

# Low Water Use California Native Plants *for Sonoma County Gardens*



# Why Use Natives?

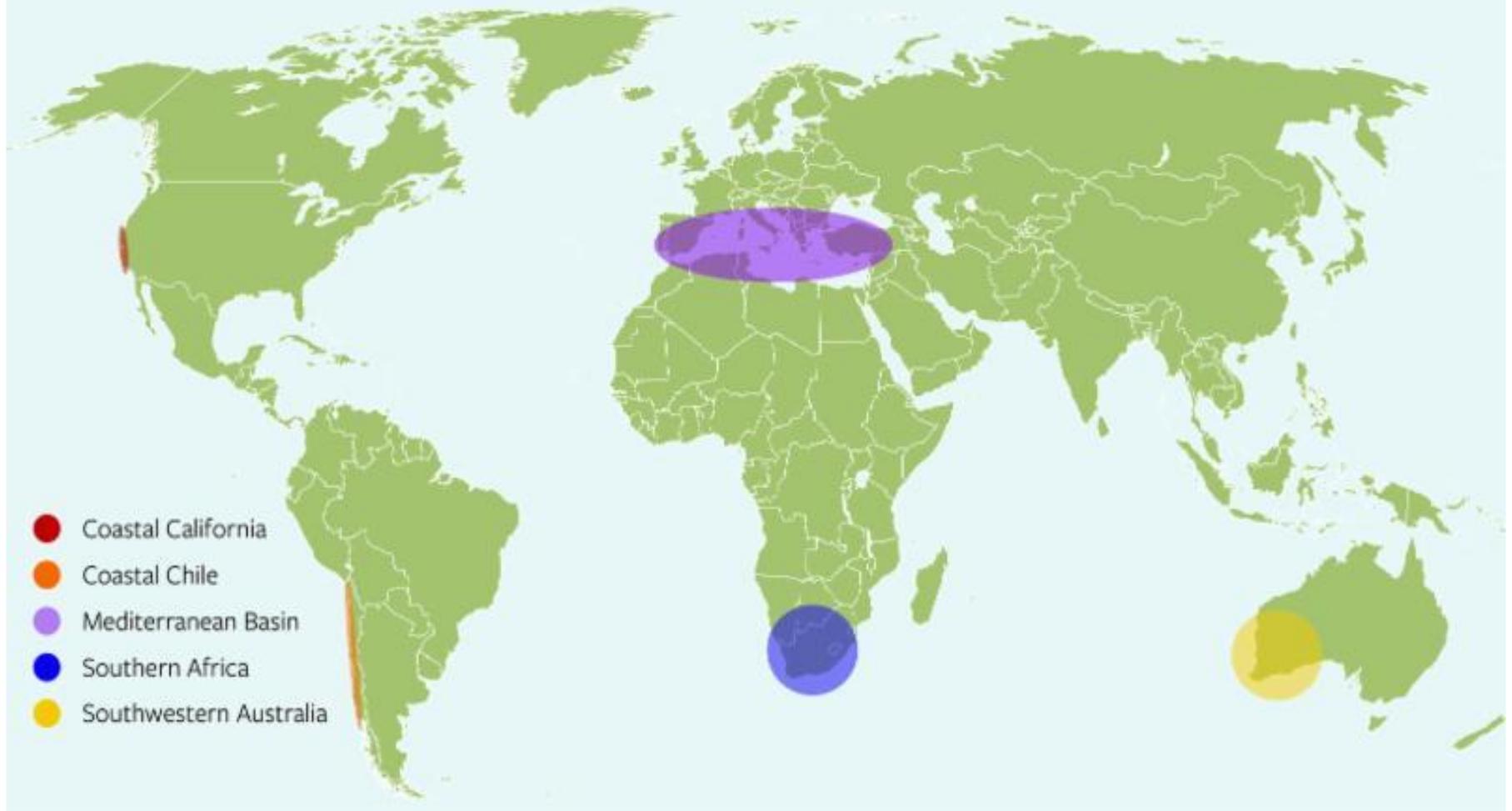
- Sense of Place
- Low Maintenance
- Climate Appropriate
- Habitat Preservation
- Best Plants for  
Pollinators & Beneficials

“Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.” ~Albert Einstein



# Mediterranean Climate Zones of the World

(where the climate is moderate and most rain falls in the winter)



Attribution?

