
DROUGHT TOLERANT PLANTS

for Waterworks
District No. 29



GUIDE TO CONSERVING WATER IN MALIBU AND TOPANGA CANYON

Whether you're a novice gardener with a small flowerbed or an expert whose green thumb fosters a new set of plants each season, incorporating native California plants into your garden can help spruce up your yard and save water. Drought tolerant plants help conserve hundreds of gallons of water each year for a single family home! After California native and drought tolerant plants are established in the soil, they'll require substantially less water and maintenance than traditional landscaping plants, so you can spend less time watering and more time in the yard enjoying your plants.

Throughout this booklet, Los Angeles County Waterworks District No. 29 has provided examples of California native and drought tolerant plants that have been selected specifically for the conditions of the Malibu/Topanga/Marina del Rey area. Pictures and helpful information about each plant are featured to help meet your landscaping needs and make for a quick, easy transition to a native and drought tolerant plant garden.

FLOWERS

SHRUBS, HEDGES

GRASSES

GROUNDCOVER

SHADE

HERBS

SLOPE STABILIZATION

Special thanks to Las Virgenes Municipal Water District for photos and content.

FLOWERS



BEACH SUNCUPS

Naturally found growing in sand dunes, a good choice for areas with good drainage. Low growing silver foliage with lemon yellow flowers. Thrives in full sun.



BLUE FLAX

Small perennial with attractive blue-white flowers in spring. Interesting texture. Cut back after blooming to keep compact. Easy to grow from seed. Full to partial sun.



Photo Credit: Len Blumin

CALIFORNIA EVENING PRIMROSE

A perennial that tolerates rough places with a tendency to invade. Best if kept in contained area with little irrigation. Attractive white to pink blossoms in summer. Likes full sunlight.



CALIFORNIA FUSCHIA

Commonly found in dry areas, rocky slopes and cliffs. Abundant, scarlet tubular flowers bloom in summer. Attracts hummingbirds. May be used as a ground cover. Sun to partial sun.

FLOWERS



CALIFORNIA POPPY

Pale yellow to deep orange. Flowers spring to summer and reseeds easily. Blossoms close at night. Plant seeds in fall on well-drained soil. Little irrigation required. Full sun.



CLEVELAND'S BEARDTONGUE

Rose pink flowers with gray foliage make this an attractive garden plant. Prefers hot summers and mild winters. Full sun.



Photo Credit: Charles E. Jones

COMMON YARROW

Spreads by its roots, with clusters of small white flowers above evergreen foliage. Butterflies enjoy this plant. Likes sun. Widely adapted to variety of soil conditions.



DESERT / APRICOT MALLOW

Very hardy evergreen perennial with coral flowers clustered on stems spring to fall, depending on temperatures. Prefers dry winters and benefits from pruning after blooms. Full sun.

FLOWERS



Photo Credit: Susan Bazell

DESERT BEAUTY

Perennial with purple pea flowers clustered at the ends of silvery green leaf branches in spring. Trim to promote fullness. Infrequent summer watering. Likes sun.



DESERT MARIGOLD

Perennial with bright yellow flowers above gray-green foliage spring through fall. Extend blooming with periodic moisture. Attracts butterflies. Requires good drainage. Full sun.



DOUGLAS IRIS

Evergreen leaves up to 2' long, flowers on 1–2' stems range in color from purple to blue, and white to cream. Tolerates less than ideal garden conditions. Sun to partial sun.



FIRECRACKER PENSTEMON

Bright red blossoms, from spring to summer, on long evergreen stalks. Prefers full sun and good drainage. Attracts hummingbirds. Some water in the summer.

FLOWERS



GLOBE GILIA

Clusters of spring blue flowers. Used by many butterflies. Plant in fall or early spring in well-drained soil. Likes rocky areas with lots of sun. Little to moderate water.



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

HARVEST BRODIAEA

Loves sun and heat and requires no summer water. Dark violet to blue flowers in late spring to mid summer. Mulch to protect corms from freezing.



ISLAND BUSH SNAPDRAGON

Bright red tubular flowers bloom from spring to summer. Tolerates shade. Attracts hummingbirds.



