaden Valley Nursery, San Jose
- Annie’s Annuals, Richmond (mail order available)
- Payless Nursery near Aborn and King Roads in San Jose
- Summerwinds Nursery in Palo Alto and off Winchester in Campbell

Other sources:
- Seed companies: www.larnerseeds.com and others (mail order available)
- Annual CNPS-SCV plant sales at Hidden Villa, Los Altos, this year on October 17 2015
- Free annual CNPS-SCV seed and cutting exchange

For a complete list, go to:
cnps.org/cnps/grownative/nurseries.php#bay
**Myth: If a plant is a California native, it must be drought-tolerant. Right?**

- All young plants, native or not, require “regular” water until established in a garden.

- Once established, native plants have evolved to survive on the natural precipitation of their native range.

- A CA native that is drought-tolerant in Eureka, CA (40.0” rain/yr) will likely NOT be drought-tolerant in Bakersfield (6.7” rain/yr).
Summer Watering Schedule for Drought Tolerant Natives*

• 1st year: once a week
• 2nd year: once in 2 weeks
• 3rd year: once in 3 weeks
• 4th year and later: once a month or as needed

* This schedule also applies to recent dry winters.
Lots of rain

Semi-arid rainfall amounts

Pacific Ocean
Santa Cruz Mountains
Much of Santa Clara County

Adapted from an image at this site: http://wc.pima.edu/~bfiero/tucsonecology/climate/climate_home.htm
Select Waterwise Natives

• Many established native plants look fine with just **once-a-month** watering in summer.

• Some native plants resent ANY summer water (e.g. oak, coyote bush, flannel bush, wooly blue curls), except in exceptionally dry years.

• Summer water for established natives may improve appearance but may **reduce life span**.
Benefits

Less water use! Rebates NOW.

Naturally diverse, beneficial, and beautiful ecosystem
What is the rebate amount?

– *Temporary* increase in rebates through 12/31/2015.
– 2015 applications are limited to $50,000.
– Receive $2.00/sq ft (up from $1) to convert high-water-use to low-water-use landscape using approved plants and/or irrigation equipment. Some cities, e.g. Morgan Hill, offer higher rebates.

– **How do I qualify?**
– Citizen of Santa Clara County
– Make purchases *after* receiving a “Notice to Proceed” from SCVWD.

How do I start?

– See program details at: [http://www.valleywater.org/Programs/LandscapeRebateProgram.aspx](http://www.valleywater.org/Programs/LandscapeRebateProgram.aspx)
– Call Water Conservation Hotline at *(408) 630-2554* with questions.
I. Lower water bills:

Garden / Garden Study from City of Santa Monica

Reference: Click on “garden-garden 2013” at the end of the first paragraph at:
http://www.smgov.net/departments/ose/categories/landscape/garden-garden.aspx
II. A Healthier Ecosystem:

Local native plants generally do not require:
    Pesticides
    Fertilizers
    Herbicides
III. Innate Survival Strategies

- **Hummingbird Sage**
  (Hairy, resinous leaves)

- **Giant Chalk Dudleya**
  (White, succulent leaves)

- **Mountain Mahogany**
  (Leaves vertical when stressed)

- **White Sage**
  (Small leaves in summer, big ones in winter.)

- **Coast Live Oak**
  (Edges of leaves curled under when stressed)

Photos on this slide by N McClenny
Innate Survival Strategies

California Buckeye
(Early leaf drop in late summer and winter dormancy)

Photo by N McClenny
IV. Habitat Value

Plants are at the bottom of the food chain.

Native flora have coevolved with native fauna over millenia.

Some types of fauna depend on very specific types of flora.
Getting Started:

20+ Easy-to-Grow Plants*
ANNUALS

• RUBY CHALICE CLARKIA (*Clarkia rubicunda*)
• ELEGANT CLARKIA (*Clarkia unguiculata*)
• CALIFORNIA POPPY (*Eschscholzia californica*)
• GLOBE GILIA (*Gilia capitata*)
• MEADOWFOAM (*Limnanthes douglasii*)
RUBY CHALICE CLARKIA

*Clarkia rubicunda* (KLAR-kee-a ru-bi-CUN-da)
ELEGANT CLARKIA
Clarkia unguiculata
(KLAR-kee-a un-gwik-you-LAY-ta)
CALIFORNIA POPPY

*Escholzia californi*a (esh-SHOLE-tzee-a)
GLOBE GILIA

Gilia capitata (JEE-leea ca-pi-TAY-ta)
MEADOWFOAM

*Limnanthes douglasii sulfurea*

(*lim-NAN-thus dug-LAS-ee-I sul-FUR-ee-a*)

Photos by Arvind Kumar
Alternative yellow wildflower: *Layia platyglossa* (Tidy Tips)

Photo from http://www.lernerseeds.com/product/tidy-tips
BONUS PLANT: COMMON MADIA (Madia elegans) Blooms in summer.
Wildflower Care

- **Water regularly** including winter weeks when there is no rain.
- **Weed regularly**. Native wildflowers can’t compete with invasive annual weed species.
- **Guard against snails and slugs** with regular hand-picking, traps (e.g. beer), barriers (e.g. copper strips), and baits (iron phosphate products such as Sluggo)*.
- **Harvest seed** if desirable.

