

California Native Plants

Adding Them to Your Garden



Why grow California Natives?

- Native gardens become expressions of our environmental values e.g. water conservation and habitat restoration
- Native plants help native creatures by providing food: leaves, fruit, seeds, nectar, pollen and other creatures (attract insects).
- Because they are beautiful -- bring a little of the wild where we can see it every day

Native plants support diversity

- Landscaping with native plants increases the resource base for native insects
- Using a greater diversity of plants provides for a greater diversity of insects
- Greater numbers and diversity of insects supports more birds, insectivorous animals and beneficial predatory insects



Native Landscapes Promote Sustainability

- Plants link to the surrounding wildland ecosystems providing more resources for creatures.
- Give local landscapes a unique style and promote “sense of place”
- Helps people value, and thus work to protect, plants and habitats.

Why aren't there more California Native Plants in our Landscapes?



Lack of Availability

- They have historically not been widely available in commercial nurseries
- Propagation and production protocols are not worked out yet—hard to mass produce
- Local by nature they are not marketable across the nation.

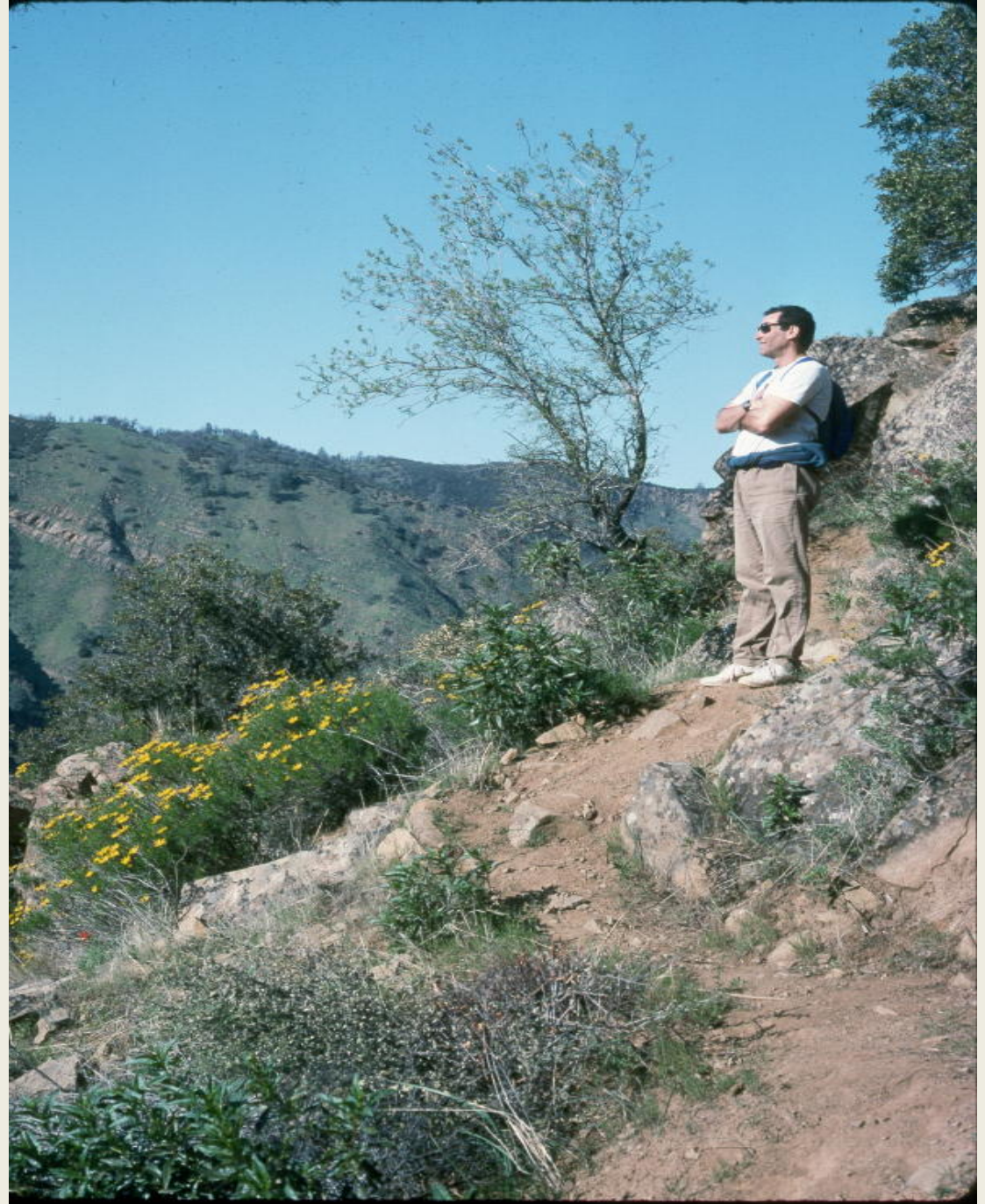


Lack of readily available information

- Many California native plants have not been selected for tolerance of cultivation.
- Abundant water availability has allowed the use of more lush plants that need summer water.
- The needs of Natives may be incompatible with those of non-natives



Many
common
natives
need well
drained
soils



Native plants in Gardens

- Heavy soils in the Valley can hold too much water in the winter and limit oxygen to roots.
- With poorly drained soils it is important to use *grading* to make slightly raised areas so water doesn't collect around the root crown.



