

A hummingbird with iridescent green and blue feathers is hovering in flight, its long beak extended towards a cluster of bright pink, tubular flowers. The background is a soft-focus field of similar pink flowers, creating a vibrant and natural scene.

Landscape Plants *for the Arizona Desert*

A Detailed Guide on Low-Water-Use Plants



Avondale | Chandler | Gilbert | Glendale | Goodyear | Mesa | Peoria | Phoenix | Scottsdale | Tempe

Working Together as the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert was originally developed by the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association (AMWUA) Conservation & Efficiency Advisory Group. This was a collaborative effort among the ten AMWUA member municipalities with professional expertise in water conservation, horticulture, botany, and the plant sciences, together with AMWUA staff and assistance from local green industry professionals, university faculty and staff members.

We appreciate the contributions of the diverse team who shared their knowledge and time during the 2024 update of this popular book:

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These updates would not be possible without the hard work of our talented photographer, Dave Seibert. Over two years, Dave gained unexpected expertise in desert-adapted plants. He diligently located and photographed thousands of plants at our request and with guidance from Bill Casenhiser, Steve Priebe, and Carol Ward. Supporting photos were generously provided by Kirti Mathura.

Plant selections in this booklet align with the Arizona Department of Water Resources Phoenix Active Management Area Low-Water-Use/Drought-Tolerant Plant List.

This book is being published in honor of Kirti Mathura and Kent Newland, two landscape professionals who left a lasting legacy of passion, knowledge, and a collection of beautiful plant photos to be adored.

Book design by Frani Halperin/Halperin Creative, LLC

A complete list of contributors to the creation and continued evolution of the Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert book can be found online at amwua.org/plants. We thank everyone who contributed their time, expertise, advice, input, and support to develop this popular publication.

Cover: Parry's penstemon (page 74) is an excellent native perennial wildflower for adding spring color and attracting hummingbirds and other interesting pollinators to your low-water-use yard. *Photo by: Dave Seibert* | Back cover: Desert willow (page 10)

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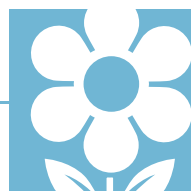
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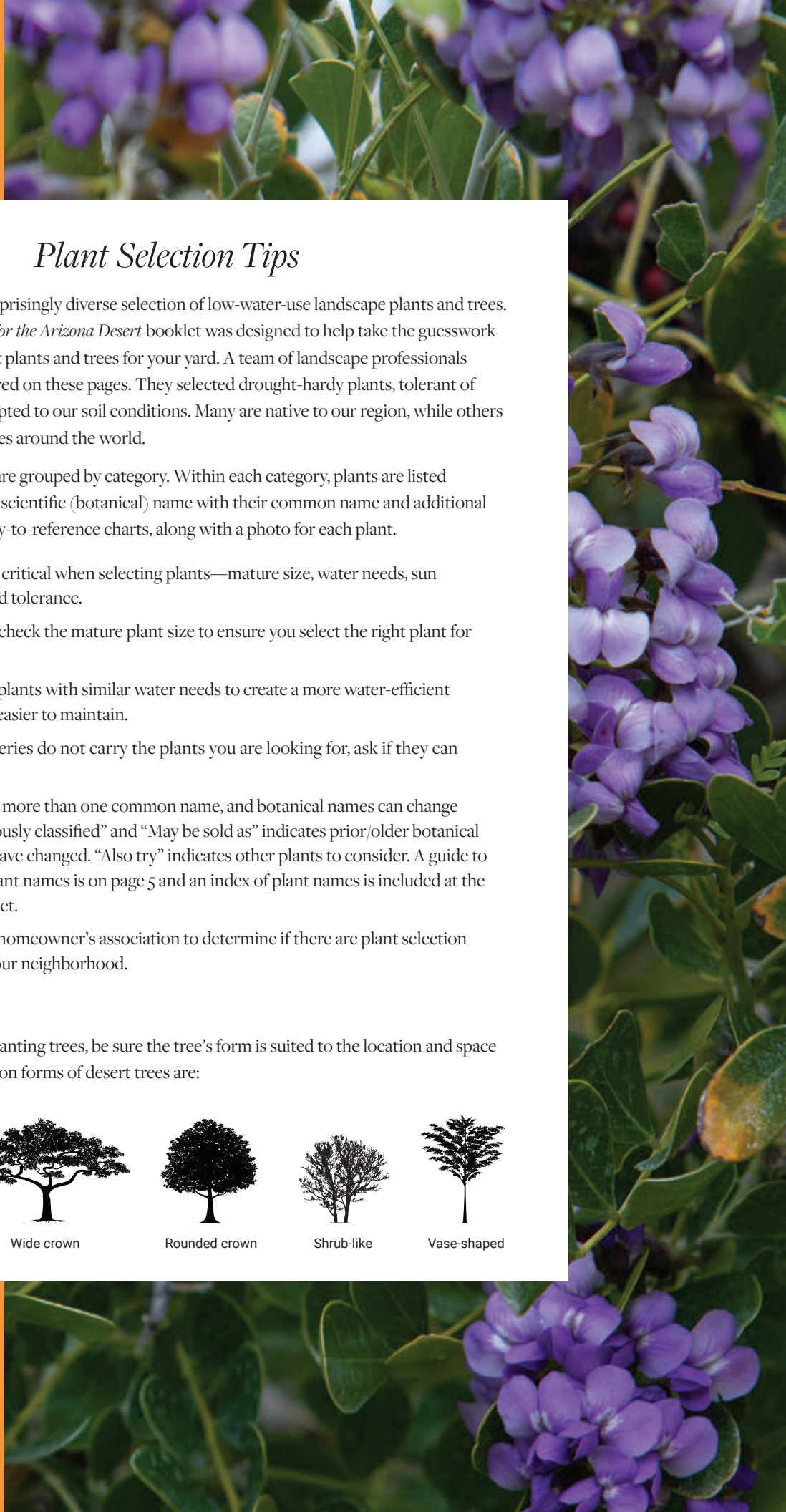
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Plant Selection Tips

The desert offers a surprisingly diverse selection of low-water-use landscape plants and trees. The *Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert* booklet was designed to help take the guesswork out of finding the right plants and trees for your yard. A team of landscape professionals chose the plants featured on these pages. They selected drought-hardy plants, tolerant of heat and cold, and adapted to our soil conditions. Many are native to our region, while others come from arid climates around the world.

Plants in this booklet are grouped by category. Within each category, plants are listed alphabetically by their scientific (botanical) name with their common name and additional details arranged in easy-to-reference charts, along with a photo for each plant.

- ✿ Basic features are critical when selecting plants—mature size, water needs, sun exposure, and cold tolerance.
- ✿ Use the charts to check the mature plant size to ensure you select the right plant for the right place.
- ✿ Select and group plants with similar water needs to create a more water-efficient landscape that is easier to maintain.
- ✿ If your local nurseries do not carry the plants you are looking for, ask if they can order them.
- ✿ Many plants have more than one common name, and botanical names can change over time. “Previously classified” and “May be sold as” indicates prior/older botanical names that may have changed. “Also try” indicates other plants to consider. A guide to understanding plant names is on page 5 and an index of plant names is included at the back of this booklet.
- ✿ Check with your homeowner’s association to determine if there are plant selection restrictions for your neighborhood.

Tree Shapes

When selecting and planting trees, be sure the tree’s form is suited to the location and space available. Some common forms of desert trees are:



Upright, open



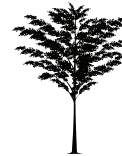
Wide crown



Rounded crown



Shrub-like



Vase-shaped



Landscape Design Tips

When designing your landscape, it's essential to consider your preferences, such as the look you want to achieve, how you will use your yard, and the amount of time you want to spend installing and maintaining it as you develop your unique plan. Follow the seven principles of xeriscaping through all phases of planning to help build your landscape precisely how you like.

1

GOOD PLANNING AND DESIGN

Creating a long-term plan will help you get the most out of your landscape while considering cost, function, aesthetic preferences, maintenance requirements, water efficiency, and energy efficiency.

You can tailor the plan to suit your taste, needs, and budget.

3

APPROPRIATE TURF AREAS

Although turf generally requires more water and maintenance than low-water-use plants, sometimes only grass will do, especially if children or pets are at home.

If properly planned, installed, and maintained, small functional turfgrass areas can be incorporated into a xeriscape.

5

SOIL IMPROVEMENTS

Desert-adapted plants will naturally thrive in our environment without fertilizers or soil supplements. When planting, provide good drainage and loosen the soil to encourage healthy root growth. Soil amendments will most likely be needed for turf areas and areas with more water-thirsty plants installed.

6

USE OF MULCHES

Mulches cover and cool the soil, reduce evaporation, and help to inhibit weed growth and erosion. The most popular organic mulches are bark chips and wood grindings. Fallen leaves and flowers can also be left as mulch. Decomposed granite and crushed rock are two of the most popular inorganic mulches.

2

LOW-WATER-USE PLANTS

There are hundreds of water-thrifty native or desert-adapted plants available locally. They come in all shapes and sizes and serve various purposes, from shade to seasonal color to screening unsightly areas.

Many low-water-use plants have beautiful flowers or interesting forms.

4

EFFICIENT IRRIGATION

In the desert, almost all new plants should be watered regularly to get them established, and many plants will need some kind of regular irrigation. Design your irrigation system so plants with similar watering needs are on the same valve. Water deeply and infrequently, and remember to adjust irrigation seasonally.

7

APPROPRIATE MAINTENANCE

When properly designed and maintained, xeriscapes save water, time, and money through reduced plant water needs and lower maintenance requirements. But all landscapes will need some care, and a well-maintained irrigation system will keep plants healthy and water use to a minimum.





Plant Description

SUN EXPOSURE

Plants vary in how much sun or shade they need to grow. In this booklet, the sun exposure a plant will tolerate is represented by the icons below.