# Mediterranean Climate Plant Characteristics

- Often evergreen
- Compact leaf size
- Often grey-green in color
- Often furry
- Short internodes
- Reflects light,  
reduces evapotranspiration
- Year-round photosynthesis



# Russian River Watershed Plant Communities

Redwood Forest

Mixed Evergreen Forest

Riparian Woodland

Chaparral

Coastal Scrub

Valley & Foothill Oak Woodland

Valley & Hill Grassland



# Redwood Forest

- Coastal fog belts
- Trees capture moisture from fog
- Deep shade, rich soils

# Redwood Forest Plants

*Sequoia sempervirens*, Coast Redwood

*Vaccinium ovatum*, Huckleberry

*Polystichum munitum*, Western Sword Fern

*Oxalis oregona*, Redwood Sorrel

*Rubus spectabilis*, Salmon Berry

*Rubus parviflorus*, Thimbleberry

*Rosa gymnocarpa*, Wood Rose

# Mixed Evergreen Forest



- Dense w/broad-leaf evergreens & conifers
- Douglas Fir, Tanbark Oak & California Bay

# Mixed Evergreen Forest Plants

*Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak

*Quercus kelloggii*, Oregon Oak

*Quercus lobata*, Valley Oak

*Aesculus californica*, California Buckeye

*Ribes californicum*, Gooseberry

*Sambucus mexicana*, Elderberry

*Baccharis pilularis*, Coyote Bush

*Symphoricarpus albus*, Snowberry



# Riparian Woodland

- Along Russian River & tributaries
- Moisture loving species
- Deciduous trees

# Riparian Woodland Plants

*Acer macrophyllum*, Big-Leaf Maple

*Alnus spp.*, Alder

*Cornus sericea*, Creek Dogwood

*Platanus racemosa*, California Sycamore

*Populus spp.*, Cottonwood

*Salix spp.*, Willow

*Carex spp.*, Sedges

*Juncus spp.*, Rushes

*Vitis californica*, Wild Grape

# Chaparral



- Rain-shadow slopes of Coast Ranges
- Dry slopes, often w/serpentine soil
- Dense shrubs & perennials

# Chaparral Plants

*Ceanothus spp.*, California Lilac

*Cercocarpus betuloides*, Mountain Mahogany

*Heteromeles arbutifolia*, Toyon

*Lupinus spp.*, Lupine

*Mimulus aurantiaca*, Sticky Monkeyflower

*Rhamnus californica*, Coffeeberry

*Salvia sonomensis*, Sonoma Sage

*Epilobium canum*, California Fuschia

# Coastal Scrub



- Cool chaparral along the Northern Coast
- Low, dense plants; like regular garden conditions

# Coastal Scrub Plants

*Achillea millefolium*, Yarrow

*Arctostaphylos spp.*, Manzanita

*Artemesia spp.*, California Sagebrush

*Baccharis pilularis*, Coyote Brush

*Ceanothus spp.*, California Lilac

*Erigeron glaucus*, Seaside Daisy

*Eriogonum spp.*, Buckwheat

*Garrya elliptica*, Coast Silktassel



## Valley & Foothill Oak Woodland

- Lower elevations of coast ranges
- Broad-leaf evergreens: oak, bay, madrone
- Shrubs, perennials, some grasses

# Oak Woodland Plants

*Quercus spp*, Coast Live Oak, Valley Oak

*Garrya elliptica*, Coast Silktassel

*Heteromeles arbutifolia*, Toyon

*Rhamnus californica*, Coffeeberry

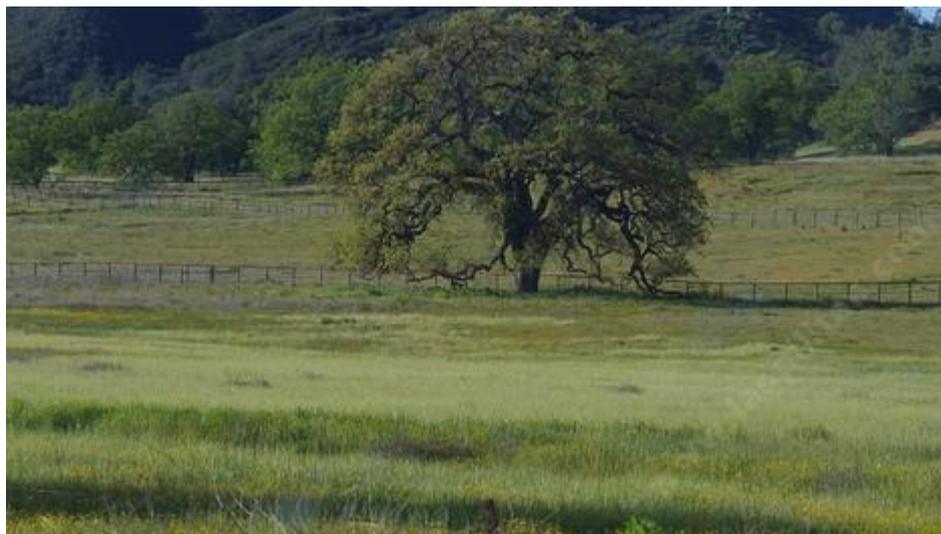
*Ribes sanguineum*, Flowering Currant

*Epilobium canum*, California Fuschia

*Festuca californica*, California Fescue

*Lupinus spp*, Lupine

# Valley & Hill Grasslands



- Coastal hills, interior slopes & valleys
- Now mostly dominated by exotics
- Poor drainage, often seasonal wetlands
- Rushes, sedges, grasses, wildflowers