* For details, see [http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7427.html](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7427.html)
Perennials

- **YARROW** (*Achillea millefolium*)
- **CALIFORNIA FUCHSIA** (*Epilobium canum* and *E. septentrionale*)
- **WILD NAKED BUCKWHEAT** (*Eriogonum nudum* ‘Ella Nelson’s Yellow’)
- **DOUGLAS IRIS** (*Iris douglasiana*)
- **FOOTHILL PENSTEMON** (*Penstemon heterophyllus*)
YARROW

Achillea millefolium

(ak-ILL-ee-a mil-eh-FO-lee-um)
CALIFORNIA FUCHSIA

Epilobium septentrionale ‘Select Mattole’

Photo by N McClenny
NAKED WILD BUCKWHEAT
(Eriogonum nudum ‘Ella Nelson’s Yellow’)

Photos by N McClenny
DOUGLAS IRIS (*Iris douglasiana*)

Photo by Armind Kumar

Pacific Coast Hybrids

Photos by N McClenny
FOOTHILL PENSTEMON

(Penstemon heterophyllus)

Photo by N McClenny
BONUS PLANT: Deer Grass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*)
How to Plant Nursery Stock

- Plant top of root ball 1-2" above surrounding grade.
- 2-4" layer of bark mulch. Do not bury stems or trunk.
- Roots at outer edge of root ball should be loosened to ensure good backfill-to-root contact.
- Backfill with topsoil from hole and water thoroughly.
- Hole should be three times as wide as root ball with sloped sides.
- Root ball should sit directly on top of undisturbed soil.

http://www.buncombemastergardener.org/fall-planting-trees/
SHRUBS

- COYOTE BUSH \((Baccharis pililaris)\)
- CALIFORNIA BUCKWHEAT \((Eriogonum fasciculatum)\)
- STICKY MONKEYFLOWER \((Mimulus aurantiacus)\)
- COFFEEBERRY \((Frangula [formerly Rhamnus] californica)\)
- WHITE or PINK-FLOWERING CURRANT \((Ribes sanguineum var. glutinosum)\)
Coyote Bush

(*Baccharis pilularis* ‘Pigeon Point’ and other cultivars)

Photo by N. McClenny
CALIFORNIA BUCKWHEAT

*Eriogonum fasciculatum*

(Er-ee-OG-an-um fa-sik-yoo-LAY-tum)
COFFEEBERRY

(Frangula californica, formerly known as Rhamnus californica)
STICKY MONKEYFLOWER

*Mimulus aurantiacus*

(MIM-yoo-lus aw-ran-TIE-a-kus)

Photo by Arvind Kumar
Mimulus

‘Jelly Bean Orange’

‘Jelly Bean White’

‘Trish’

M. aurantiacus var grandiflorus

Photos by N McClenny
Pink (or White)-flowering Currant
(Ribes sanguineum v. glutinosum ‘Inverness White’)

Photos by N McClenny
Trees, Group I

DR. HURD MANZANITA (Arctostaphylos ‘Dr. Hurd’)
CALIFORNIA LILIC (Ceanothus ‘Ray Hartman’)
SILK TASSEL BUSH (Garrya elliptica ‘James Roof’)
TOYON (Heteromeles arbutifolia)
HOLLY-LEAVED CHERRY (Prunus ilicifolia var illicifolia)
DR HURD MANZANITA
(Arctostaphylos ’Dr. Hurd’)
Ceanothus ‘Ray Hartman’
Silk Tassel Bush (Garrya elliptica ‘James Roof’)

Photos by N McClenny, Castle Rock State Park, 2/2011
TOYON (Heteromeles arbutifolia)
Toyon
On Embarcadero Rd, Palo Alto, and at Foothill College’s “Native Hill” (insert below)

Photos by N McClenny
Holly-leaf Cherry

*(Prunus ilicifolia)*
Holly-leaf Cherry

*(Prunus ilicifolia)*

IN THE WILD, Santa Monica Mtns

All photos on this slide at http://www.smmflowers.org/bloom/bloom.
Bonus Plant:

Mountain Mahogany

*(Cercocarpus betuloides)*

[Image]

Photo by N.J.McClenny

http://www.smmflowers.org/bloom/bloom
TREES, Group II

CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE  (*Aesculus californica*)
WESTERN REDBUD  (*Cercis occidentalis*)
COAST LIVE OAK  (*Quercus agrifolia*)
VALLEY OAK  (*Quercus lobata*)
BLUE ELDERBERRY  (*Sambucus nigra ssp.caerulea*)
CALIFORNIA BUCKEYE
(Aesculus californica)

Photo by Arvind Kumar
Western Redbud
(Cercis occidentalis)

Photos on this slide by N McClenny
Coast Live Oak
(Quercus agrifolia)
VALLEY OAK  (Quercus lobata)

Photo by  Arvind Kumar
BLUE ELDERBERRY
(Sambucus nigra ssp caerulea, formerly S. mexicana)
PLAN--AND PLANT FOR A BETTER WORLD.

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