Full/reflected sun indicates the toughest plants that will tolerate extreme conditions. This occurs when the sun's heat and light are intensified, such as against a south or west wall.



Full sun means a plant can tolerate exposure to eight or more hours of sun each day.



Partial sun is for plants that do best with moderate sun. Plant them where they will have afternoon shade, such as an eastern exposure, or in filtered sun beneath the canopy of trees.



Shade means that a plant does best with minimum exposure to the sun. Examples include enclosures that face north, deep shade beneath trees, or locations next to buildings.

COLD HARDINESS



This number indicates the low temperature in degrees Fahrenheit that the plant is known to tolerate before suffering severe injury or death. It is often referred to as the plant's cold hardiness. Hardiness can vary with a plant's age, health, location in the garden, and how long the temperature remains below freezing.

WATER REQUIREMENTS



Very Low

All plants in this book are low-water-use, but some get by with less water than others.



Low

The very low, low, and moderate water drops associated with each plant represent relative water use. Remember that even low-water-use plants will require regular irrigation after they are first planted.



Moderate

For more information on irrigation and water needs of plants, refer to AMWUA.org/plants.

GROWTH RATE

Knowing whether plants will grow fast, moderate, or slow is important. This will help gardeners determine a plant's suitability for a particular location.

MATURE SIZE

Plant sizes can vary depending on where and how the plant is grown. Two numbers are provided (e.g., 4 x 3). The first number represents the plant's mature height, and the second represents its width. Unless noted, these sizes are in feet and indicate the plant's mature size under typical growing conditions.

MATURE FORM

Knowing a plant's form—upright, spreading, mounding, or vase-shaped—can help you select a plant to fit the space and design you have in mind. This is especially important with trees. (For more information, see the drawings on page 2.)

FOLIAGE

Plants will be described as either evergreen, semi-evergreen, or deciduous. Evergreen means the plant is in leaf all year, although leaves will fall throughout the year. Deciduous means that all leaves drop during the dormant winter season. Several plants are noted to be semi-evergreen, meaning that some of their leaves fall for a short period in winter.

COLOR

Describes the plant's overall color, such as medium green or gray-green.

TEXTURE

Indicates the general appearance of leaves and flowers. Using plants with different leaf shapes and textures provides contrast and interest to the landscape. Examples are small, fine-textured leaves or large, coarse leaves.

FLOWER COLOR

A description of the flower color and the type, e.g., puffball, daisy-like, spikes, etc., is often included.

FLOWER SEASON

Specifies the time of year the plant will bloom—winter, spring, summer, or fall. Use this information to help you design a landscape for seasonal or year-round color.



Plant Description

PLANTS WITH A PURPOSE



Native Plant

Plants with this icon grow naturally in the Chihuahuan, Mohave, and Sonoran Deserts within parts of Arizona, the Arid Southwest, and Mexico. These unique plants adapt well to our desert environment, requiring minimal supplemental water after establishment. They provide important habitat for pollinators and other native wildlife.



Pool Friendly

This icon is being provided as a general guide for your poolscape by identifying plants that produce minimal litter and no spines or thorns. However, based on your desired aesthetics and maintenance interests, you may incorporate species that produce some litter or have spines or thorns. Place taller shrubs and trees away from your pool if maximum sun exposure is desired. Avoid grass or other plants that require heavy irrigation, which can damage your pool decking or equipment.



Attracts Wildlife

Bring your yard to life with songbirds, hummingbirds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and pollinators. Flowers attract pollinators and beneficial insects, but nearly all plants provide shelter and food to wildlife at some point in their life cycle. However, these plants are deemed especially good at providing food, cover, and nesting places that draw in wildlife while offering lively displays of color and fragrance.



Rabbit Resistant

Rabbits are determined herbivores. However, the rabbit-resistant plants listed here suggest some species which they seem to prefer less than others. TIP: Protect new plants and fresh shoots by installing larger plants (5 gal vs 1 gal containers), enclosing with a chicken wire fence, and avoiding over-watering.

LITTER

All living plants produce litter, but some create more than others. Sometimes litter is seasonal, with flowers, seedpods, or leaves dropping during certain months. Litter creates natural mulch, which benefits your plants. However, consider placing high-litter plants away from pools or patio surfaces.

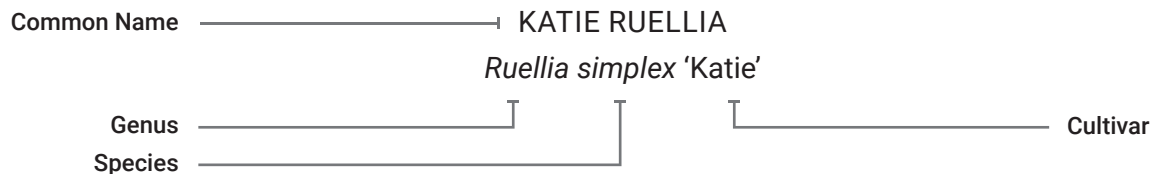
THORNS

Many desert plants have thorns and may require thoughtful placement, especially if you have children. However, thorny plants offer some advantages in certain situations. Consider using them to enhance the security around your home. At the same time, many also help create wildlife habitats.

ALLERGENIC

Many plants produce pollen which can cause allergies. Other plants have poisonous parts or sap and leaves that can cause irritation. Plants with potential allergens, irritants, or poisonous parts are noted in the plant descriptions. Use only as a general guide, as all known allergens, irritants, or toxins may not be listed. Individual tolerances may vary considerably. Consult your healthcare provider or allergist for more detailed information.

UNDERSTANDING PLANT NAMES



Common Name: A name that has no botanical standing. Common names are easier to spell and pronounce, but many plants have more than one common name or share the same common name, which can cause confusion about a plant's identity.

Genus: One or more species of plants that share many characteristics. They usually have similar flowers and fruit. Genus is the first part of a plant's botanical name and is designated with an initial capital.

Species: Plants that have different characteristics from other plants within the same genus. It is usually the second part of a plant's botanical name, and the first letter is in lowercase.

Variety: A variation of a plant species that occurs naturally in the wild, designated with the abbreviation *v.* preceding the species name. *Dodonaea viscosa v. purpurea* is a naturally occurring variation of *Dodonaea viscosa* with purplish leaves.

Cultivar: A plant that is cultivated, or developed and grown by nurseries (as opposed to occurring naturally in the wild) for its desirable characteristics. Cultivar is a combination of the words "cultivated variety." Cultivar names are enclosed in single quotes.

Trademarked Plants (™): Plant selections developed by nurseries for certain desirable characteristics. On plant labels and in written materials, typically enclosed by single quotes and designated by ™ next to the plant's name.



Trees



Trees tend to be the “backbone” of the landscape since they are more prominent in scale, permanent, and visible year-round while bringing a variety of seedpods, flowers, and colors. Trees also provide shelter and food for birds and wildlife.

Trees can help decrease heating and cooling costs for your home. Locate trees to shade your home’s east- and west-facing exposures during the summer. Deciduous trees allow sunlight into the house during the winter when branches are bare of leaves.

Selecting the right tree for the right place is important. When considering their placement, be sure the mature tree will fit safely into your yard without interfering with overhead power lines, underground utilities, buildings or fences, and walkways.



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

MULGA

Acacia aneura
Native to Australia



Slow-moderate
20 x 15
Upright

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium
texture

Yellow
rod-shaped
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Great for small
spaces, patios
Makes a good screen,
plant in small groupings



LEATHERLEAF ACACIA

Acacia craspedocarpa
Native to Australia
Also try *A. aneura*



Slow-moderate
10 x 8
Rounded

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium
texture

Yellow
puffballs
Spring to
summer

Low litter
No thorns
Good for small
spaces or in
large containers



WILLOW ACACIA

Acacia salicina
Native to Australia



Fast
30 x 15
Upright, open

Evergreen
Medium
green
Medium
texture

Cream
puffballs
Spring

Moderate litter
No thorns
Suitable screen for
narrow areas
Fragrant flowers
Can reseed easily

SHOESTRING ACACIA

Acacia stenophylla
Native to Australia



Fast
30 x 20
Upright, airy

Evergreen
Dusky green
Medium
texture

Cream
puffballs
Fall to
winter

Moderate litter
No thorns
Tall screening tree
Avoid over-watering



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

ANACACHO ORCHID TREE

Bauhinia lunarioides
Native to Chihuahuan Desert
May be sold as *B. congesta*



Slow-moderate
12 x 8
Shrub-like

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

White or pink clusters

Spring to summer

Low litter
No thorns
Small patio tree
Leaves are shaped like butterflies
Attracts bees and butterflies



MEXICAN BLUE PALM

Brahea armata
Native to Baja California and Sonora, Mexico



Very slow
25 x 12
Fan palm

Evergreen
Silvery blue
Coarse texture

Cream garlands
Summer

Low litter
Medium thorns
Bold tropical palm
Well suited to containers
Provides "oasis" feel



FLOSS SILK TREE

Ceiba speciosa
Native to Brazil, Argentina
Previously classified as *Chorisia speciosa*



Moderate
30 x 25
Upright

Deciduous
Pale green
Medium texture

Pink to red, showy
Fall

Seasonal litter
Thorns on trunk
Spectacular show of flowers
Distinctive trunk
Look for selections that offer a variety of flower colors

CANYON HACKBERRY

Celtis reticulata
Native to western US and Mexico



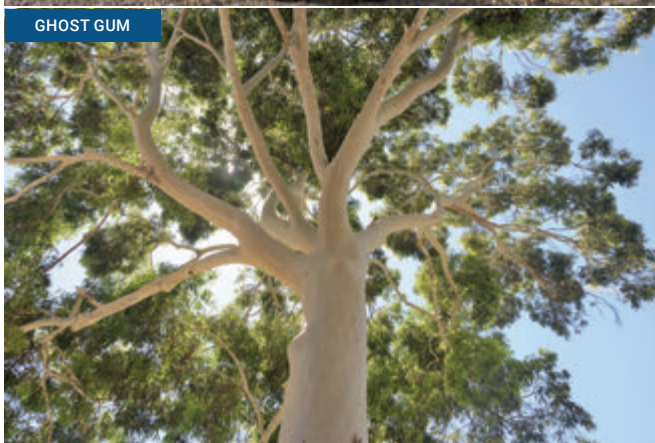
Moderate
25 x 25
Sprawling

Deciduous
Medium green
Coarse texture

Green (nonshowy)
Spring

Seasonal litter
No thorns
Allergenic
Distinctive trunk
Provides food and shelter for birds, butterflies, and mammals