# Valley & Hill Grasslands Plants

*Juncus patens*, Wire Grass

*Danthonia californica*, CA Oatgrass

*Festuca idahoensis*, Blue Bunchgrass

*Nassella pulcra*, Purple Needlegrass

*Sisyrinchium bellum*, Blue-eyed Grass

*Dichelostemma capitatum*, Blue Dicks

*Eschscholzia californica*, CA Poppy

# Great New Resource!

[www.mynativeplants.com](http://www.mynativeplants.com)

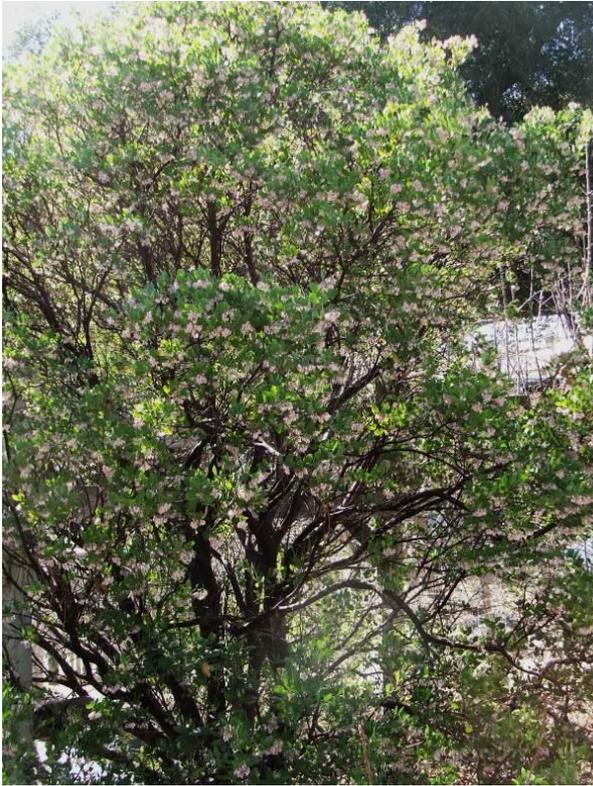
Program designed by Las Pilitas Nursery;  
Gives native plants recommendations for  
your area, and recommendations specific  
to your garden conditions

# The Myth of Natives.....



. . . Before we “*dig into*” our favorite  
California natives for Sonoma County  
. . . Some Practical Tips!

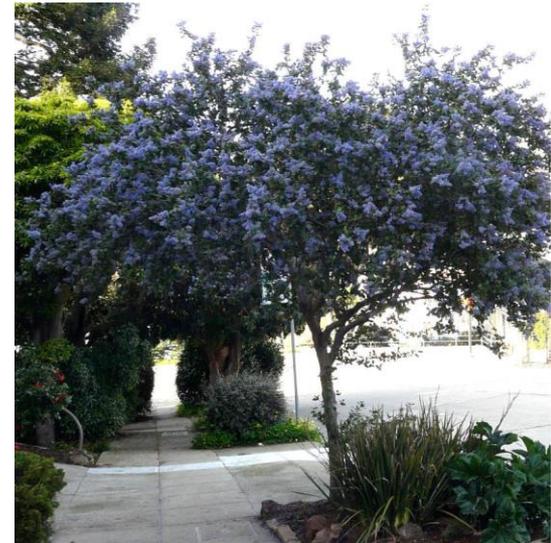
- Native plants like the soil of their ‘biome’
- No need to amend / fertilizer (in fact, don’t!)
- Please plant me in fall or winter!
- Regular irrigation while I mature, please!
- If there are no winter rains, I really need irrigation!
- Please don’t over-water me once I reach adulthood – it shortens my life!



# Trees & Large Shrubs

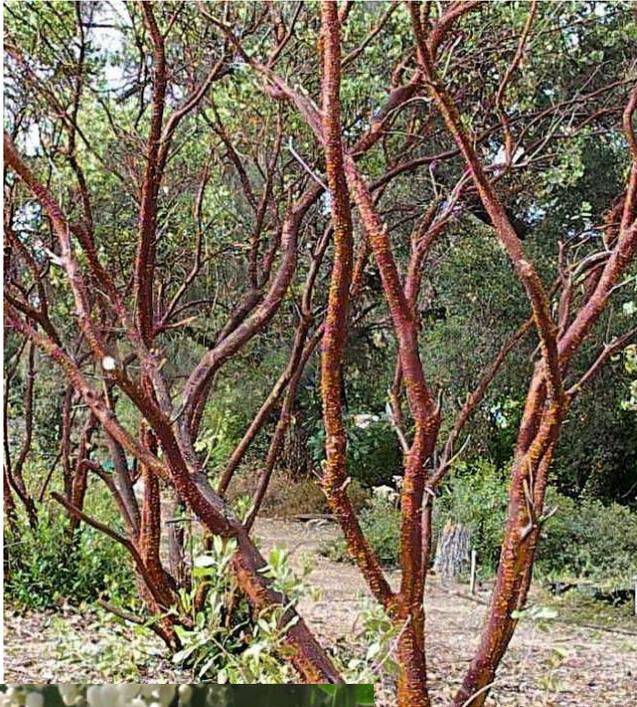
- Focal points in garden
- Provide shade

