

Shrubs

Arctostaphylos spp.

Manzanita

Sun/Par-Shady; Occasional water

Manzanita species are among the most useful California natives, especially as groundcovers and accent shrubs. Large forms develop smooth, mahogany-hued, gnarly stems and trunks that contrast with small glossy green leaves. Pinkish or white urn-shaped blossoms hang in clusters from late winter to early spring followed by berries relished by birds. Tolerates heavy soil but does best with good drainage. Dense, rounded *A. densiflora* 'Howard McMinn' is one of most garden tolerant manzanitas. Thin branches to train as a small tree; prune for hedging or to encourage density. 'Emerald Carpet' and 'Point Reyes' are choice low groundcovers.



Berberis spp.

Barberry

Sun/Par-Shady; Low Water; Deer Res.

A large genus of many species, sizes, and shapes all valued for low maintenance, delicate yellowish blossoms, colorful berries, and fall color on small leaves. Some berries persist into winter. Many forms are evergreen or bear striking lime, burgundy, or variegated foliage. Tough thorns discourage traffic, deer, and some gardeners, but provide color and interest on bare winter branches. Give good drainage, little or no summer water in clay soil; prune out old wood near the base or at ground level to renew.

Ceanothus spp.

California Lilac

Sun/Par-Shady; Drought Tolerant

Huge variation of evergreen forms includes low spreading or mounding groundcovers, medium to large shrubs nearly tree size. Foliage varies also from medium-sized and glossy to very small and rough; the latter are fairly deer resistant. All produce profuse clusters of tiny blue flowers in mid-spring that attract birds, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Most thrive on neglect but like good drainage in winter and little to no summer water. Glossy-leaved varieties need afternoon shade inland. Suggested varieties: *C. griseus horizontalis* (groundcover); 'Joyce Coulter' (low shrub); 'Julia Phelps' (medium to large shrub); 'Ray Hartman' (large shrub/small tree). Most are generally short-lived.

Ceratostigma spp.

Plumbago

Sun; Drought Tolerant

Prized for brilliant blue blossoms in summer to fall and round foliage that glows with autumn colors, these resilient plants survive in full sun in water-retentive soils even without summer irrigation. *C. griffithii* is a twiggy, slowly spreading evergreen shrub. *C. willmottianum* spreads by underground runners to form a thicket; deciduous stems turn brown in winter and may be cut to the ground before spring. *C. plumbaginoides*, known as dwarf plumbago, is a deciduous, slowly spreading groundcover that requires shearing in winter.

Cotinus coggygria

Smoke Bush

Sun/Par-Shady; Low Water

Loose and airy, grayish buff-to-pink tiny flowers and stems rise above foliage in wispy smoke-like puffs and persist for months. Purple-leaved varieties make dramatic statements especially as colors change in fall. Poor soil is superior to wet or highly fertile ground, but good drainage is a must. Prune to control size and shape. Train as a tree or allow many stems to develop.

Daphne odora 'Aureo-marginata'

Winter Daphne

Part Shady; Moderate water; Deer Res

Highly perfumed blossoms cover this shrub in winter, but its value continues throughout the year as yellow-edged foliage brightens shaded spots in the garden. For best success, plant in amended, porous but water-retentive soil. Once established, withhold summer water in full shade and water occasionally in part-sun. Tip-prune branchlets as flowers fade.

Heteromeles arbutifolia

Toyon

Sun/Par-Shady; Drought Tolerant; Deer Res

A large shrub with excellent fall/winter interest, toyon produces clusters of white flowers in spring followed by profuse bright red berries that persist all winter until eaten by birds. Dark green, leathery leaves have prickly margins. Once established, shrubs are long-lived. Light pruning encourages heavier flowering and berry production. Good as a specimen shrub, informal screen or hedge, toyon works well planted with manzanita, coffeeberry, or ceanothus.

Hydrangea quercifolia

Oak Leaf Hydrangea

Sun/Par-Shady; Moderate Water

Burnished fall colors on bold foliage resembling oak leaves and pendulous white flowers in late spring to early summer make this shrub a standout in gardens. Dried flowers and peeling bark are winter highlights. Performs best in full sun; unlike other hydrangea species, it tolerates fairly dry conditions. Prune after bloom; cut crowded and weak stems to the ground as they spread to form a clump. Dwarf varieties are best in most gardens.



Rhamnus californica

Coffeeberry

Sun/Par-Shady; Occasional water; Deer Res

Excellent hedge, screen or specimen plant with inconspicuous flowers and attractive red berries on some varieties that turn black in late fall. Dependable native for year-round good looks from dark green leathery leaves and neat mounding habit. Prune to control size and shape; water promotes faster growth; part shade prevents sunburn. Tolerates poor soil but requires good drainage. Select named varieties for low, tall, or spreading forms. Suggested varieties: 'Eve Case' (smaller shrub form with large berries); 'Seaview Improved' (groundcover); 'Mound San Bruno' (very adaptable larger shrub).

Rosmarinus officinalis

Rosemary

Sun; Low Water; Deer Res

Throughout the rainy season, small blossoms in white, pink, or shades of blue attract butterflies and bees and light up deep green needlelike foliage. Roots form along branches in contact with moist ground. No water is needed in summer. Begin pruning when plants are young to limit size or promote bushiness; side branches will not sprout from bare wood. Because shapes vary from low, mounding groundcovers to trailing shrubs to stiff and upright forms, select a named cultivar for a specific size and flower color. Popular upright forms include 'Collingwood Ingram' (2-3 ft), 'Blue Spires' (to 4ft), 'Tuscan Blue' (to 5-6 ft). Popular mounding or trailing forms include 'Prostrata' (1-2 ft x 4-6 ft) and 'Huntington Carpet' (1-1.5 ft x 4-8 ft).

