

Scripps Miramar Seed Library

“Grow & Share”



Newsletter

Third Quarter 24

NATIVE PLANTING

California is blessed with remarkable diversity. The state is home to 25 percent of the plants that occur north of Mexico, more native plant species than any other state in the United States. Moreover, a third of these plants are found nowhere else on Earth! It's because over millennia, geological diversity accumulated biological diversity. New hills or distinct soil patches drove the evolution of new types of organisms, while cool mountains and scorching of micro deserts sheltered ancient organisms that have gone extinct everywhere else - except here.

Gardening with natives means gardening with plants that have belonged for thousands of years in the place we call home. Natives reflect the characteristics of their locale. They have adapted to prevailing temperatures, rainfall and to local, often



distinctive soils. Existing with one another, many of them share resources—even water through interconnected underground root structures. They feed, shelter, and depend on native wildlife, including butterflies, birds, and other pollinators.

Native plants offer us unsurpassed practicality and generally require fewer inputs. These plants usually need less supplemental water and only a few get much benefit from fertilizer or other amendments. They, therefore, require less work, less replanting, less protecting and less pruning. Echoing the wilderness, natives bring habitat and a sense of place. A native garden can contain

“volunteer natives”, some brought by birds from a distant park and others sprung from long-dormant seeds.

WHEN TO BEGIN

For most parts of California, fall is the ideal planning time. With shortening days, cool air, and still warm soil, plants direct their growth to their roots. If they are put in the ground now, they will have ample time to establish themselves before the stress of a summer drought. It is best to plant them in the areas of the garden that suit them best, such as island bush poppies and woolly blue curls on a slope or in coarse, fast draining soil. Put redwood understory perennials, such as Pacific bleeding hearts and sword ferns, in shade and close to a water source.

Cool Season Grasses can be planted from gallon containers, from plugs and seeds or laid as sod. Many of California's native grasses, like needle grasses and most fescues are cool season grasses. Fall is the best time to get them established in the garden. This is an ideal time to buy plants from native nurseries and plant sales. If you want to plant a tree, as soon as you begin to notice acorns on the ground, collect them from the trees themselves. Plant coast live oak acorns soon after you collect them. Also, other oak acorns can be stored in the refrigerator for a month before planting them.

WHAT TO DO

Most Southern California natives require well-drained soils and will struggle in heavy clay soils that retain water and smother the roots. These plants and their bloom cycles are adapted to the Mediterranean climate pattern of winter rains and up to six months of summer drought.

Before wildflower seeds can be sown successfully in a new area of the garden, weeds should be allowed to germinate and then be removed. This requires some patience. It is always better to sow just before rains are forecast.

You can start watering the area as the weather cools and continue to water until the weeds pop up. Then hoe them over and sow the wildflower seeds.

HOW TO SOW

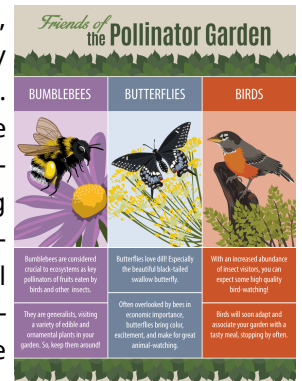
The planting season should begin with the rains. Wait for soaking rains or prepare the site by watering deeply as soon as the air temperatures cool. Consider sowing in drifts of a single species. This will make it easy to distinguish newly germinated wildflowers from weeds and will attract bees and butterflies. Try to sow seeds evenly and allow them to come in contact with the soil. Mix them into a handful or more of fine soil or sand before distributing them on the ground. After sowing the seeds, they will need protection from birds, rodents, snails, and slugs. Some gardeners walk over the area to nudge their seeds into closer contact with the soil. Then, adding a thin layer of gravel will assist young plants to flourish.

WATER

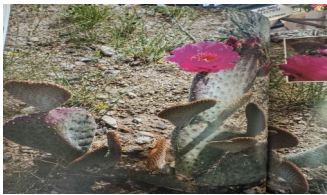
Water gently at first, returning multiple times using a fine mist so that you do not wash away the seeds or knock down the tiny seedlings. Water new plantings and containers during dry spells and add more water if it is windy. Once the cool days arrive, you also can water to encourage new fall growth.

POLLINATORS

Over 100,000 invertebrates-including bees, butterflies, beetles, moths, wasps, flies and more than a thousand mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians take on the job of pollinating plants. This group of wildlife buzzes, flutters, and creeps from plant to plant, dining on protein rich pollen and high energy nectar. As they move, they transport and deposit pollen, fertilizing plants and allowing those plants to reproduce. Bees are the most numerous, effective and important pollinators. Roughly 4,000 species of native bees, some of which are endangered, perform the critically important ecological service of pollinating wild plants across the North American ecosystem. Pollinators worldwide are in decline, losing numbers to threats like pesticide poisoning, habitat loss, and disease. Creating a wildlife habitat garden is one way to help bees and other pollinators at a local level. Watering without pesticides will also protect the wildlife of the garden. Saving an old-growth tree, which is invaluable and irreplaceable for both humans and wildlife, is also important to creating a new habitat. Teaching about the native trees and small wildlife to the rural communities or to the people who are living in areas near national or state parks will foster the importance of habitat.