- Most native trees are large
  - Many native shrubs can be pruned as trees



# *Arctostaphylos manzanita*

## *'Dr. Hurd'*

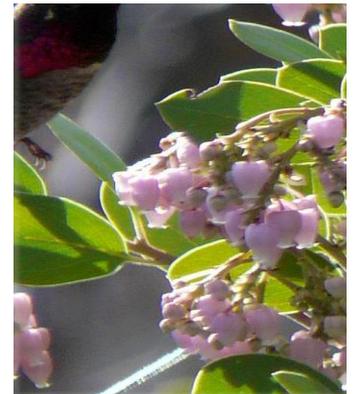


- Evergreen
- Shrub/Small Tree
- Full sun
- 12-16'H x 10'W
- Likes clay, tolerates sandy soil
- White flowers
- Great specimen or focal point
- Garden tolerant

Grassland, Oak Woodland,  
Chaparral

# *Arctostaphylos densiflora* 'Austin Griffiths'

- Evergreen
- Shrub/Small Tree
- Full Sun
- 10-12'H & W
- Can be pruned to 6'H x 4'W
- Sandy soil preferred but clay OK
- Large clusters of soft pink flowers, winter
- Garden tolerant



Chaparral, Coastal Sage Scrub, Oak Woodland

# *Cercis occidentalis*, Western Redbud



- Deciduous
- Shrub/Small Tree
- Sun/Part Sun
- 15'H x 10'W
- Prefers well drained soil, clay ok
- Deer resistant

Chaparral, Woodland

# *Ceanothus 'Ray Hartman'*

## California Lilac

- Evergreen
- Shrub/Small Tree
- Full Sun
- 10-20' H&W; fast
- Heavy soils or sand OK
- Not deer resistant

Chaparral, Woodland



# *Cercocarpus betuloides*

## Mountain Mahogany

- Evergreen
- Shrub/Small Tree
- Sun/Part Sun
- 10-15' H&W; Fast
- Tolerates clay
- Upright, open habit
- Unusual seed pods!

Chaparral, Woodland,  
Forest

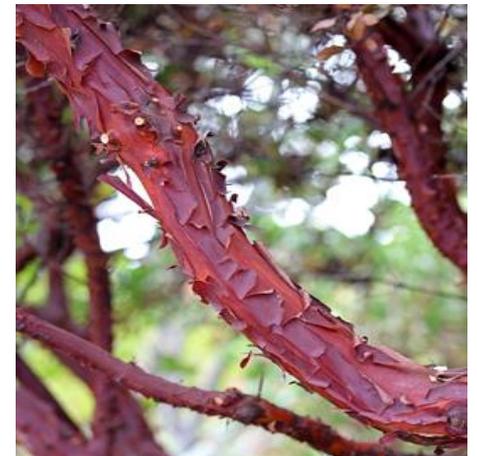


# Medium to Large Shrubs

- Medium shrubs: 3-6'H x 3-6'W
- Large shrubs: 7'+H x 7'+W
- Shrubs: 60-70% of garden landscape
- Evergreen: 'Backbone of garden'
- Evergreen shrubs best for hedges
- Deciduous: 'Drama Queens'
- Mix of both for seasonal interest

# *Arctostaphylos densiflora* 'Howard McMinn'

- Evergreen
- Full sun/light shade inland
- 7'H x 10'W
- Clay or sandy Soils
- Dependable SoCo hybrid
- Deer resistant
- Garden tolerant



Chaparral, Coastal Scrub

# *Ceanothus spp.*

## *'Julia Phelps', 'Dark Star'*



- Evergreen
- Full to Part Sun
- 6-8' H x 6-8'+W
- Good drainage
- Tolerates clay

- Hard to tell apart! Both deer resistant
- Great habitat shrub

Coastal Sage Scrub, Chaparral, Open  
Woodland



# *Eriogonum giganteum*

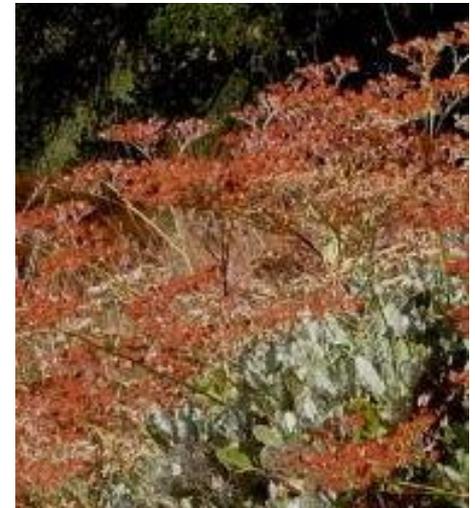
## St. Catherine's Lace



- Evergreen
- Full to Part Sun
- 4-8'H x 6-8'W
- White flowers, spring; turn rust in fall