LEOPARD LILY

Perennial bulb likes moist shaded areas. In spring and summer, clusters of large orange or red flowers with brown to maroon spots appear on tall flowering spikes.

FLOWERS



MILKWEED

Greenishwhite or purple flowers June-September. Seed pods open and spill out hundreds of fine white hairs. Food source for Monarch butterflies. Sun to partial sun. Narrow leaf is one variety.



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

ONELEAF ONION

Lavender to pink flowers that appear in June on tall stems. A good cut flower either fresh or dried. Likes deep, rich, sandy loam soil and full sun.



PALMER'S PENSTEMON

Large, fragrant pale pink blossoms with gray foliage. Grows with a very erect form, attractive to hummingbirds, and appropriate for areas with cold winters. Thrives in full sun.



PANAMINT BEARD PENSTEMON

Large showy perennial. Coarsely serrated to smooth leaves with hot pink flowers atop tall spikes. Prefers hot, dry summers with full sun and cold winters.

FLOWERS



SCARLET BUGLER

Scarlet red blossoms with blue-gray foliage and a long bloom season. Very drought tolerant. Prefers full sun, hot, dry summers and mild winters.



SCARLET COLUMBINE

This perennial has beautiful orange-red flowers. Attracts hummingbirds. Likes shade. Moderately drought tolerant. Benefits from annual pruning of spent flower stalks.



SCARLET LARKSPUR

Native to coastal mountains, this perennial rootstock has wide lobed leaves, erect stems and large deep red blossoms that attract butterflies. Likes sun.



SHOWY PENSTEMON

Lavender-pink-purple flowers, April-June found on two-foot spikes above coarse textured leaves. Attracts hummingbirds. Sun to partial sun exposure.

FLOWERS



SOCIETY GARLIC

Perennial with bluish green long leaves. Clusters of lavender flowers bloom in spring and summer. Prefers well drained soils. Divide clumps to increase plantings. Full sun.



ST. CATHERINE'S LACE

Branching stems, silver to grayish-white oval leaves, white blooms throughout summer. Attracts butterflies. Sun exposure, well-drained, loose soil. Useful to cover dry banks.



STICKY MONKEYFLOWER

Spring apricot-colored blossoms attract hummingbirds. Light summer watering extends blooming period. Thrives in full to partial sunlight.



Photo Credit: Chris Wagner

SULPHUR BUCKWHEAT

Brilliant yellow flowers bloom in the spring on stems above mounds of pretty oval foliage. Very drought tolerant, prefers full to part sun. Attracts hummingbirds.

FLOWERS



TIDY TIPS

Prefers clay to loam soil. Plant seeds in fall or early spring in full sun. Yellow-white blooms spring through early summer. Self-seeds.



WESTERN BLUE FLAX

Small perennial. Many blue to white flowers cover the plant in early spring. Keeps shape better if trimmed back after blooming. Prefers full sun.



WHITE MARIPOSA LILY

Bulb blooms May-July. Colors range from white, yellow, purple, to dark red, all with “peacock eye” at base of petals. Full sun to partial shade.



WOOLLY BLUECURLS

Native to Santa Monica Mountains. Sweet-scented woolly flowers. Hummingbird favorite. Needs excellent drainage and sunny hillside exposures. No summer water once established.

SHRUBS, HEDGES



APACHE PLUME

Semi-evergreen shrub with flowers resembling single white roses, followed by large, feathery seedheads that change from green to red. Requires well-drained soil and full sunlight.



BUSH ANEMONE

Evergreen shrub. Shiny dark leaves, fragrant white flowers with golden stamens May to August. Resistant to oak root fungus, does well in dry, shady conditions.



BUSH POPPY

Catalina variety has linear gray foliage, bright yellow, poppy-like flowers February-June. Thrives in dry, well-drained soil. Good for banks, roadsides. Sun to partial sun exposure.



BUSH SUNFLOWER

Small deciduous shrub with loose clusters of yellow daisy-like flowers. Light summer water will extend blooming. Cut back every two years to maintain shape. Sun to partial sun.