Teucrium spp.

Germander

Sn/Par-Shady; Low water; Deer Res

This genus includes low perennial groundcovers to dwarf and bulky shrubs. Bush germander (*T. fruticans*) has small gray-green foliage with a silvery cast

on dense, twiggy stems in nearly constant bloom with tiny lavender-blue flowers. *T. x lucidrys* (aka *T. chamaedrys*), a small-leaved, dark green subshrub, bears tiny, rosy purple blossoms on tips of foot-tall stems in summer. Both species are amenable to shearing and hedging, which makes them more attractive than those left to sprawl. Soft stems covered with ruffled leaves on *T. scorodonia crispum* spread via underground runners and can become invasive.

Perennials

Achillea spp.

Yarrow

Sun; Drought Tolerant; Deer Res

A favorite summer bloomer for bright, flat blossom clusters in yellow, orange, and pinkish red that rise on thin stems from basal clumps of lacy foliage. Named varieties vary in height, color, and vigor, some spreading rapidly by underground runners and requiring annual dividing. Cut stems to the ground after flowers fade. Blossom heads are valued in dried arrangements.



Euphorbia spp.

Spurge

Sun/Par-Shady; Low; Deer Res

The most ornamental species of this widely diverse plant group develop showy green bracts in elongating terminal panicles atop tough stems that must be cut to the ground annually after bloom. New growth appears immediately. A few types are known for burgundy foliage and yellow flowers. Some self-sow profusely but seedlings are easy to pull out. Most tolerate dry soil with little or no summer water. When cut, all species release a milky, white sap that can cause dermatitis.

Euphorbias often planted in Sonoma County include:

Euphorbia characias wulfenii, a very drought tolerant evergreen with large, beautiful clusters of lime-green flowers in early spring. Multiple stems at the base develop into a 3- x 4-ft clump.

Euphorbia characias 'Tasmanian Tiger' bears evergreen leaves with green centers and white margins. Flower clusters are cream with light green centers. It grows 2-3 ft high and wide and prefers partial shade where it is drought tolerant.

Euphorbia amygdaloides 'Purpurea', semi-evergreen with oval, purple-red suffused leaves and yellow bloom clusters. In full or part sun with little-to-no water, it grows in compact tufts 2 ft high by 1 ft wide.

Lavandula spp.

Lavender

Sun; Occasional Summer water; Deer Res

Prized for fragrance, white, pink or more common lilac-to-purple flower spikes that appear in spring or summer. Some varieties repeat bloom in late summer or fall. After flowering, prune single stems or up to one-half of the entire foliage mound. To rejuvenate leggy shrubs, in late fall or early winter, prune harder into woody growth but only where small green buds are showing. Give excellent drainage, air circulation, and little water. Lavenders generally need replacing after 4-6 years.



Suggested species: *L. angustifolia*, English lavender, many cultivars, most with tall stems; *L. dentata*, French lavender with long bloom; *L. stoechas*,

Spanish lavender, many cultivars good near the coast; intensely fragrant hybrids, 'Provence' and 'Grosso'.

Nepeta spp.

Catmint

Sun/Par-Shady; Moderate water; Deer Res

Related to catnip and often favored by felines, this sprawling perennial blooms repeatedly from late spring through fall in small, lilac blue, two-lipped flowers. To maintain neat appearance, deadhead individual stems or shear plants back by as much as half after each round of bloom; shear to the ground in winter; divide when clumps become crowded.

Perovskia atriplicifolia

Russian Sage

Sun; Drought Tolerant; Deer Res

Lacy gray-green, finely divided foliage decorates stout stems rising from a woody base to 4-5 ft tall. Dwarf cultivars are shorter. Airy, lavender blue flower spikes on branch tips erupt into summer bloom and last for months. In winter, stems become silvery white, a standout in the landscape. Plants withstand cold but can be damaged if pruned before the last frost when they should be cut to about 6 inches from the ground. Unpruned plants become unstable and subject to breakage. Provide good drainage but withhold fertilizers and all but light summer irrigation.

Phormium spp.

New Zealand Flax

Sun/Par-Shady; Moderate water; Deer Res.

Fibrous, sword-shaped leaves endow this rugged plant with dramatic qualities year-round in groups or as accent plants. Foliage colors range from solid green or burgundy to stripes of nearly every hue. *P. tenax* develops huge clumps with stiff leaves; *P. cookianum* clumps are lax and sprawling. Numerous named hybrids between these species yield a broad range of sizes and colors more easily accommodated in gardens. All need good drainage and look best with moderate irrigation and light shade to avoid sunburn. Cut out flower stalks after blooms fade.

Salvia spp.

Sage

Sn/Par-Shady; Low; Deer Res

Tubular, two-lipped blossoms in a wide range of colors on long- and short-lived species attract hummingbirds and bees within this large and variable genus. Some become hardy subshrubs with woody bases. These and tender species should not be cut back until frost danger is past. Most are quite drought tolerant and provide showy floral displays. Local native *S. sonomensis* and similar *S. clevelandii* cultivars have aromatic foliage and spread widely as groundcovers.

Santolina spp.

Lavender Cotton

Sn/Par-Shady; Drought Tolerant; Deer res

Cultivars of this fast-growing but often short-lived sub-shrub may be grown as foliage plants for either pale gray or bright green color, but gardeners often remove their yellow, button-like blossoms. These rarely appear, however, when plants are regularly sheared into a soft, low hedge or into rounded shapes. Left untrimmed, shrubby mounds tend to flop over. Cut back in spring; renew by pruning hard every year or two.