- No to occasional water
- Nectar source for many butterflies

Coastal Sage Scrub

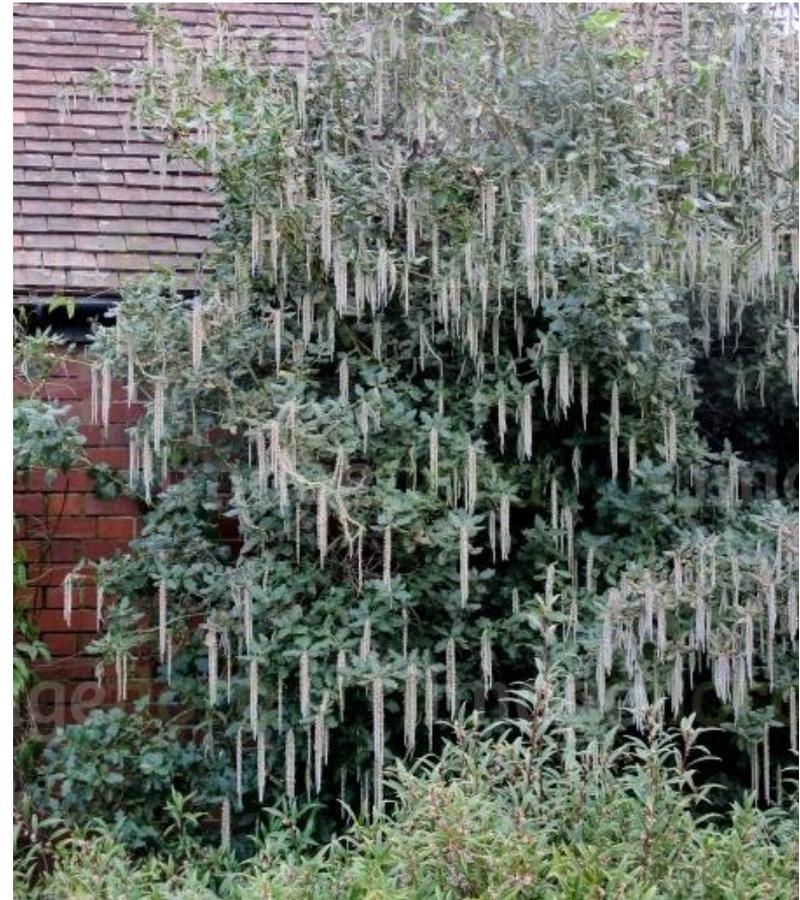


# *Garrya elliptica* 'James Roof'

## Coast Silk Tassel

- Evergreen
- Full Sun coastal areas
- Part Shade inland
- 5-10'H x 8-10'W
- Takes summer water with good drainage
- Long, silvery-gray catkins in winter

Chaparral, Coastal Scrub,  
Mixed Evergreen Forest



# *Heteromeles arbutifolia*

## Toyon



- Evergreen
- Full sun to part shade
- 10'H x 8'W
- Garden tolerant, any soil w/good drainage
- Erosion control

Chaparral, Coastal Scrub,  
Mixed Forest, Oak Woodland

# *Prunus ilicifolia ssp. Lyonii* Catalina Cherry



- Evergreen
- Full or Part Sun
- 12-25'H x 10-15'W
- All soil types
- Needs drainage
- Birds love fruit

Chaparral, Coastal Scrub,  
Oak Woodland

# *Rhamnus (Frangula)*

## *californica*

### Coffeeberry

- Evergreen
- Full Sun to Part Shade
- 3-8'H x 3-8'W
- All soils



- Deer resistant; erosion control
- Adaptable & Versatile

Chaparral, Coastal Scrub,  
Oak Woodland

# *Rhus ovata*

## Sugar Bush

- Evergreen
- Sun to Shade
- 8' to 12' H & W



- Tolerates clay
- Deer resistant
- Erosion control
- Great hedge or small tree

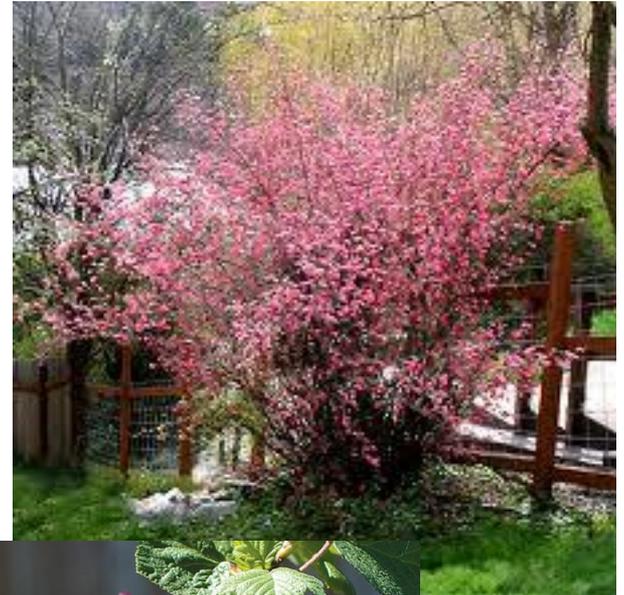
Chaparral

# *Ribes sanguineum*

## Pink Flowering Currant

- Deciduous
- Part to Full Shade
- 6-12' H x 4-8' W; fast
- Clay tolerant
- Vigorous & adaptable
- Deer resistant