SHRUBS, HEDGES



BUTTERFLY BUSH

Semi- evergreen shrub with tall branches, arching in mid-summer with dense small, fragrant spike-like clusters. Full sun.



CALIFORNIA BUCKWHEAT

Small evergreen shrub. Blooms summer and fall. Pinkish flower clusters turn rusty red. Attracts butterflies. Hardy to around 15°F. Good for slope stabilization. Sun to partial sun.



CALIFORNIA FLANNELBUSH

Yellow flowers in May and June. Dark green and fuzzy leathery leaves. Needs good drainage. Hillside planting is best with staking when young. No dry-season watering. Full sun.



CALIFORNIA HONEYSUCKLE

Climbing shrub with deciduous foliage and large pink flowers. The edible fruit is bitter but attracts birds. Handles cold temperatures and is not favored by deer. Part sun to shade.

SHRUBS, HEDGES



CALIFORNIA LILAC

Dark wrinkled green leaves covered, deep blue to white flower clusters in early spring. Good drainage, little to no summer watering. Sun to partial sun. Creeping variety good for groundcover



Photo Credit: Chris Wagner

CHAPARRAL CURRANT

Medium-sized deciduous shrub with clusters of fragrant pink flowers most of the year. Prefers shade, little maintenance required.



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

COAST SILKTASSEL

Dense with dark green, gray woolly wavy-edged leaves. Flower tassels bloom December–February. Grapelike clusters of purple fruit June–September. Some summer watering. Full to partial sun.



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

FAIRY DUSTER

This deciduous shrub is native to desert areas. Once established, it does not require water and produces beautiful clusters of pinkish fluffy flowers in the spring. Full sun.

SHRUBS, HEDGES



GOLDEN CURRANT

Semi-deciduous shrub produces bright yellow flowers winter through spring, followed by yellow, orange, and red currants. Sun to partial sun.



GOLDEN YARROW

Small perennial shrub. Prefers sun exposure. Finely leafed foliage, green above and woolly below. Clusters of yellow flowers March to August. Attracts butterflies.



HEART-LEAF PENSTEMON

Spiked clusters of orange-red tubular flowers on arching branches March–August. Attracts hummingbirds. Sun to partial sun exposure. Remains evergreen with summer irrigation.



Photo Credit: Charles E. Jones

LEMONADE BERRY

Dark, leathery leaves, delicate pink flowers. Berries can be used to make lemonade. Fairly tolerant to cold temperatures. Monthly watering improves fire resistance. Full to partial sun.

SHRUBS, HEDGES



LUPINES

Colors will delight any gardener. Attracts butterflies. Trimming keeps plants sturdy and compact. Perennial varieties include Bush and Big-leaf. Sun to partial sun.



MANZANITA

Red bark, urn-shaped flowers. Very water-efficient. Varieties range from groundcover to large shrubs and small trees including Bigberry, Island, and Common. Sun to partial sun.



MATILIJA POPPY

Hardy perennial with large fragrant blossoms, up to 9" wide. Root structure helps reduce erosion. Spreads by underground runners; prefers loose, gravelly soil and full sun.



RED HOT POKER

Shrub-size clump of grass-like foliage requires moderate water to bloom and good drainage in winter. Dramatic red-orange to yellow blossoms. Full sun to light shade.

SHRUBS, HEDGES



SPICE BUSH

Deciduous shrub with green leaves that turn yellow in the fall. Blossoms resemble brownish-red water lilies. Both foliage and flowers are fragrant. Full to partial sun.



WESTERN AZALEA

Prefers shade and an acid soil. Fragrant funnel-shaped flower clusters May–June with colors varying from white to pinkish white to carmine rose markings.



WESTERN PENNYROYAL

White to purple pincushion flowers, evergreen leaves, strong mint-like fragrance. Attracts bees and butterflies. Thrives in shade with fairly rich soil and garden watering.



WHITE MOCK ORANGE

Satiny, white fragrant flowers cover this deciduous shrub from June–July. Grows in an erect and arching style. Prefers moist soils. Prefers moist soils, full sun.