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

MEDITERRANEAN FAN PALM

Chamaerops humilis
Native to Mediterranean, Africa



Slow
10 x 10
Fan palm

Evergreen
Medium green
Coarse texture

Cream
Summer

Low litter
Thorns on leaves
Multi-trunked palm for small areas and containers
Provides "oasis" feel

DESERT WILLOW

Chilopsis linearis
Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico
Look for selections that offer a variety of flower colors, branching structures, and leaf forms



Fast
25 x 20
Irregular

Deciduous
Medium green
Medium texture

White, pink, purple, trumpet-shaped
Spring to fall

Seasonal litter
No thorns
Pollinated by carpenter bees and bumblebees
Attracts hummingbirds



GHOST GUM

Corymbia papuana
Native to New Guinea, Australia
Previously classified as *Eucalyptus papuana*
Also try *E. torquata*



Moderate
40 x 25
Upright, open

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium texture

White
Summer

Moderate litter
No thorns
Smooth, bright-white bark

TEXAS MOUNTAIN LAUREL

Dermatophyllum secundiflorum
Native to southeastern New Mexico, southern Texas, northeastern Mexico
Previously classified as *Sophora secundiflora*



Slow
10 x 8
Upright, dense

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Purple clusters
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Fragrant flowers
Attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and moths
Fruits are poisonous





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

TEXAS EBONY

Ebenopsis ebano

Native to southern Texas, Mexico

Previously classified as *Pithecellobium flexicaule*



Slow
20 x 15
Irregular

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Cream to yellow
Late spring to summer

Moderate litter
Medium thorns
Rich green foliage color
Bark sunburns if tree is overpruned

MEXICAN BIRD OF PARADISE

Erythrostemon mexicanus

Native to Mexico

Previously classified as *Caesalpinia mexicana*



Moderate-fast
15 x 10
Upright, open

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Yellow spikes
Intermittent throughout the year

High litter
No thorns
Attracts hummingbirds



COOLIBAH

Eucalyptus microtheca

Native to Australia

Also try *E. erythrocorys*



Fast
35 x 25
Irregular

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium texture

Cream (nonshowy)
Summer

Moderate litter
No thorns
Accepts lawn conditions

KIDNEYWOOD

Eysenhardtia orthocarpa

Native to southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, and Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico



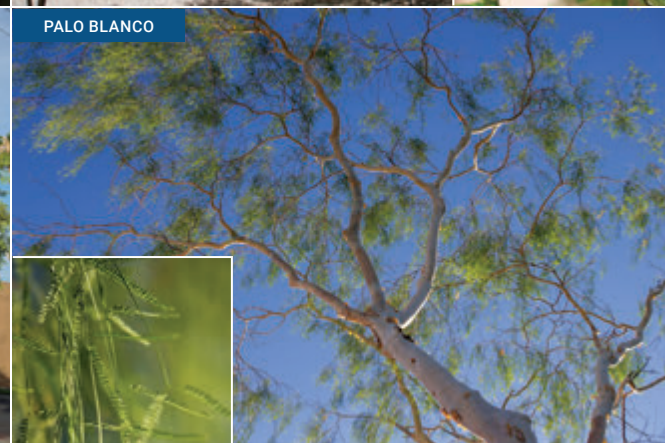
Moderate
15 x 10
Shrub-like

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

White spikes
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Shrub or small tree
Fragrant flowers attract bees, butterflies, and other pollinators





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

MEXICAN EBONY

Havardia mexicana
Native to Baja California and Sonora, Mexico
Previously classified as *Pithecellobium mexicanum*





Moderate
30 x 20
Irregular, open

Deciduous
Gray-green
Medium texture

Cream puffballs
Spring

Seasonal litter
Small thorns
Good for naturalistic landscapes



TENAZA

Havardia pallens
Native to southern Texas, northeastern Mexico
Previously classified as *Pithecellobium pallens*





Moderate
25 x 12
Shrub-like

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Cream puffballs
Summer

Seasonal litter
Medium thorns
Attractive bark
Fragrant flowers
Allergenic

FEATHER BUSH

Lysiloma watsonii
Native to Arizona and Sonora, Mexico
May be sold as *L. microphylla* v. *thorberi*





Moderate
15 x 15
Irregular

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Cream puffballs
Late spring to early summer

High litter
No thorns
Lush appearance
Grow as a shrub or small tree



PALO BLANCO

Mariosousa willardiana
Native to Sonora, Mexico
Previously classified as *Acacia willardiana*





Slow-moderate
20 x 10
Upright, airy

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Cream spikes
Spring

Moderate litter
No thorns
Striking white peeling bark
Nice accent tree





FRUITLESS OLIVE

























IRONWOOD

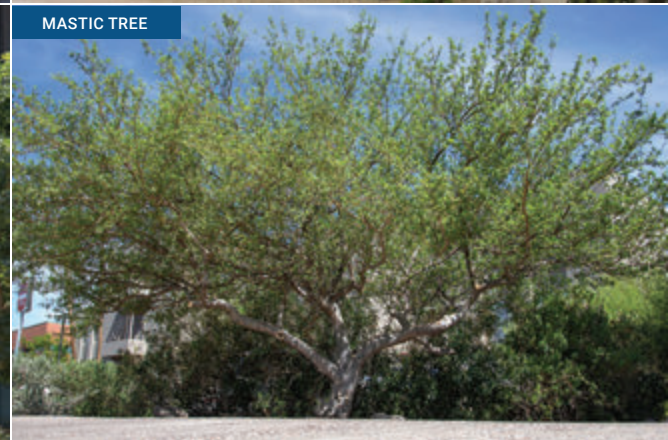


BLUE PALO VERDE



HYBRID PALO VERDE

COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
FRUITLESS OLIVE <i>Olea europaea</i> Horticultural selection	   15°  L	Slow-moderate 25 x 25 Rounded crown	Evergreen Gray-green Medium texture	Cream (nonshowy) Spring	Low litter No thorns Use fruitless selections, as some cities and counties prohibit the landscape use of fruit-bearing and pollen-producing olive trees	
IRONWOOD <i>Olneya tesota</i> Native to Sonoran Desert	   20°  VL	Slow 25 x 25 Multi-trunked	Evergreen Gray-green Medium texture	Dusty lavender Late spring	Seasonal litter Medium thorns Keystone desert tree species Provides food and shelter for birds and other wildlife	 
BLUE PALO VERDE <i>Parkinsonia florida</i> Native to Sonoran Desert Previously classified as <i>Cercidium floridum</i>	   15°  VL	Fast 30 x 30 Vase-shaped	Semi-evergreen Blue-green Fine texture	Bright yellow Spring	Seasonal litter Small thorns Vivid spring color Allergenic Provides seed and cover to birds and other wildlife Attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and moths	 
HYBRID PALO VERDE <i>Parkinsonia hybrid</i> Horticultural selection Previously classified as <i>Cercidium hybrid</i>	   15°  VL	Fast 25 x 25 Vase-shaped	Semi-evergreen Medium green Fine texture	Yellow Spring to summer	Seasonal litter No thorns May be short-lived and prone to storm damage Attracts bees, butterflies, and other pollinators	



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

FOOTHILLS PALO VERDE

Parkinsonia microphylla
Native to Sonoran Desert
Previously classified as *Cercidium microphyllum*





Slow-moderate
15 x 15
Shrub-like

Semi-evergreen
Lime green
Medium texture

Sulfur yellow
Spring

Seasonal litter
Sharp branch tips
Provides seed and cover to birds and other wildlife
Attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and moths



PALO BREA

Parkinsonia praecox
Native to Baja California and Sonora, Mexico into South America
Previously classified as *Cercidium praecox*





Fast
25 x 30
Umbrella-like

Semi-evergreen
Blue-green
Medium texture

Bright yellow
Spring

Seasonal litter
Small thorns
Distinctive sculptural form with lime-green bark
Attracts bees, birds, and other wildlife



CHINESE PISTACHE

Pistacia chinensis
Native to China, Philippines





Moderate
40 x 35
Rounded crown

Deciduous
Dark green
Medium texture

Green (nonshowy)
Spring

Seasonal litter
No thorns
Dense shade tree
Striking fall color, red fruit on female trees
Allergenic (caused by male pollen)

Look for 'Red Push' and other selections

MASTIC TREE

Pistacia lentiscus
Native to the Mediterranean





Slow
15 x 20
Shrub-like


















Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

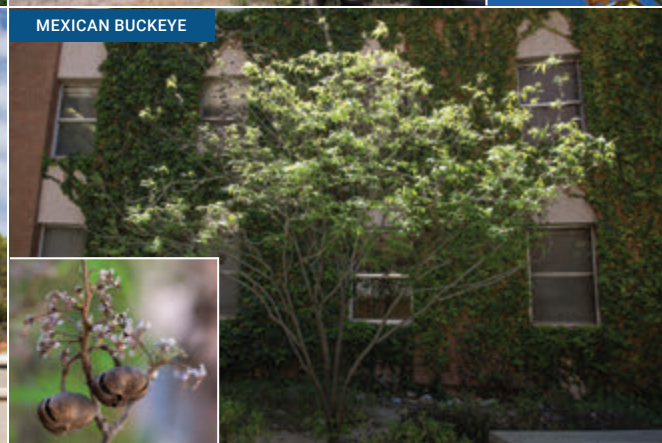
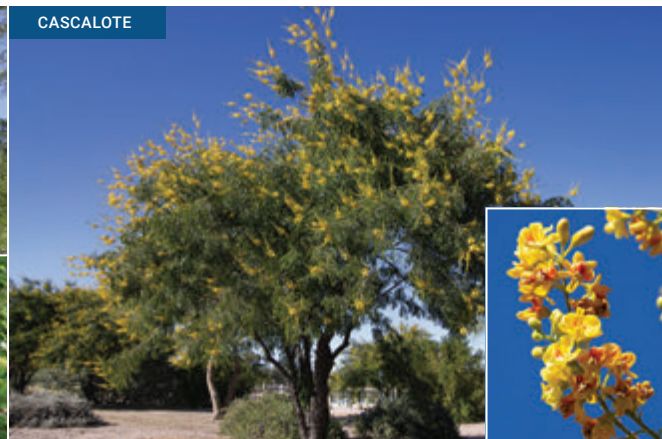
Green (nonshowy)
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Use for screening or train into a small specimen tree