Mixed Evergreen & Oak  
Woodland



# *Ribes speciosum*

## Fuschia Flowered Gooseberry



- Evergreen
- Light Shade
- 4-6' H x 4-6' W
- Tolerates clay with good drainage
- Thorny, arching branches
- Excellent under oaks
- Deer resistant

Chaparral, Coastal Scrub



# *Symphoricarpus albus*, Common Snowberry

- Deciduous
- Sun to Shade
- 1-4'H x 1-3'W
- Any soil OK with good drainage
- Forms thickets under oaks
- Graceful & airy; white berries



Mixed Evergreen, Oak Woodland

# *Vitis californica* 'Rogers Red'

## California Wild Grape



- Deciduous
  - Sun or Shade
  - 25-40' H x W
  - Regular irrigation
  - Great fall color
  - Birds love fruit
- 
- Vigorous – needs sturdy structure

Chaparral, Coastal Scrub, Mixed Woodland, Oak Woodland, Riparian

# Shrub Groundcovers

- Evergreen
- Best option for replacing front lawn!
- Cover a lot of square footage quickly & effectively so very cost effective
- Right plant right place means little to no maintenance

# *Arctostaphylos* 'Pacific Mist'

## Pacific Mist Manzanita



- Evergreen
- Full sun to light shade
- 2' H x 10' W
- Tolerant of heavy soil
- Dependable, disease resistant
- Dense with broad spread

Coastal Scrub

# *Baccharis pilularis* 'Pigeon Point'

## Dwarf Coyote Brush



- Evergreen
  - Full sun
  - 1' H x 12' W
  - Deer resistant
  - Excellent nectar source for butterflies, beneficials
- 
- Moderate to occasional water inland

Coastal Scrub

# *Ceanothus gloriosus* 'Anchor Bay', 'Emily Brown'

- Evergreen
- Full Sun, Pt Shade inland
- 2-3'H x 4-6'W
- Tolerates clay
- Deer resistant
- Erosion control



Coastal Scrub

# Perennials

- Higher maintenance: 'the icing on the cake'
- Comprise 20-30% of the home landscape
- Choose perennials w/varied bloom times
- Site for maximum impact: along edges, corners of walkways
- Cut back in fall for new growth through rainy season

# *Achillea millefolium* 'Sonoma Coast', White Yarrow

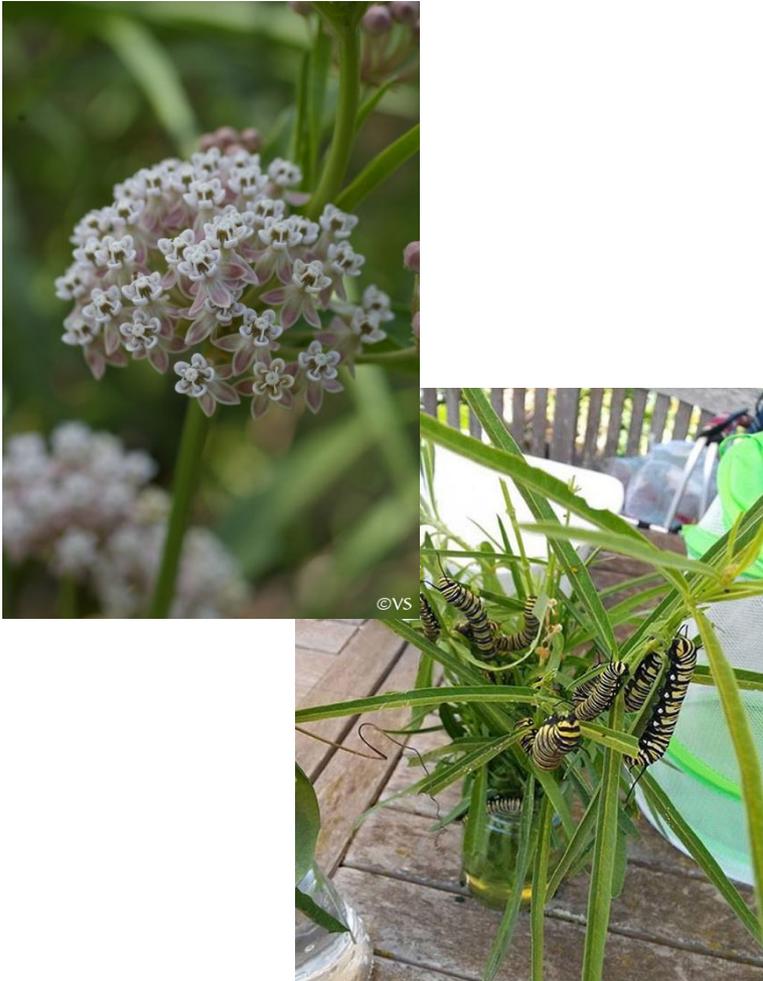


- Full to Part Sun
  - 1'H x 2' W
  - All soils
  - Deer resistant
  - Attracts beneficial insects
- 
- Creamy white flowers spring to fall if sheared
  - Easy; takes hot inland sun with irrigation