Not all California native plants have the same water needs

- Plants from coastal areas are used to cooling summer fogs and moister soils
- Interior natives from rocky areas may require summer dry



Interior natives are frequently more drought tolerant

- *Cercis occidentalis*
redbud



Success with Native Garden Plants

- Many recommendation lists are written for **coastal gardens** with cooling summer fog
- These plants require **shade from the hot afternoon sun** to flourish in the Valley

Salvia spathacea



Adaption to summer drought



- Some natives have given the group a bad name by being prone to summer dormancy (*Ribes sanguineum* and *Keckiella*)



Native Gardens

- Require an appreciation of “golden” in summer
- Too much “golden” can be overcome by use of “hydrozones”
- Important to carefully mix evergreen and deciduous plants.



Native annuals can be easy, showy alternatives

- Annuals are *not the lowest maintenance*
- Need to be cut down in summer
- Let seed drop or collect and sow in fall



Lupinus microcarpus var.
densiflorus 'Ed Gedling'

Davis golden lupine

Can require extra weeding



Some spread actively from seed

Datura wrightii, tolguacha



Especially some grasses

Melica californica



Managing these plants requires different methods

Purple needle grass

Nassella pulchra



These can be used to create meadow-like
landscapes



Where can I see California native plants in a garden?
Mary Wattis Brown Garden of California Native Plants



Every two week summer irrigation

Ceanothus
thyrsiflorus
cultivars
'Ray Hartman'



Toyon
Heteromeles arbutifolia



Many support wildlife

Arctostaphylos , manzanitas





Some natives prefer shade

making them useful for under oaks



Island alum root
Heuchera maxima



Other native hybrid coral bells



Iris douglasii, Douglas iris
Pacific Coast Hybrid 'Canyon Snow'



Simple and elegant planting with natives
Interior live oak, alum root, juncus and deer grass



If you can plant
some plants to
provide food for
butterflies

Asclepias speciosa
showy milkweed



California pipevine
for swallowtail
larvae





For nectar and
pollen
*Eriogonum
fasciculatum*
buckwheat



Native plants are also important for native bees

- Shortage of European honeybees for crop pollination due to Colony Collapse Disorder.
- Native bees found to make up a high proportion of bee visits in certain crops
- Proximity to **native habitat** **increase number of bee visits**



Kremen et.al. 2002

There are old and new native sages
Salvia apiana bee sage



Natives to attract Hummingbirds

- Particularly like red, tubular flowers
- Lap nectar from a variety of native and non-native plants
- Need complex habitat like other birds



Epilobium canum, California fuchsia
Salvia spathacea, hummingbird sage



California fuchsia
Epilobium canum



What about combining Natives with other plants?



- Pair natives with plants from other summer dry regions
- Expands the possibilities you can create
- Helps with more evergreen plants for structure

Native perennials and shrubs with Mediterranean plants



More mixing California natives with drought tolerant non-natives

Deer grass

*Muehlenbergia
rigens*

Spanish lavender

Lavandula stoechas
'Otto Quast'



Combining Mediterranean and California plants

Salvia clevelandii

Lavandula angustifolia 'Munstead'



Native color mainly in spring.
Add color year-round with other drought tolerant
plants



Fall blooming:
asters
sages
CA fuchsia

Come to the Arboretum
to see more examples
Ruth Risdon Storer Garden



*Rosmarinus
officinalis*
rosemary



Sedum 'Autumn Joy'



Non native
compatible plants

*Miscanthus
sinensis* 'Morning
Light'



Calamagrostis 'Karl Foerster'



Other compatible trees and shrubs
Acacia boormanii





Callistemon
'Mauve Mist' and
'Reeve's Pink'