GRASSES



Photo Credit: Charles E. Jones

DEERGRASS

Provides interesting texture contrast, with many erect narrow blades that fan out in vase-shaped foliage, in dense clumps. Stays evergreen without summer water. Full sun.



GIANT WILD RYE

Tall, erect clumping perennial. Good in back of a border garden or slope stabilization. Shorter Canyon Prince variety has silver blue-gray foliage, bluish flower plumes in summer. Full sun.



PURPLE NEEDLE GRASS

Bunch grass with purplish flowers. Matures in summer to golden yellow, remains dormant until winter rains. Likes full sunlight.



Photo Credit: Chris Wagner

SHEEP FESCUE

Clumping grass with soft, tough leaves form blue-gray tufts. Useful groundcover in sunny to partially shaded area, on slopes. Needs little water. Clip to enhance appearance.

GROUNDCOVER



Photo Credit: Peter Zika

COTONEASTER

Arching branches, fall color, red or orange berries in winter. Little to moderate water, full sunlight. Thrives with little to no maintenance. Does well on dry slopes, poor soil.



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

COYOTE BRUSH

Creeping groundcover tolerates difficult situations. Useful for slope stabilization. Extremely drought tolerant. Full sun.



CREEPING MAHONIA

Groundcover for partial sun to full shade (under oaks). Requires little irrigation. Colorful winter foliage. Yellow spring flowers followed by berries that attract birds.



CREEPING MANZANITA

Evergreen mat, light pink flowers winter-spring. Leaves turn a reddish tint in winter. Useful on slopes, along retaining walls. Regular water the first summer after planting. Sun to partial sun.

GROUNDCOVER



DYMONDIA SILVER CARPET

Light gray foliage, yellow summer blooms. Deep rooted, grows close to ground. Plant in areas of light foot traffic. Full sun to partial shade.



HEN AND CHICKENS

Clusters spread to form clumps up to 2-feet wide. Red or reddish brown blossoms on erect stems. Full sun to partial shade. A variety of colored leafed plants are available.



PARRY'S NOLINA

Long grass-like leaves form a nice mound and spring flowers are creamy white. Very drought tolerant, likes full sun.



ROCKROSE

Hardy plant with spring flowers. Accepts poor, dry soil. Tolerates cold ocean winds, salt spray or desert heat. Prefers full sun.

GROUNDCOVER



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

SAND STRAWBERRY

Perennial with white blossoms in spring and occasional fruit. Shiny green foliage turns red in the fall. Full sun.



SEASIDE DAISY

Forms clump of stout stems topped by lavender flowers. Some summer irrigation best. Tolerant of hot inland conditions. Likes full sun to partial shade.



SPRING CINQUEFOIL

Clusters of butter yellow flowers in spring and summer. Will smother out weeds. Good lawn substitute in areas of no-traffic. Well used as a cover for bulbs. Full to partial sunlight.



WOOLLY YARROW

Groundcover with flat golden flowerheads atop a spreading flat mat of fernlike gray-green, hairy leaves. Full sun to high shade.

SHADE



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

CORAL BELLS

Foliage clumps with shiny dark-green, round, heart-shaped leaves. Whitish to pinkish blossoms February–April. Drought tolerant, cold resistant. Attracts hummingbirds. Partial sun.



HOLLYLEAF CHERRY

Deep green leaves resemble holly. White flowers. Edible fruit attractive to wildlife. Grows in well-drained poor soils, once established requires no irrigation. Full to partial sun.



PINK FLOWERED CURRANT

Vining shrub with long, pink flowers produces blue-black berries. Blooms January-March. Moderately drought tolerant. Tolerates a range of soil conditions. Sun to partial sun.



TOYON

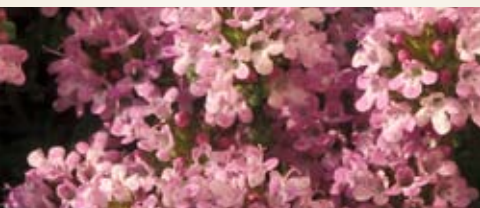
Thick, glossy green leathery leaves. Clusters of white flowers bloom June–July. Bright red berries attract birds November–January. Benefits from periodic watering. Sun to partial sun.