Coastal Scrub, Grassland

# *Asclepias fascicularis*

## Narrowleaf Milkweed



- Full Sun to Part Shade
- 1-3'H, spreading
- Likes clay; adaptable
- Pale mauve flowers on slender stems
- Drought tolerant
- Deer resistant

Chaparral, Mixed-Evergreen Forest, Riparian, Oak Woodland

# *Artemisia pycnocephala* 'David's Choice', Beach Sandwort



- Full sun
- 1-2'H x 2-3'W
- Well drained soil
- White flowers
- Occasional water
- Deer resistant
- Shear for longer life

Coastal Scrub

# *Mimulus (Diplacus) aurantiacus*

## Sticky Monkey Flower

- Full Sun to Part Shade
- 3' H x 3'W
- Adaptable
- Well drained soil
- Orange flowers, spring to fall
- Deer resistant
- Attracts hummingbirds

Chaparral, Forest edges



# *Dudleya* spp. Liveforever



Coastal Scrub



- Succulent
- Cool sun, Part Sun inland
- 6" H x 1' W
- Needs fast drainage
- Red or white flowers in summer

# *Epilobium spp.* California Fuschia

- Full Sun
- 6''-3'H x 4-5'W
- Adaptable with good drainage
- Red-orange flowers, late summer
- Little to no water
- Deer resistant

Chaparral



# *Erigeron glaucus* 'WR'

## Seaside Daisy



- Full Sun, Part Shade inland
- 1'H x 2-3'W
- Adaptable, well drained
- Lavender-blue flowers,  
Spring to Summer
- Occasional to regular  
irrigation
- Deer resistant

Coastal Scrub

# *Eriogonum* spp.

## Buckwheat

- Over 125 species in CA
- Full Sun to Part Shade
- 2-6'H x 3-8'W
- Clay if well drained
- Creams, yellows, pinks
- Spring to Fall bloomers
- Occasional water
- Great for attracting Beneficials



Coastal Scrub

# *Eriogonum grande rubescens*

## Red Buckwheat



- Full sun
  - 1'H x 3'W
  - Prefers clay
  - Deep Pink; June to October
  - Attracts beneficials
  - Deer love the flowers!
- 
- Thrives on neglect; excellent massed on dry hillsides

Chaparral

# *Juncus patens*

## California Gray Rush



- Evergreen
- Full Sun to Shade
- 1-2'H x 1-2'W, spreading
- Golden-brown flowers
- Adaptable
- Dry in shade, occasional water in full sun
- Upright to arching form

Grassland, Riparian

# *Monardella villosa* 'Russian River'

## Coyote Mint

- Full Sun to Part Shade
- 12-18”H x 12-18”W
- Well drained
- Pinkish-purple, late spring to fall
- Deer resistant
- Attracts bees and butterflies

Chaparral, Coastal Scrub,  
Oak Woodland



# *Penstemon heterophyllus*

## 'Margarita BOP', Blue Bedder

- Full sun
- 18" H x 2' W
- Any soil, well drained
- Blue-violet flowers, spring to summer
- Hummingbird favorite
- Deadhead for rebloom, shaping



Chaparral, Coastal Scrub,  
Oak Woodland

# *Salvia spp.*

## Sage

- Evergreen
- Full sun
- 1-6'H x 1-6'W
- Poor soil OK, well-drained



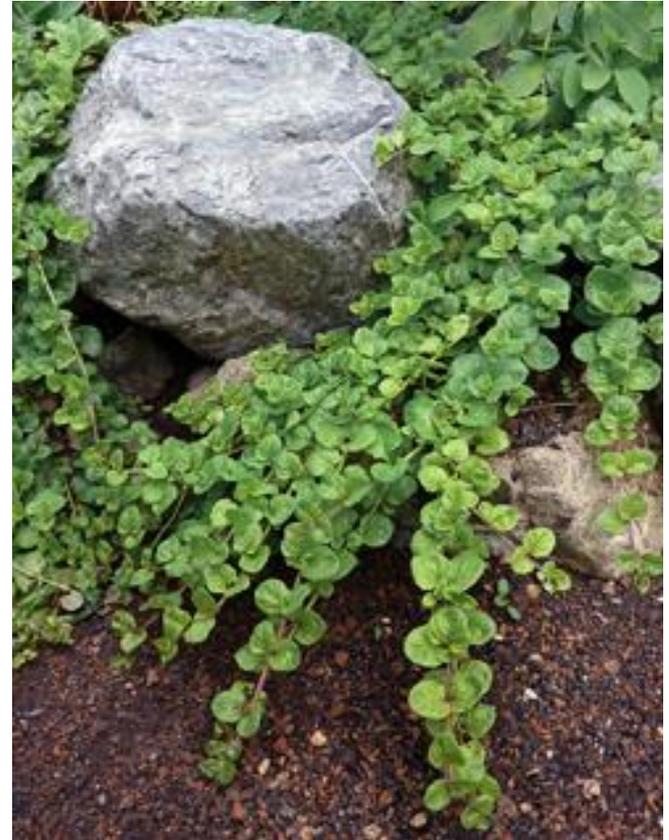
- Aromatic; Deer resistant
- Excellent for pollinators & beneficials