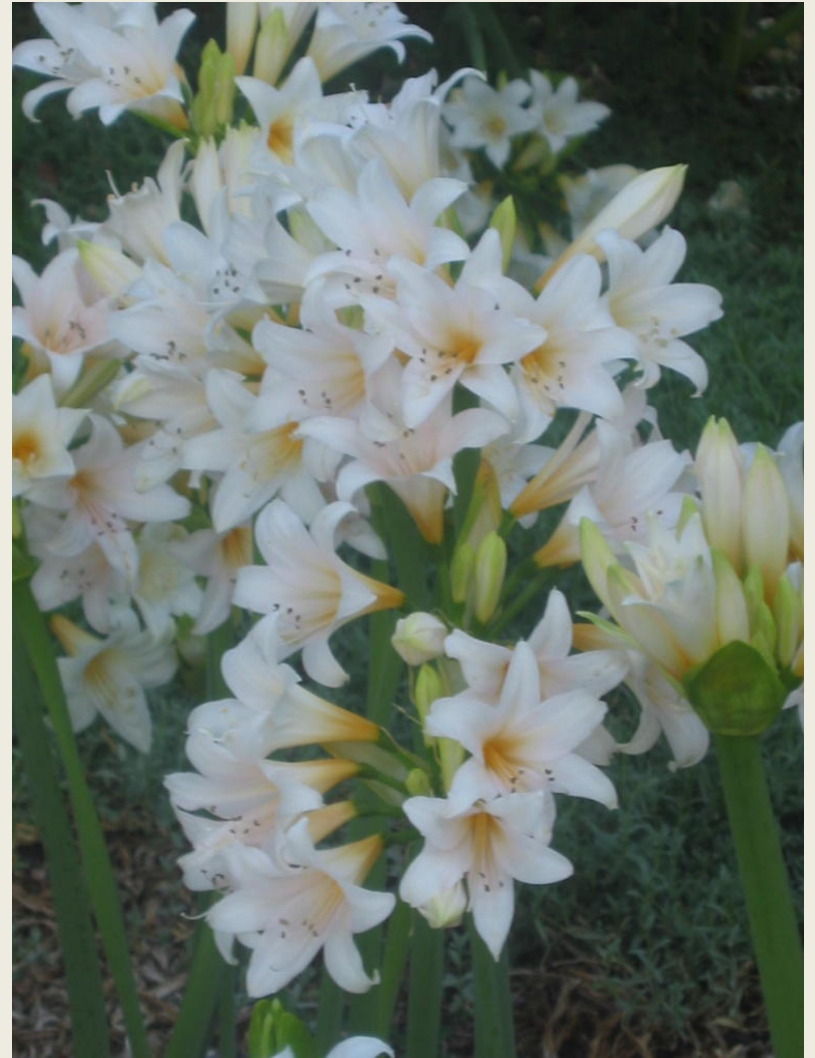
Leucophyllum
frutescens
ceniza, barometer bush



Arbutus 'Marina'



Don't forget you can use some old favorites
that are summer dormant
Narcissus and *Amaryllis belladonna*



Hardy succulents

Aloe, *Echeveria* 'Imbricata', *Delosperma*



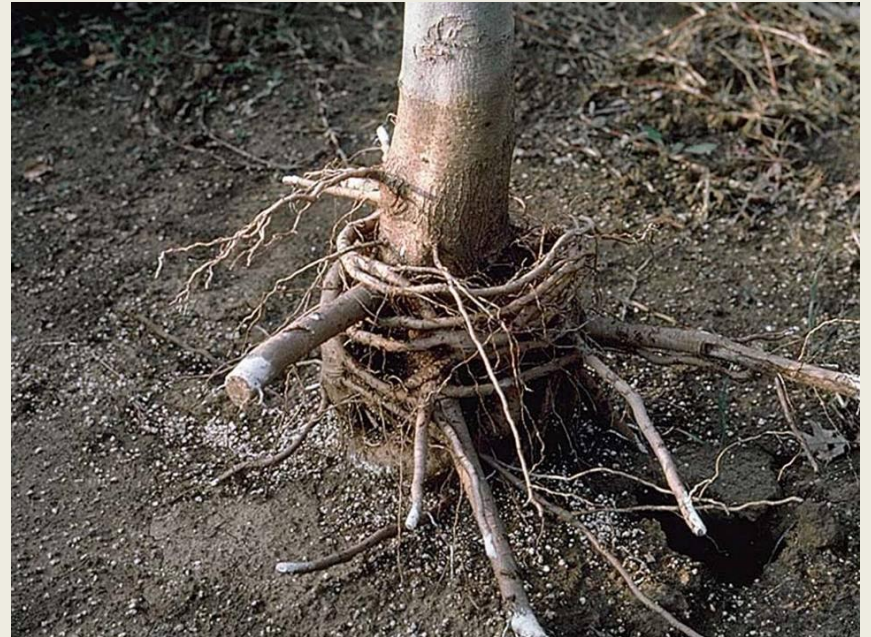
Adding Native plants to your Garden

- Give careful attention to establishment watering
- Make sure they will be with other plants with same water needs.
- Try and plant in fall.
- Supply supplementary irrigation the first summer.