HERBS



COYOTE MINT

A plant with light purple flowers in June – August. Foliage is furry gray-green. Attracts butterflies. Likes sun to part shade.



ENGLISH THYME

Small, gray-green pungent leaves with white lilac flowers in late spring. Useful as a border edging or in a container with good drainage. Full sun. Another variety is Red Creeping Thyme.



GREEK OREGANO

Shrubby plant with slightly fuzzy gray-green leaves and tiny clusters of small flowers. Needs good drainage. Full sun.



LAVENDER

Requires drainage, sun and air space for circulation, some irrigation. Full size in three years. Prune after blooming season. Varieties include English, French, Sea, Spanish and Sweet.

HERBS



MOUNTAIN PENNYROYAL

Beautiful purple flowers attract butterflies and bees; very minty fragrance. Cut back regularly to maintain shape. Full to partial sun.



ROSEMARY

Short, narrow green leaves on woody stems with delicate blue flowers. Tough plant, requires good drainage. Pruning encourages new growth. Full sun to partial shade.



SAGE

Whorls of two-lipped flowers. Sweet, strong, flavorful scents. Good for erosion control, hot, dry locations. Attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. Full to partial sun. Many varieties.



SERPENTINE MONARDELLA

Dark green, blunt-tipped leaves are up to 1" long. Flowers are reddish purple and bloom from mid-summer to early fall. Full to partial sun.

SLOPE STABILIZATION



BLUE-EYED GRASS

Delicate flowers, abundant from February to May, with grass-like leaves. Does well in containers with well-draining soil. Sun to partial sun exposure.



Photo Credit: California Academy of Sciences

CALIFORNIA REDBUD

Pea-shaped magenta flowers on leafless stems in the spring, followed by seedpods and heart-shaped blue-green leaves. Yellow or red fall foliage on multi-branching stems. Prefers sun.



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

QUAIL BUSH

Evergreen shrub with gray-green leaves that is able to tolerate hot, dry climates. Thrives in full sun, with well-drained soil. Produces yellow flowers during the summer.



Photo Credit: Neal Kramer

TWINBERRY HONEYSUCKLE

Prefers moist areas. Pruning will control size. Dense foliage with unique orange-red flowers produce berries. Attractive to birds. Blooms in the spring. Sun to partial shade.

OUTDOOR WATER SAVING AND PLANTING TIPS

Your yard and garden account for up to 70 percent of your home's water usage. By planting California native plants and cutting down on water use, you're not only saving yourself time and money, but you're creating a habitat for birds and butterflies and helping reduce the strain on the environment as well! It's easy to conserve water by taking a few simple steps this planting season:

PLANTING TIPS:

- Water your yard between midnight and 8 a.m. and save up to 700 gallons of water each month by reducing evaporation and wind interference.
- Use organic mulch to keep plants cool and nourished in the heat and save up to 750 gallons of water each month.
- Choose a drip irrigation system for trees, shrubs and flowers and save up to 375 gallons of water each month.

WATER SAVING TIPS:

- Water your yard, not the sidewalk or street and save 500 gallons of water each month.
- Plant species native to California or drought tolerant and save 750 gallons of water each month.
- Fix leaks around the yard (and in the house!) and save 600 gallons each month.

SAVE WATER, PROTECT THE OCEAN

Using water responsibly can also prevent pollution of the ocean. Did you know that water that runs off your yard into the street picks up pollutants like trash, bacteria, and motor oil on its way through the storm drain system and eventually ends up in the ocean without any kind of treatment?

There are simple things you can do to make a big difference. Make sure your sprinkler heads are not tilted, clogged or broken. Check to see that the system doesn't leak and that the water is directed to your lawn and plants and not running off onto the streets and sidewalks. Ensure you are only watering for the appropriate amount of time. These easy tips will save water and help protect the beautiful Pacific Ocean, our creeks and our unique beach communities.

So please, take a few minutes a week to check your sprinkler system and prevent runoff. If someone maintains your yard for you, ask that they do a weekly check and let you know if anything needs to be fixed.