Chaparral, Coastal Scrub

# *Satureja douglasii*

## Yerba Buena

- Evergreen groundcover
- Part to Full Shade
- 6”H x 6’W, spreading
- Adaptable, well drained
- Best with occasional water
- Deer resistant
- Easy, tough & long lived; good under oaks



Chaparral, Mixed-Evergreen Forest, Coastal Sage Scrub, Redwood Forest

# *Sedum spathulifolium* 'Cape Blanco', Cape Blanco Stonecrop



- Evergreen succulent
- Partial to full sun
- 2-4" H x 24" W
- Well drained
- Yellow flower, summer
- Silvery leaves turn purplish in winter

Coastal Scrub

# *Verbena lilacina* 'De la Mina'

## Cedros Island Verbena



- Full Sun, Part Sun inland
- 2-3'H x 2-3'W
- Adaptable, with good drainage
- Light Purple, Spring & Summer

- Occasional water
- Attracts butterflies & bees
- Frost sensitive

Coastal Scrub



# Grasses

- Add contrast in texture
- Add movement
- Great focal points
- Cool season growers - some summer water
- Warm season growers drought tolerant
- Mass to create a meadow or mow as lawn
- Excellent habitat plants

# *Bouteloua gracillus* 'Blonde Ambition'

## Blonde Ambition Grama Grass



- Semi-evergreen
- Full sun
- 12-18" H, spreading
- Adaptable if well-drained
- Golden flowers, summer
- Occasional water; deep rooted, tough
- Can be mowed as lawn substitute

Coastal Scrub, Oak Woodland

# *Carex tumulicola*

## Foothill Sedge



- Evergreen
- Cool sun, shade inland
- 2'H x 2-3'W
- Prefers clay
- Mass to create meadow
- Erosion control; spreads slowly rhizomes
- Deer resistant

Coastal Scrub, Woodlands,  
Mixed-Evergreen Forest

# *Festuca californica*

## California Fescue

- Evergreen
- Full Sun to Part Shade
- 12-18" H x 2-3' W
- Adaptable
- Drought tolerant;  
occasional water in hot sites
- Deer resistant
- Excellent under oaks, dry shade



Oak Woodland, Mixed-Evergreen Forest

# *Festuca rubra*

## Creeping Red Fescue



- Semi-Evergreen
- Cool Sun to Part Shade inland
- 3-12”H, spreading
- Adaptable
- Deer resistant

- Good lawn substitute in cool/shady areas
- Moderate water; or allow to go dormant

Open & Shaded Woodlands

# *Muhlenbergia rigens*

## Deer grass

- Evergreen
- Full Sun to Part Shade
- 4-5'H x 4-6'W
- Adaptable
- Little to moderate water
- Deer resistant
- Erosion control



Chaparral, Grassland, Oak Woodland

# Annual Wildflowers

- The 'cherry on top'
- Most spring bloomers
- Grassland plants;  
like clay
- Sprinkle liberally  
for a naturalistic  
look!



# Get familiar with California Natives

## California Native Plants for the Garden

Bornstein, Floss, and O'Brien, Cachuma Press, 2005

## A Flora of Sonoma County

Best, Howell, Knight, & Wells, California Native Plant Society, 1996

## Designing California Native Gardens

Keator and Middlebrook, UC Press, 2007

## The California Native Landscape

Rubin & Warren, Timber Press, 2013

## California Native Gardening, A Month-By-Month Guide

Helen Popper, UC Press, 2013

“The more we know, the more we see.” ~Stephen Trimble,  
*A Natural History of the Great Basin*

# Web Sites

**Las Pilitas Nursery**

[www.laspilitas.com](http://www.laspilitas.com)

**Cal Flora Nursery**

[www.calfloranursery.com](http://www.calfloranursery.com)

**Annie's Annuals**

[www.anniesannuals.com](http://www.anniesannuals.com)

**San Marcos Growers**

[www.smgrowers.com](http://www.smgrowers.com)

# UC Master Gardener Program of Sonoma County

For information on gardening  
techniques and more ...

<http://ucanr.edu/sites/scmg/>

Or just Google  
Sonoma County Master  
Gardeners