How to succeed with new plantings: check for plant quality before buying

- Examine woody plants for good structure
- Look at roots and avoid circling rooted plants
- Reject diseased or infested plants



Never plant low and bury the crown of the plant
or it may rot off

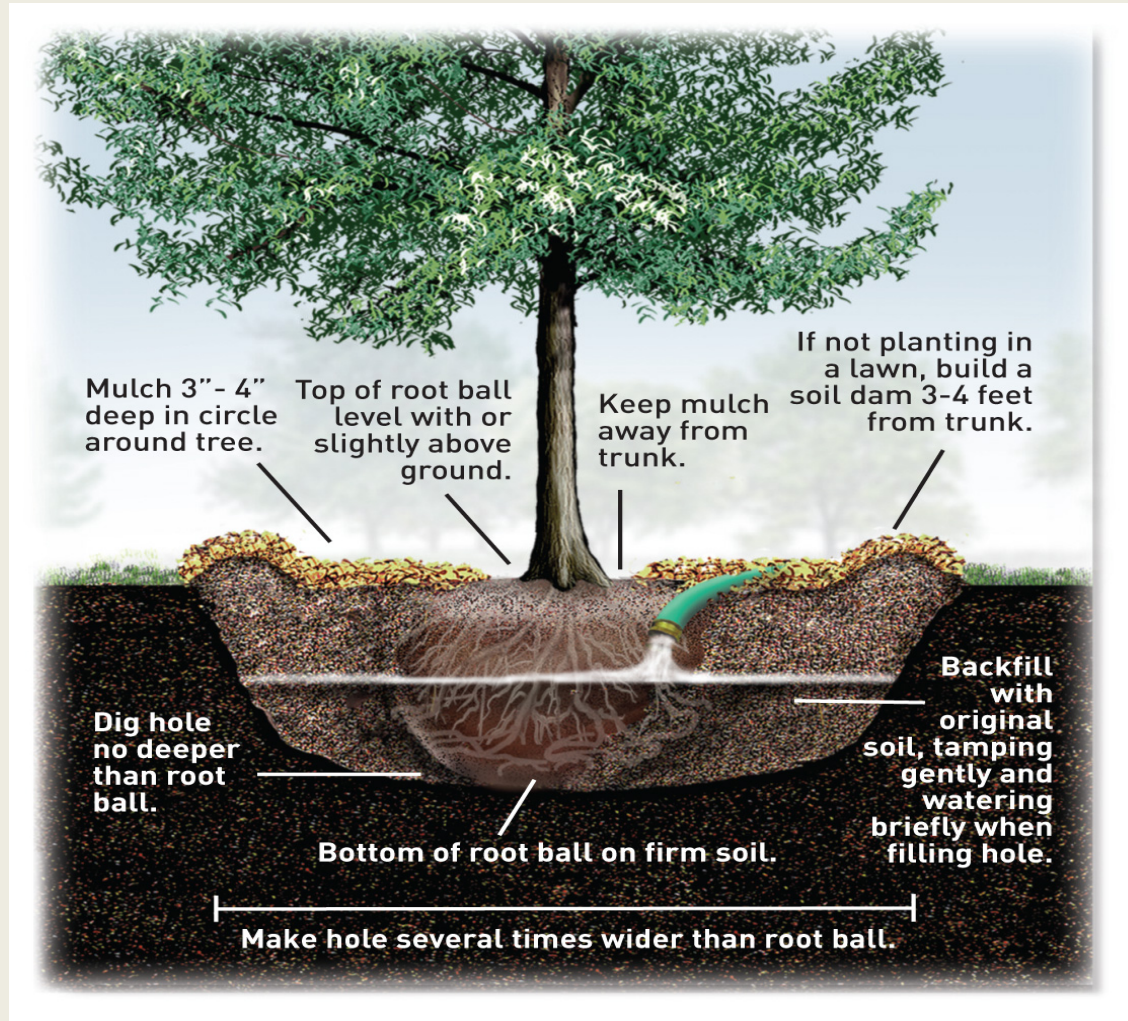


When you plant take time to do it right



- Dig a hole as deep as the root ball is tall
- And twice as wide
- Backfill carefully removing air pockets
- No amending backfill
- Irrigate thoroughly

Check there is no mulch on trunk



In summary successful native gardens require:

- All plants must have compatible water needs
- Provide afternoon shade to reduce plant stress
- If soils are heavy use grading to assure winter rain doesn't collect around plant
- Check if the plants have summer dormancy

Choosing the right drought tolerant plants can help you
create beauty with less water
And create our own regional style



To see more examples of low water and native
landscapes visit the UC Davis Arboretum



A dramatic sunset sky with orange and red clouds. The text "Any questions?" is centered in the upper half of the image.

Any questions?