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
TEXAS HONEY MESQUITE <i>Prosopis glandulosa</i> v. <i>glandulosa</i> Native to southwestern US and northern Mexico <i>P. glandulosa</i> v. <i>torreyana</i> is the Western Honey Mesquite Look for thornless selections	  	Fast 30 x 30 Wide crown	Deciduous Bright green Fine texture	Pale yellow Spring	Seasonal litter Large thorns Flowers attract native bees and other pollinators Provides seed and shelter to birds and wildlife Allergenic (often caused by foliage)  
SOUTH AMERICAN MESQUITE HYBRID <i>Prosopis</i> hybrid Horticultural selections May be sold as <i>P. chilensis</i> , <i>P. alba</i> , or <i>P.</i> hybrid Look for thornless selections	  	Fast 30 x 30 Wide crown	Semi-evergreen Dark green Fine texture	Yellow-green Spring	Seasonal litter Variable thorns Provides seed and shelter to birds and wildlife Limit water to control rapid growth Flowers attract native bees and other pollinators Allergenic (often caused by foliage) 
VELVET MESQUITE <i>Prosopis velutina</i> Native to Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts May be sold as <i>P. juliflora</i> Also try <i>P. pubescens</i>	  	Moderate-fast 25 x 25 Wide crown	Deciduous Gray-green Fine texture	Pale yellow Spring	Seasonal litter Medium thorns Flowers attract native bees and other pollinators Provides seed and shelter to birds and wildlife Allergenic (often caused by foliage)  
LIVE OAK <i>Quercus virginiana</i> Native to southeastern US	  	Moderate 40 x 50 Wide crown	Semi-evergreen Dark green Medium texture	Green (nonshowy) Spring	Seasonal litter No thorns Allergenic Accepts lawn conditions Consider mature size



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

GUAJILLO

Senegalia berlandieri
Native to southern Texas and northeastern Mexico
Previously classified as *Acacia berlandieri*



Moderate
12 x 12
Vase-shaped

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Cream puffballs
Spring

Moderate litter
Variable thorns
Fragrant flowers
Lush-looking shrub for screening or attractive small tree
Allergenic



CASCALOTE

Tara cacalaco
Native to central and southern Mexico
Previously classified as *Caesalpinia cacalaco*



Slow-moderate
20 x 20
Vase-shaped

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Showy, yellow spikes
Winter to spring

Seasonal litter
Medium thorns
Stunning, fragrant winter flowers are followed by colorful seed pods

EVERGREEN ELM

Ulmus parvifolia
Native to China



Fast
35 x 35
Umbrella-like

Semi-evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Green (nonshowy)
Spring

Seasonal litter
No thorns
Attractive bark
Accepts lawn conditions
Allergenic

MEXICAN BUCKEYE

Ungnadia speciosa
Native to central/western Texas, southeastern New Mexico, northern Mexico



Slow
10 x 10
Shrub-like

Deciduous
Dark green
Coarse texture

Rose-pink
Spring

Seasonal litter
No thorns
Fragrant flowers
Large shrub or small patio tree





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

WHITETHORN ACACIA

Vachellia constricta
Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico
Previously classified as *Acacia constricta*. Also try *Senegalia greggii*



Slow
10 x 15
Multi-trunked

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Yellow puffballs
Spring to summer

Moderate litter
Medium thorns
Good for naturalistic landscapes
Flowers attract bees, seeds attract birds and other wildlife



SWEET ACACIA

Vachellia farnesiana
Native to southern US into South America
Previously classified as *Acacia farnesiana*. May be sold as *A. smallii* or *A. minuta*. Also try *V. schaffneri*



Moderate
20 x 20
Vase-shaped

Evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Golden yellow puffballs
Late winter to spring

Moderate litter
Small thorns
Sweet-scented flowers attract bees
Provides food and shelter for birds and other wildlife
Allergenic



BLACKBRUSH ACACIA

Vachellia rigidula
Native to western and southern Texas, northeastern Mexico
Previously classified as *Acacia rigidula*



Slow
15 x 15
Vase-shaped

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Light yellow spikes
Spring

Low litter
Medium thorns
Effective as a barrier
Attractive light gray bark
Attracts bees and butterflies



CHASTE TREE

Vitex agnus-castus
Native to southern Europe
Look for selections that offer a variety of flower colors and sizes



Moderate
20 x 20
Shrub-like

Deciduous
Dark green
Medium texture

Lavender, pink, or white spikes
Summer to fall

Moderate litter
No thorns
Fragrant flowers
Seeds are hazardous on sidewalks
Attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds





Shrubs



Shrubs are a versatile group of plants. Explore shrubs with a variety of flower colors and blooming periods to provide seasonal impact or use them as accents, borders or hedges, screening, or even in containers.

As with trees, select shrubs according to their use and mature size, allowing enough space for their full-grown height and width.

Most shrubs have attractive, natural shapes, so very little pruning or shearing is needed.



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
SUPERSTITION MALLOW <i>Abutilon palmeri</i> Native to southern California and southern Arizona, northwestern Mexico	 20° L	Fast 4 x 4 Upright, open	Evergreen Silvery-green Coarse texture	Orange, yellow Spring to fall	Low litter No thorns Subtropical effect Heart-shaped velvety leaves Attracts bees, butterflies, and other pollinators
BEE BRUSH <i>Aloysia gratissima</i> Native to Chihuahuan Desert south to South America May be sold as <i>A. lycioides</i>	 15° VL	Moderate 6 x 6 Upright, open	Semi-evergreen Medium green Fine texture	White to pale purple Spring to fall	Moderate litter No thorns Scented flowers and fragrant foliage Attracts bees, butterflies, and other pollinators
TRIANGLELEAF BURSAGE <i>Ambrosia deltoidea</i> Native to Sonoran Desert Also try <i>A. dumosa</i>	R 22° VL	Moderate-fast 1 x 2 Mounding	Evergreen Silver-green Medium texture	Green (nonshowy) Mid-winter to mid-spring	Low litter No thorns Allergenic Highly drought tolerant Good for naturalistic landscapes
FLAME HONEYSUCKLE <i>Anisacanthus quadrifidus</i> <i>v. wrightii</i> Native to Chihuahuan Desert Also try <i>A. thurberi</i>	 5° L	Moderate 3 x 4 Sprawling	Deciduous Bright green Medium texture	Orange-red Summer to late fall	Low litter No thorns Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/Season	Comments/Special Features
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FOURWING SALTBUSSH

Atriplex canescens
Native to western North America



Moderate
5 x 8
Rounded, dense

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium texture

Green (nonshowy)
Spring to summer

Low litter
No thorns
Tolerates tough conditions
Provides forage and shelter for wildlife
Allergenic



GOLDEN EYE

Bahiopsis parishii
Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts
Previously classified as *Viguiera deltoidea*. Also try *V. stenoloba* and *Trixis californica*



Fast
3 x 3
Rounded

Evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Yellow daisy-like
Spring to summer

Low litter
No thorns
Good for naturalistic landscapes
Attracts butterflies



BARBERRY

Berberis trifoliolata
Native to Chihuahuan Desert
Also try *B. haematocarpa*
May be sold as *Mahonia trifoliolata* or AGARITA



Slow-moderate
5 x 5
Rounded

Evergreen
Blue-gray
Medium texture

Yellow
Late winter to spring

Low litter
Prickly leaves
Good informal hedge
Red berries attract birds, foliage provides shelter



WOOLLY BUTTERFLY BUSH

Buddleja marrubifolia
Native to Chihuahuan Desert



Moderate
5 x 5
Upright, dense

Evergreen
Silvery
Medium texture

Orange
Spring to midsummer

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts butterflies





PINK FAIRY DUSTER



NATAL PLUM



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

RED BIRD OF PARADISE

Caesalpinia pulcherrima
Native to West Indies, Mexico
Look for selections with yellow flowers



Fast
6 x 6
Rounded, open

Deciduous
Dark green
Fine texture

Orange and yellow
Late spring to fall

Low litter
Prickly stems
Showy summer color
Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds



BAJA FAIRY DUSTER

Calliandra californica
Native to Baja California
May be sold as *C. peninsularis*



Moderate
5 x 5
Upright, open

Semi-evergreen
Dark green
Fine texture

Red powderpuffs
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Good informal hedge
Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds



PINK FAIRY DUSTER

Calliandra eriophylla
Native to southwestern US into central Mexico



Moderate
3 x 4
Upright, airy

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Pink powderpuffs
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds



NATAL PLUM

Carissa macrocarpa
Native to South Africa
Previously classified as *Carissa grandiflora*. Look for dwarf cultivars for use in smaller landscape spaces



Moderate
7 x 7
Mounding

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

White
Spring

Low litter
Medium "forked" spines on interior branches
Sap may irritate skin
Possible heat stress above 110 degrees

Provides an "oasis" feel
Fruits are edible
Flowers are fragrant



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

DESERT HACKBERRY

Celtis pallida

Native from Arizona to western Texas and northern Mexico



Moderate
8 x 10
Upright, dense

Evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Yellow-green (non-showy)
Spring