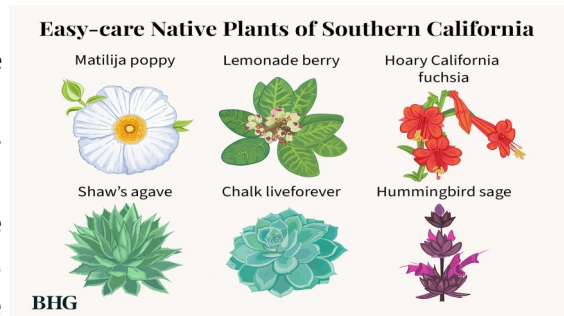


Diversity is the key to a well-balanced garden. Choose a selection of plants that will provide blooms from early spring through winter. To further maximize the number and diversity of pollinators, choose a mix of flowers with a variety of sizes and shapes. Here are introductions to a few plants:



Beavertail Prickly Pear is a plant from the cactus family. The blue-green pads of the small-scale, shrubby prickly pear make an attractive accent to a cactus garden, especially when it produces brilliant pink flowers that cover the plant. It blooms during the spring to the early summer and does best in full sun with well-drained, sandy or gravelly soils, and not much water. It attracts cactus bees, native flies, and wasps.

Hummingbird Sage is a plant from the mint family. This leafy, green mat is studded with flagpoles of red flowers. It can grow in full sun to full shade; loamy, clayey well-drained soils. This plant attracts humming birds, butterflies, and bees. This is a top ten garden plant that thrives as an understory ground cover.



California Buckwheat is a plant from the Buckwheat family. It blooms in the spring through the fall, requiring full sun and coarse, well-draining soils. Widespread across many vegetation communities, this adaptable, long-blooming buckwheat is blanketed with a dense cluster of pinkish to white flowers, followed by rusty-colored seed heads. It is a highly attractive nectar source for bees and butterflies, especially hairstreaks and blues.



SEED LIBRARY PICK-PLANT: Sage, an aromatic herb of the mint family, which includes oregano, lavender, rosemary, thyme and basil, is cultivated for its pungent edible leaves. Sage is native to the Mediterranean region and is used fresh or dried as a flavoring in many foods, particularly in stuffings for poultry, pork and sausages. Some varieties are also grown as ornamentals, due to their attractive leaves and flowers. There are several other species of the genus *Salvia* that are also known as sage. Recently, several studies have demonstrated the health benefits of sage due to its range of anti-inflammatory and antioxidant compounds. There are currently more than 900 species of sage.



SEED LIBRARY PICK-RECIPE Piñon Hotcakes

- 1 ½ cups ground raw pine nuts
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 tbs sugar
- 1 cup milk

Mix all dry ingredients. Slowly beat in milk to make a smooth batter. Drop by the spoonful onto a greased skillet and cook until golden brown.



GARDEN EVENTS @ Scripps Ranch

Garden Share
Saturday, August 10th,
 Garden Share @ 2-3:30 pm
 SR Library Courtyard

Join us with your friends and family to share your garden. Bring what you have to share. Take home something you really want. Be sure to bring a bag to take home your finds!

What to bring: Any extra bounty from the garden (produce, fruit, herbs, flowers, plants in pots), seeds, seedlings, tools. Anything garden related is welcome!

Come meet your fellow gardeners and share your experiences!

Scripps Miramar Ranch Library
 10301 Scripps Lake Dr., San Diego, CA 92131 (619) 488-8158

Library

The library has several events scheduled if you are interested.

**Garden Share- Aug 10th
 2-3:30pm@ Courtyard**

SEED LIBRARY BOOK SUGGESTION: Native Plant Gardening for Birds, Bees & Butterflies-

This book is a field guide to 108 native plants, blooming periods, and what animals the plant attracts. Call N. 635.95179/MILLER



References: Popper, Helen (2012) : "California Native Gardening". Published by University of California Press.

There are multiple resources available at Scripps Ranch Library that are not cited here. We request that you share pictures of your garden and tells us about your experiences, which can be helpful for other gardeners. Also, we invite you to send in your garden related questions and we will answer them in the next newsletter.

This newsletter is composed by Ashu Agarwal and edited by Jeff Lash
 For any questions, please contact Ashu Agarwal (seedlibrary@srfol.org)

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