CHOOSING PLANTS TO FIT A SITE

California is a large state with a diverse flora and various climates. To further complicate the matter of growing plants, there is a great diversity in the cultural requirements of the plants. To dispel any myths: NOT ALL California native plants are drought-tolerant; NOT ALL prefer the heavy clay soil; and NOT ALL tolerate full sun.

The native plants have evolved over eons of time and are suited to California's climatic conditions: a hot dry summer and fall and a cold, wet winter and cool, damp spring.

Choosing the plant site and deciding what to plant go hand in hand. To grow specific native plants in your garden, observe the same species in the wildlands; and then, at the planting site, replicate the planting situation as to soil type, water needs and sun exposure.

Most, but not all, native plants require good drainage. If the site has heavy clay soil, plant on a slope. If the site is sandy, plant on a more level area, mulching heavily to retain moisture.

Many native plants in full sun survive the spring and summers with little or no added water once deep roots have formed; however, other natives will not prosper in full sun unless they are given additional water. Watering is a tricky situation since molds and soil fungi grow rapidly under warm, wet summer conditions. Therefore water early in the day and thoroughly soak the soil, while keeping the foliage dry.

Save the native plants endemic to your property—at least until you have observed them through all the seasons. When you become acquainted with them, you will be able to assess their horticultural value to the site.

NATIVE PLANTS FOR VARIOUS PLANTING SITUATIONS

FULL SUN --hot and dry:
- Aesculus californica                  California Buckeye
- Arctostaphylos spp.                   Manzanitas
- Artemisia spp.                        Sagebrush
- Ceanothus spp.                        California Wild Lilac
- Cercis occidentalis                   Western Redbud
- Cerocarpus betuloides                Mountain Mahogany
- Dendromecon rigida                   Bush Poppy
- Erigeronum spp.                      Buckwheat
- Eschscholzia californica             California Poppy
- Fremontodendron californicum         Flannelbush
- Heteromeles arbutifolia              Toyon
- Holodiscus discolor                  Cream bush
- Lonicera interrupta                  Chaparral Honeysuckle
- Lupinus spp.                         Lupine
- Penstemon spp.                      Coffeeberry
- Salvia spp.                          Sage
- Zauschneria spp. (Epilobium)          California Fuchsia

FULL SUN to part shade --tolerates moisture :
- Asclepias (speciosa  & fascicularis)  Milkweed (Showy & Narrowleaf)
- Berberis aquifolium                   Oregon-Grape
- Brodiaea spp. and other bulbs        California native bulbs
- Calycanthus occidentalis             Spicebush
- Carpenteria californica              Tree-Anemone
- Ceanothus intergerrimus              Deer Brush
- Clematis lasiantha                   Pipestems
- C.ligusticifolia                    Virgin’s Bower
- Delphinium spp.                     Larkspur
- Linum lewisii                        Blue Flax
- Lonicera hispidula                   Honeysuckle
- Monardella villosa                   Coyote-Mint
- Penstemon spp.                      Holly-leafed Redberry
- Ribes sanguineum                     Pink Flowering Currant
- Ribes speciosum                     Fuchsia-flowered Gooseberry
- Rosa spp.                            California Wild Rose
- Sambucus mexicana                    Blue Elderberry
- Sisyrinchium bellum                  Blue-eyed Grass
- Spiraea douglasii & S.densiflora     Native spiraeas
DRY SHADE—plantings under oaks:
*Aquilegia formosa - A.pubescens Columbine
Arctostaphylos spp. Low-growing Manzanitas
Artemisia spp. Sagebrush
Berberis aquifolium Oregon - Grape
Brodiaea spp. and other bulbs California native bulbs
Chlorogalum pomeridianum Soap Plant
* Ferns: Wood Fern, Sword Fern, Maidenhair Fern
* Heuchera spp. Alumroot
* Iris spp. Douglas Iris hybrids
Mimulus aurantiacus Bush Monkeyflower
Nassella pulchra Purple Needlegrass; also other native grasses
Ribes viburnifolium Evergreen Currant
* Symphoricarpos albus laevigatus Snowberry

RIPARIAN AREAS—part shade:
*Aquilegia formosa & A.pubescens Columbine
Mimulus aurantiacus Bush Monkeyflower
*Lilium pardalinum Leopard Lily
Philadelphus lewisii Wild Mock Orange
* Spiraea douglasii & S. densiflora Native Spiraeas

RIPARIAN AREAS—deep shade, more moisture:
Acer circinatum Vine Maple
Acer macrophyllum Big-leaf Maple
*Asarum hartwegii Wild-ginger
Dicentra formosa Bleeding Heart
Mimulus cardinalis Cardinal Monkeyflower
*Tellima grandiflora Fringe cups
Thalictrum fendleri Meadow-Rue
*Vitis californica California Wild Grape

*denotes plants that may need a little summer water if not in a wet area.

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