Low litter
Small thorns
Allergenic
Orange berries attract birds
Provides shelter for wildlife



TEXAS OLIVE

Cordia boissieri

Native to southern Texas, northeastern Mexico



Slow-moderate
10 x 10
Upright, dense

Evergreen
Gray-green
Coarse texture

White, showy
Spring to fall

Moderate litter
No thorns
Can be grown as a small tree

LITTLE LEAF CORDIA

Cordia parvifolia

Native to Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts



Moderate
6 x 6
Rounded, open

Semi-evergreen
Gray-green
Medium texture

White clusters
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Effective for screening or informal hedge



BLACK DALEA

Dalea frutescens

Native to Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and northwestern Mexico



Moderate-fast
3 x 4
Rounded

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Rose-purple clusters
Fall to early winter

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts butterflies and quail





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
BUSH DALEA <i>Dalea pulchra</i> Native to southeastern Arizona and northern Sonora, Mexico	 	Moderate-fast 4 x 5 Rounded, airy	Evergreen Silver-green Fine texture	Violet clusters Winter to spring	Low litter No thorns Winter color Attracts butterflies	
WEeping DALEA <i>Dalea versicolor v. sessilis</i> Native to Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts Also try <i>D. bicolor v. argyrea</i>	 	Moderate 3 x 4 Spreading, open	Evergreen Dark green Fine texture	Purple clusters Fall to spring	Low litter No thorns Winter color Daleas require well-drained soil Attracts bees and butterflies	
HOP BUSH <i>Dodonaea viscosa</i> Native to southern Arizona and warm regions worldwide	 	Moderate 10 x 8 Upright, dense	Evergreen Bright green Medium texture	Yellow-green (nonshowy) Spring	Low litter No thorns Oleander alternative Decorative papery fruits attract birds	
BRITTLEBUSH <i>Encelia farinosa</i> Native to Sonoran Desert	 	Fast 3 x 4 Mounding	Evergreen Silvery-gray Medium texture	Yellow daisy-like Winter to spring	Low litter No thorns Good for naturalistic landscapes Provides food and shelter for birds and small mammals Attracts bees, butterflies and other pollinators	



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
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DESERT TEA

Ephedra nevadensis
Native to western US,
Baja California and
Sonora, Mexico



Slow
4 x 4
Upright, open

Evergreen
Medium green
Coarse texture

Green
(nonshowy)
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Allergenic
Unusual form with
sculptural qualities



BLUE BELLS

Eremophila hygrophana
Native to Australia



Moderate
2 x 3
Rounded

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium
texture

Violet-blue
Fall to
spring

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts
hummingbirds



RED EREMOPHILA

Eremophila maculata
v. brevifolia
Native to Australia
Look for selections that
offer a variety of leaf forms
and flower colors



Moderate
4 x 5
Rounded

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium
texture

Red tubular
flowers
Late winter
to spring

Low litter
No thorns
Seasonal color
Attracts
hummingbirds



TURPENTINE BUSH

Ericameria laricifolia
Native to Chihuahuan,
Mohave, and Sonoran Deserts
May be sold as
Haplopappus laricifolius



Moderate
2 x 3
Mounding

Evergreen
Bright green
Fine texture

Yellow
clusters
Late summer
to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Fragrant foliage
Provides food and
shelter for wildlife
Attracts pollinators





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
FLATTOP BUCKWHEAT <i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i> <i>v. polifolium</i> Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts	15° VL	Fast 1 x 2 Rounded	Evergreen Dark gray-green Fine texture	Pale pink to white Spring	Low litter No thorns Suited to small spaces Attracts bees, birds, and butterflies	
YELLOW BIRD OF PARADISE <i>Erythrostemon gilliesii</i> Native to Argentina Previously classified as <i>Caesalpinia gilliesii</i>	5° L	Moderate 6 x 5 Upright, open	Semi-evergreen Medium green Fine texture	Yellow with red stamens Spring to fall	Low litter No thorns Exotic flowers Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds	
LITTLE LEAF ASH <i>Fraxinus greggii</i> Native to Chihuahuan Desert	10° M	Slow 15 x 10 Rounded	Semi-evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Green (nonshowy) Spring	Low litter No thorns Allergenic Graceful shrub or small tree Attractive gray bark with age	
SAN MARCOS HIBISCUS <i>Gossypium harknessii</i> Native to Baja California	25° L	Moderate 3 x 4 Rounded	Evergreen Dark green Medium texture	Yellow with red center Summer to fall	Low litter No thorns Flowers are showy Glossy heart-shaped leaves Attracts bees, butterflies, and moths	



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

GUAYACÁN

Guaiacum coulteri
Native from Sonora
to Oaxaca, Mexico



Slow-moderate
8 x 8
Rounded, open

Semi-evergreen
Dark green
Medium
texture

Deep
violet-blue
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Vivid flower color
Attracts bees and
butterflies
Seeds attract birds



FIREBUSH

Hamelia patens
Native to Florida
into South America



Moderate
4 x 4
Upright

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Coarse texture

Red-orange
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Colorful winter foliage
Attracts hummingbirds



DESERT LAVENDER

Hyptis emoryi
Native to Mohave
and Sonoran Deserts
May be sold as *Condea emoryi*



Moderate
10 x 8
Upright, open

Evergreen
Woolly gray
Medium
texture

Tiny,
lavender
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Fragrant foliage
Attracts bees,
butterflies, and
hummingbirds



CHUPAROSA

Justicia californica
Native to Sonoran Desert
Look for selections with
yellow flowers



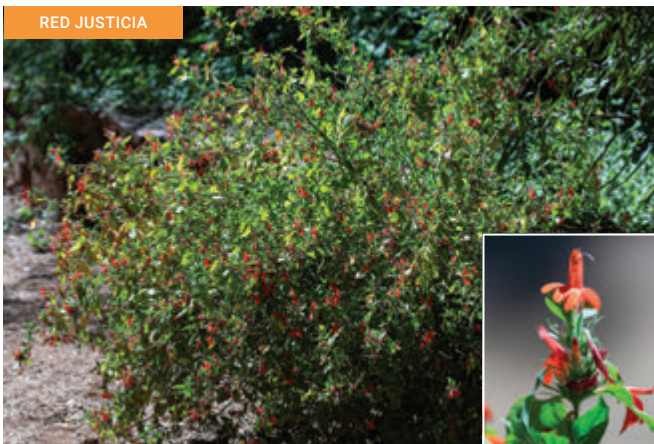
Moderate
4 x 4
Sprawling

Semi-evergreen
Gray-green
Medium
texture

Orange to
red tubular
Winter to
spring

Low litter
No thorns
Good informal
hedge
Attracts
hummingbirds





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

RED JUSTICIA

Justicia candicans

Native to southern Arizona and western Mexico

May be sold as *J. ovata*

Also try *J. spicigera*



Moderate
3 x 3
Sprawling

Evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Bright red
Fall to spring

Low litter
No thorns
Winter color
Good in containers
Attracts hummingbirds



CREOSOTE BUSH

Larrea tridentata

Native to Chihuahuan, Mohave, and Sonoran Deserts

May be sold as *L. divaricata*



Moderate
6 x 6
Open, angular

Evergreen
Dark green
Fine texture

Small, yellow
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Provides food and shelter for wildlife, attracts bees and other pollinators
Fragrant foliage after rain
Allergenic



VIOLET SILVERLEAF

Leucophyllum candidum

Native to Chihuahuan Desert

Look for 'Cloud' series, which offers a variety of plant sizes



Moderate
3 x 3
Mounding

Evergreen
Silver
Fine texture

Deep violet
Summer to fall, responds to monsoon rains

Low litter
No thorns
Silvery leaves contrast well with green-foliaged plants
Not tolerant of poorly draining soils
Allergenic



TEXAS SAGE

Leucophyllum frutescens

Native to Chihuahuan Desert

Look for 'Cloud' series, which offers a variety of flower and foliage colors



Fast
6 x 6
Rounded

Evergreen
Green to gray
Fine texture

White, pink, or purple
Summer to fall, responds to monsoon rains

Low litter
No thorns
Good informal hedge
Allergenic





CHIHUAHUAN SAGE



LANGMAN'S SAGE



WOLFBERRY



MANGLE DULCE

COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

CHIHUAHUAN SAGE

Leucophyllum laevigatum

Native to Chihuahuan Desert



Moderate
4 x 5
Rounded, open

Evergreen
Olive-green
Fine texture

Lavender
Summer to fall, responds to monsoon rains

Low litter
No thorns
Fragrant flowers
Accepts poor soils
Good informal hedge
Allergenic



LANGMAN'S SAGE

Leucophyllum langmaniae

Native to Chihuahuan Desert

Also try *L. pruinatum* and *L. zygophyllum*



Moderate
5 x 5
Rounded, dense

Evergreen
Bright green
Fine texture

Lavender
Summer to fall, responds to monsoon rains

Low litter
No thorns
Provides significant summer color
Allergenic



WOLFBERRY

Lycium fremontii

Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts

Also try *L. exsertum*



Moderate
8 x 8
Mounding

Deciduous
Light green
Medium texture

White to lavender
Late winter to spring and fall

Low litter
Sharp branch tips
Fruits and cover attract birds
Flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds



MANGLE DULCE

Maytenus phyllanthoides

Native to Baja California and Sonora, Mexico and southern coastal US



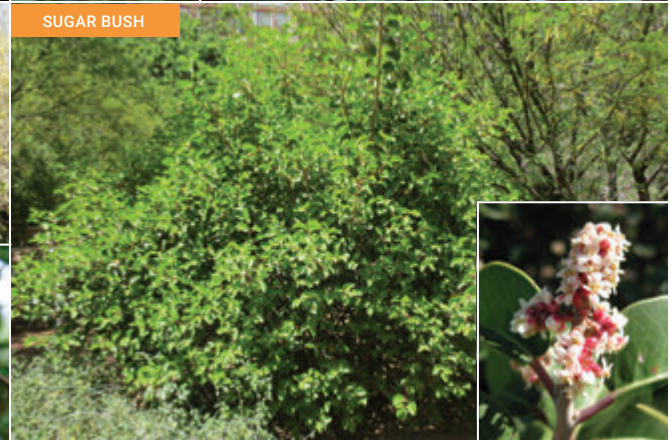
Slow
6 x 6
Mounding





















Evergreen
Light green
Medium texture

Green (nonshowy)
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Highly salt tolerant
Good in containers





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
OLEANDER <i>Nerium oleander</i> Native to Mediterranean Look for selections that offer a variety of flower colors and plant sizes	  	Fast 5 x 4 (dwarf variety sizing) Upright, dense Standard varieties can grow to 20' tall or more	Evergreen Dark green Coarse texture	White, pink, or red Spring to fall	Moderate litter No thorns Sap may irritate skin Excellent screen Good summer color	All plant parts are poisonous 
WHITE PLUMBAGO <i>Plumbago zeylanica</i> Native to southern Arizona, Mexico, southern Texas and Florida, and other tropical locations May be sold as <i>P. scandens</i>	  	Fast 3 x 3 Sprawling	Evergreen Dark green Medium texture	White clusters Summer to fall	Low litter No thorns Foliage turns an attractive maroon color in winter Attracts and hosts butterflies	  
POMEGRANATE <i>Punica granatum</i> Native to southern Asia, Mediterranean Look for selections that offer a variety of flower colors, fruit characteristics, and plant sizes	  	Moderate 8 x 6 Upright, dense	Deciduous Dark green Medium texture	Orange to red, showy Spring	Moderate litter No thorns Fruit is colorful and edible Foliage turns yellow in fall before dropping Pollinated by bees	
SUGAR BUSH <i>Rhus ovata</i> Native to southern California, central Arizona, and Baja California Also try <i>R. virens</i>	  	Slow 8 x 8 Rounded, dense	Evergreen Dark green Coarse texture	Red buds followed by cream clusters Spring	Low litter No thorns Attractive screen or informal hedge Fruits attract birds Allergenic	  



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

BAJA RUELLIA

Ruellia peninsularis

Native to southern Baja California and Sonora, Mexico

Also try *R. californica*



Moderate
4 x 5
Rounded

Evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Purple,
bell-shaped
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Tolerates
some shade
Attracts
hummingbirds



CORAL FOUNTAIN

Russelia equisetiformis

Native to Mexico



Moderate
4 x 4
Sprawling

Evergreen
Bright green
Fine texture

Coral
Spring to
fall

Low litter
No thorns
Cascading foliage
Attracts hummingbirds



FEATHERY SENNA

Senna artemisioides ssp.
artemisioides

Native to Australia

May be sold as *Cassia artemisioides*. Also try *S. artemisioides* v. *oligophylla*, v. *petiolaris*, and v. *sturtii*



Fast
6 x 6
Rounded, airy

Evergreen
Medium green
Fine texture

Yellow
clusters
Late winter
to spring

Moderate litter
No thorns
Winter color
Fragrant flowers



SHRUBBY SENNA

Senna wislizeni

Native to Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts

Also try *S. polyantha* (*Cassia goldmannii*)



Moderate
6 x 6
Upright

Deciduous
Medium green
Medium texture

Bright yellow
clusters
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Attractive shrub
for summer color
Fragrant flowers





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

JOJOBA

Simmondsia chinensis
Native to Sonoran Desert



Slow
6 x 6
Mounding

Evergreen
Gray-green
Coarse texture

Yellow-green (nonshowy)
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Good for naturalistic landscapes, screening, or informal hedge
Allergenic



CAPE HONEYSUCKLE

Tecoma capensis
Native to southern Africa
Previously classified as *Tecomaria capensis*



Fast
6 x 5
Sprawling

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Vivid orange-red
Year-round in frost-free weather

Low litter
No thorns
With support, can be trained as a vine
Attracts hummingbirds



ORANGE BELLS

Tecoma hybrid
Horticultural selection
Also try *T. garrocha*



Fast
8 x 5
Upright

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Orange, trumpetlike clusters
Year-round in frost-free weather

Moderate litter
No thorns
Colorful background screen
Attracts hummingbirds



ARIZONA YELLOW BELLS

Tecoma stans v. angustata
Native to Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts
Also try *T. stans v. stans* for larger flower and leaf size



Fast
6 x 6
Upright, open

Semi-evergreen
Bright green
Medium texture

Yellow, trumpetlike clusters
Spring to fall

Moderate litter
No thorns
Summer color
Attracts hummingbirds





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

ARIZONA ROSEWOOD
Vauquelinia californica
Native to Sonoran Desert



Slow
10 x 8
Upright

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

White clusters
Early summer

Low litter
No thorns
Can be grown as a small tree
Native alternative to oleander



GRAY THORN
Ziziphus obtusifolia
v. canescens
Native to southwestern US,
northern Mexico



Slow
8 x 8
Upright

Deciduous
Gray-green
Medium texture

Cream (nonshowy)
Early summer

Low litter
Sharp branch tips
Provides shelter for wildlife
Blue-black fruits attract birds



Left unpruned, Chihuahuan sage offers plenty of purple and silvery gray color for a natural desert look.



ABOUT PRUNING

The watchword for pruning desert-adapted trees and shrubs is *WAIT*. Watch your plants during the establishment period and you will find that most desert-adapted plants and trees have a beautiful natural form that requires little or no pruning.

Too much pruning leads to unnaturally shaped plants, inhibits the plant's food making capability, reduces flowering and heightens a plant's water demand due to increased growth from new shoots. It also sends too much waste material to local landfills.
























Groundcovers

Groundcovers add color and texture to bare soil and large expanses of granite or rock mulch. From a design sense, groundcovers help unify and blend separate elements of the landscape. These plants also soften hardscape features like low walls, walkways, and patio areas. Beyond the visual interest groundcovers add, they serve beneficial purposes such as stabilizing soil, minimizing dust, and shading bare surfaces.

When selecting your groundcovers, it's important to keep their mature size and space requirements in mind—avoid planting them too close to walkways or other plants to prevent the need for frequent trimming or pruning.





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
TRAILING ACACIA <i>Acacia redolens</i> Native to Australia Look for the prostrate form; upright forms can reach 4-5 feet high or more	  	Fast 2 x 10 Spreading	Evergreen Gray-green Medium texture	Small yellow Early spring	Low litter No thorns Good for banks and erosion control	
TRAILING DESERT BROOM <i>Baccharis</i> hybrid (male varieties only) Horticultural selection Look for selections with uniform growth habit	  	Fast 3 x 4 Spreading	Evergreen Bright green Fine texture	White (nonshowy) Fall	Low litter No thorns Tolerates tough conditions Allergenic	 
BUSH MORNING GLORY <i>Convolvulus cneorum</i> Native to southern Europe	  	Fast 2 x 3 Mounding	Evergreen Silvery-gray Medium texture	Showy white Spring	Low litter No thorns Requires well-drained soil	
TRAILING INDIGO BUSH <i>Dalea greggii</i> Native to western Texas, southern New Mexico and Arizona, and Mexico Also try <i>D. capitata</i>	  	Moderate 2 x 6 Spreading	Evergreen Silvery-green Fine texture	Lavender-purple clusters Spring to summer	Low litter No thorns Tolerates tough conditions Good for banks and erosion control	  



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

TRAILING GAZANIA

Gazania rigens
Native to South Africa



Moderate
1 x 3
Trailing

Evergreen
Silvery
to green
Medium
texture

Yellow
Late winter
to spring

Low litter
No thorns
Brilliant flower colors
May die out in summer
if overwatered



LANTANA

Lantana hybrid
Horticultural selection
Look for selections that
offer a variety of flower
and foliage colors



Fast
2 x 3
Mounding,
trailing

Evergreen
Medium
green
Medium
texture

Yellow,
orange, gold
Year-round
in frost-free
weather

Low litter
No thorns
Leaves may
irritate skin
Vibrant summer color
Attracts butterflies



TRAILING LANTANA

Lantana montevidensis
Native to South America



Fast
1 x 4
Mounding,
trailing

Evergreen
Medium
green
Medium
texture

Lavender
or yellow,
or white
Year-round
in frost-free
weather

Low litter
No thorns
Leaves may
irritate skin
Fragrant flowers
Attracts butterflies



MYOPORUM

Myoporum parvifolium
Native to Australia



Fast
1 x 6
Trailing

Evergreen
Bright
green
Medium
texture

Small white
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Good cover on slopes
May die if overwatered





TRAILING ROSEMARY



KATIE RUELLIA



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

TUFTED EVENING PRIMROSE

Oenothera cespitosa
Native to western US,
northern Mexico

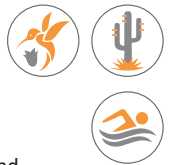


Moderate
1 x 2
Clumping

Evergreen
Gray-green
Coarse
texture

Large showy
white flowers
fade to pink
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Fragrant flowers
open from dusk to
early morning
Seeds eaten by birds
Attracts hawk moths and
other nocturnal pollinators



SALTILLO PRIMROSE

Oenothera stubbei
Native to northeastern Mexico
Also try *O. berlandieri*,
although it can spread easily



Fast
6" - 1 x 4
Clumping

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium
texture

Butter yellow
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Showy, sweet-scented
flowers open from
dusk to early morning
Attracts hawk moths
and other nocturnal
pollinators



TRAILING ROSEMARY

Rosmarinus officinalis
'Prostratus'
Horticultural selection



Moderate
2 x 4
Trailing

Evergreen
Dark green
Fine texture

Blue
Winter
to spring

Low litter
No thorns
Upright forms
are available
Fragrant foliage
Pollinated by bees,
attracts other pollinators



KATIE RUELLIA

Ruellia simplex 'Katie'
Horticultural selection
May be sold as *R. brittoniana*
'Katie.' Look for selections
that offer pink or white
flowers



Moderate
1 x 2
Mound

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium
texture

Purple
Spring
to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Refined groundcover
for small area





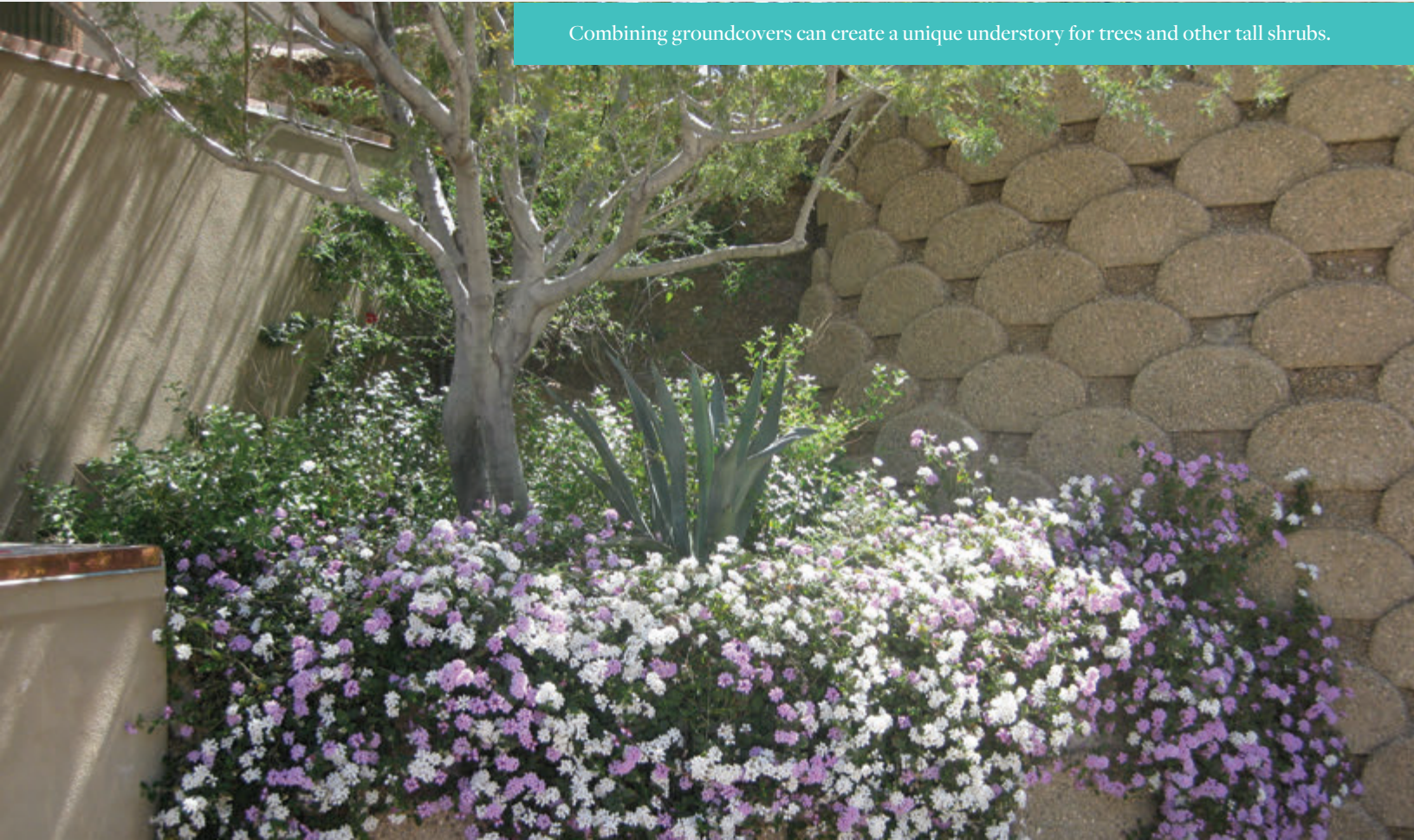
Groundcovers



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
YELLOW DOT <i>Sphagneticola trilobata</i> Native to Central and South America Previously classified as <i>Wedelia trilobata</i>	 	Fast 2 x 6 Trailing	Evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Yellow daisy-like Spring to fall	Low litter No thorns Plant parts may irritate skin Good in containers Can be invasive if not controlled
CREEPING GERMANDER <i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i> 'Prostratum' Horticultural selection	 	Moderate 1 x 3 Trailing	Evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Pale pink Winter to spring	Low litter No thorns Fragrant foliage Requires well-drained soil



Combining groundcovers can create a unique understory for trees and other tall shrubs.



Notes



Red yucca, page 63, and trailing lantana, page 37

Extreme Weather Tips

Outdoor water use in the Phoenix Valley tends to rise significantly as summer temperatures climb. Ensuring your irrigation system is functioning properly and watering correctly—deeply and less frequently—are the keys to maintaining your landscape’s health and beauty. While we often think more water is needed, especially with escalating temperatures, that is not always the case. Here are a few basic guidelines to protect plants and trees while increasing watering efficiency during extreme temperatures in our hottest months.

GIVE YOUR PLANTS A BREAK

With the stress of intense heat, it’s best to give your plants a break. In other words, avoid planting, pruning, shearing, and even light trimming when the temperatures are high. Additionally, you should avoid using chemicals, including fertilizer. These activities make your plants more sensitive to the heat and sun and could cause them to take up more water to repair damage and manage the added stress. If you have potted plants, consider relocating them to a cooler and shadier spot in your yard, keeping the pot and root ball out of the direct afternoon sun.



WATER DEEPER BUT INFREQUENTLY

Excessive heat can harm trees and shrubs, especially young ones that have not had time to grow strong roots. So closely monitor all your plants and trees, even established ones, for signs of stress. Watering your plants more often is tempting in the extreme summer heat, but may not be necessary. When your plants need supplemental watering, simply increase the watering time so the water can soak deep into the soil—no need to add an extra day. Deep, infrequent watering encourages strong, healthy root systems that can better tolerate intense heat and periods of drought.



Watering at the correct time is also vital to ensuring healthier plants and less water waste in the hottest months. Make sure you are not watering during the sunniest and hottest hours of the day when water will simply evaporate; instead, aim to water early in the morning—one to three hours before sunrise. And, when we get monsoon activity, turn off your irrigation for a few days. If you have a smart irrigation timer, it should automatically adjust.

KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Another key element to keeping your plants healthy is ensuring your irrigation system is running correctly, especially when the weather intensifies in summer. Your pipes, sprinkler heads, and drip lines are particularly susceptible to extreme weather. High temperatures, dust, and rain can clog, crack and break emitters and lines. In these situations, even when your reliable irrigation controller comes on, plants don’t get watered, or gallons of wasted water can pool or run off your yard into the street. It’s as simple as turning on your irrigation system and walking around to inspect that everything is working correctly.



For more helpful information, visit AMWUA.org/landscape



Vines

Use vines to add vertical interest to your landscape, cover bare walls and fences, screen views, dress up posts and columns, or create welcoming areas for a ramada or patio.

These plants are especially valuable in small gardens because they require little space. Many vines will cling to a trellis or structure, but others will not. In those cases, extra support or ties may be needed. Some vines become excellent groundcovers when allowed to sprawl on the soil surface.





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
QUEEN'S WREATH <i>Antigonon leptopus</i> Native to Baja California and Sonora, Mexico south into Central and South America Look for selections with white or red flowers	 30° M	Fast 15 x 15 Twining	Deciduous Medium green Coarse texture	Bright pink clusters Summer to fall	Seasonal litter No thorns Good for hot areas Dies back with cold, regrows in spring Attracts bees and birds
BOUGAINVILLEA <i>Bougainvillea spectabilis</i> Native to Brazil May be sold as <i>B. brasiliensis</i> . Selections available in a wide range of flower colors, sizes, and forms	 28° L	Moderate 15 x 20 Sprawling	Evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Many bright colors Year-round in frost-free weather	High litter Large thorns Accepts hot exposures Shrub forms are available
YELLOW ORCHID VINE <i>Callaeum macropterum</i> Native from Baja California and northern Sonora, Mexico to Central and South America Previously classified as <i>Mascagnia macroptera</i> . Also try <i>M. lilacina</i> for purple flowers	 22° L	Moderate 15 x 15 Twining	Evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Yellow clusters Late spring to early summer	Seasonal litter No thorns Flowers followed by paper-like pods changing color from chartreuse to copper when mature
GRAPE IVY <i>Cissus trifoliata</i> Native from Arizona to Florida, south into Mexico and Central America to northern South America	 20° L	Moderate 15 x 10 Twining	Semi-evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Green (nonshowy) Summer	Seasonal litter No thorns Allow to drape over retaining walls



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

CATCLAW VINE

Dolichandra unguis-cati
Native from Mexico to Central and South America
Previously classified as *Macfadyena unguis-cati*





Fast
25 x 15
Twining

Evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Large yellow trumpet-like
Spring

High litter
No thorns
Provides fast cover but can damage walls and fences

LILAC VINE

Hardenbergia violacea
Native to Australia





Fast
15 x 10
Twining

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Purple clusters
Winter to spring

Low litter
No thorns
Winter color
Needs well-drained soil



YUCA VINE

Merremia aurea
Native to southern Baja California





Moderate
10 x 10
Twining

Deciduous
Dark green
Medium texture

Large, bright yellow
Summer to fall

Seasonal litter
No thorns
Summer color
Dies back with winter cold, regrows in spring



BAJA PASSION VINE

Passiflora arida
Native to Baja California and Sonora, Mexico





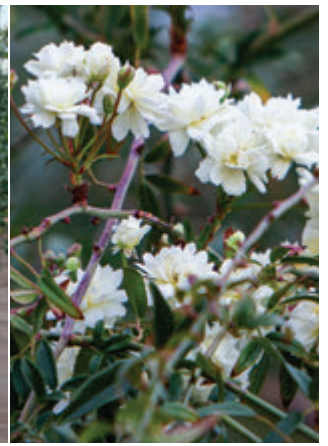
Moderate
10 x 10
Twining

Semi-evergreen
Gray-green
Medium texture

White and purple, showy
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Striking flowers
Attracts Gulf Fritillary butterfly





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
PINK TRUMPET VINE <i>Podranea ricasoliana</i> Native to southern Africa	 25° L	Moderate 20 x 10 Sprawling	Evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Showy pink clusters Late summer to fall	Seasonal litter No thorns Lightly fragrant flowers Can be confused with <i>Pandorea</i> species
LADY BANK'S ROSE <i>Rosa banksiae</i> Native to China	 10° M	Fast 20 x 15 Sprawling	Evergreen Medium green Medium texture	White or pale yellow clusters Spring	Low litter No thorns Requires little maintenance



ABOUT PLANNING

Planning should be a priority, because a beautiful, functional yard begins with a great plan. However, many people do not know where to start.

When designing your landscape, consider using the right plant for the right place, the look you want to achieve, how much time you want to spend caring for your yard, and your overall budget.

Left: Catclaw vine, page 45

Notes

Pink trumpet and other vines can add color and texture to masonry walls and other hardscape features in your yard.







BUCKHORN CHOLLA



GOLDEN BARREL



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

SAGUARO

Carnegiea gigantea
Native to Sonoran Desert



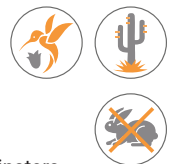


Very slow
40 x 10
Columnar

Evergreen
Medium green
Gray spines

White showy
Late spring

Low litter
Long spines
Consider mature size
Red fruits are enjoyed by birds
Attracts nocturnal pollinators, shelters cavity-nesters



HILDMANN'S CEREUS

Cereus hildmannianus
Native to eastern South America
May be sold as *C. peruvianus*. Also try *Stetsonia coryne*





Fast
15 x 10
Columnar

Evergreen
Blue-green
Gray spines

White, showy
Blooms at night
Spring through summer

Low litter
Medium spines
Fast-growing substitute for organ pipe cactus
Attracts hawk moths and other nocturnal pollinators



BUCKHORN CHOLLA

Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa
Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts
May be sold as *Opuntia acanthocarpa*. Also try *C. imbricata*, *C. spinosior*, and *C. versicolor*





Moderate
4 x 5
Shrub-like

Evergreen
Medium green
Yellow spines

Red to yellow
Spring

Low litter
Medium spines
Makes an effective security barrier
Provides nesting habitat, flowers attract pollinators



GOLDEN BARREL

Echinocactus grusonii
Native to central and southern Mexico





Slow
2 x 2
Globe-shaped

Evergreen
Medium green
Golden spines

Yellow
Spring

Low litter
Long spines
Striking accent
Attractive in groupings





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

ENGELMANN'S HEDGEHOG

Echinocereus engelmannii
Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts



Slow
1 x 2
Clumping

Evergreen
Medium green
Brown spines

Magenta, showy
Spring

Low litter
Long spines
Vibrant spring color
Attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds



ARGENTINE GIANT

Echinopsis candicans
Native to Argentina
May be sold as *Trichocereus candicans*
Also try *E. oxygona*



Moderate
2 x 3
Sprawling

Evergreen
Medium green
Yellow spines

White, showy
Blooms at night
Spring

Low litter
Small spines
Flowers are striking, 6" to 8" across, and are fragrant
Attracts nocturnal pollinators



ARGENTINE HEDGEHOG

Echinopsis huascha
Native to Argentina
May be sold as *Trichocereus huascha*. Look for selections that offer a wide range of flower colors



Moderate
2 x 3
Clumping

Evergreen
Medium green
Yellow spines

Orange and red, showy
Spring to summer

Low litter
Small spines
Some of the most spectacular flowers of all landscape cacti
Attracts hummingbirds and other pollinators



CARDON GRANDE

Echinopsis terscheckii
Native to Argentina
May be sold as *Trichocereus terscheckii*



Moderate
20 x 8
Tree-like













Evergreen
Light green
Tan spines

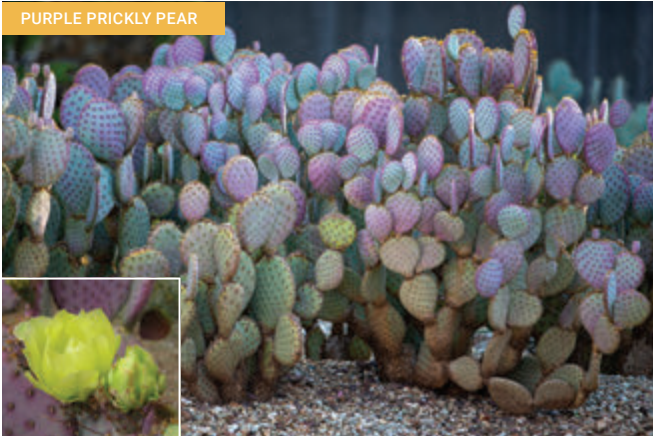
White, showy
Spring

Low litter
Medium spines
Similar to saguaro but grows faster and is smaller at maturity
Attracts nocturnal pollinators





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
COMPASS BARREL <i>Ferocactus cylindraceus</i> Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts May be sold as <i>F. acanthodes</i> . Also try <i>F. herrerae</i> and <i>F. wislizeni</i>	  	Slow 5 x 2 Globe-shaped	Evergreen Medium green Red/yellow spines	Yellow to orange Late spring to summer	Low litter Long spines Good for naturalistic landscapes
BLUE MYRTLE CACTUS <i>Myrtillocactus geometrizans</i> Native to central Mexico	  	Moderate 15 x 10 Upright	Evergreen Blue-green Black spines	Small greenish white Spring	Low litter Medium spines Can become treelike with age Purple fruits follow fragrant flowers
BEAVERTAIL PRICKLY PEAR <i>Opuntia basilaris</i> Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts	  	Moderate 2 x 4 Low, spreading	Evergreen Blue-gray Brown spines	Magenta to pink, showy Spring	Low litter Small spines Vibrant spring color
ENGELMANN'S PRICKLY PEAR <i>Opuntia engelmannii</i> Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico	  	Moderate 4 x 8 Shrub-like	Evergreen Medium green White-gray spines	Yellow, showy Spring to early summer	Low litter Medium spines Large, dark red fruits attract birds and wildlife



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
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INDIAN FIG

Opuntia ficus-indica
Horticultural selection







Moderate
12 x 18
Shrub or tree

Evergreen
Medium green
Spineless

Yellow to
orange, showy

Spring

Low litter
Usually no spines
Showy fruits
Tree-like sculptural
qualities


GIANT PRICKLY PEAR

Opuntia robusta
Native to central Mexico







Moderate
10 x 10
Shrub-like

Evergreen
Blue-green
Whitish spines

Yellow
Spring

Low litter
Medium spines
Pads grow to
1 foot across
Large red fruit


PURPLE PRICKLY PEAR

Opuntia santa-rita
Native to Chihuahuan
and Sonoran Deserts
Also try *O. macrocentra*







Moderate
4 x 5
Shrub-like

Evergreen
Green-purple
Tan spines

Yellow
Spring

Low litter
Small spines
Cold or dry weather
causes pads to take on
striking purplish color


MEXICAN FENCEPOST

Pachycereus marginatus
Native to central, southern
Mexico
May be sold as
Marginocereus marginatus
or *Stenocereus marginatus*







Moderate
10 x 6
Columnar

Evergreen
Dark green
White spines

Pink
Spring

Low litter
Medium spines
A bold, dramatic accent
Good in containers



ORGAN PIPE



SPRUCE CONES



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

SENITA

Pachycereus schottii
Native to southwestern Arizona, Baja California and Sonora, Mexico
May be sold as *Lophocereus schottii*




18°



VL

Slow
10 x 10
Columnar

Evergreen
Light green
Gray spines

Pink
Late spring to summer

Low litter
Medium spines
Flowers bloom at night on "furry" top regions of stems
Pollinated by the senita moth



TOTEM POLE

Pachycereus schottii f. *monstrosus*
Native to Baja California
May be sold as *Lophocereus schottii* f. *monstrosus*




20°



VL

Slow
15 x 10
Columnar

Evergreen
Light green
Spineless

Pink
Late spring to summer

Low litter
No spines
Particularly interesting for its sculptural quality



ORGAN PIPE

Stenocereus thurberi
Native to Sonoran Desert




22°



VL

Slow
10 x 10
Columnar

Evergreen
Olive-green
Black spines

Pale pink
Blooms at night
Spring to summer

Low litter
Medium spines
Striking focal point with time
Pollinated primarily by nectar-feeding bats



SPRUCE CONES

Tephrocactus articulatus
Native to Argentina




15°



VL

Moderate
1 x 3
Sprawling

Evergreen
Gray-green
Spineless

White to pink, small
Spring

Low litter
No spines
Good container plant
Sculptural qualities





Cacti provide interesting forms, colors, and textures to residential yards with limited water use and minimal maintenance.





Succulents & Accents

Succulents can provide dramatic sculptural qualities to your landscape with minimal care. Use these accent plants individually or in a grouping to create a dramatic effect. Avoid too many different accents in one location, or the overall impact may be lost.

Before deciding where to plant succulents, check their mature size and if they have thorns and additional plant features. Some larger succulents can overwhelm a small garden, and thorns or spines should not be located next to walkways, play areas, or traffic areas.

Agaves are a popular succulent. It's important to remember that once agaves mature, almost all will produce a spectacular flower stalk. Depending on the species, agaves will die after they bloom, usually five to 20 years after planting. However, many produce new plants with offsets or pups. Be cautious when cutting plant parts, as the sap can be irritating.



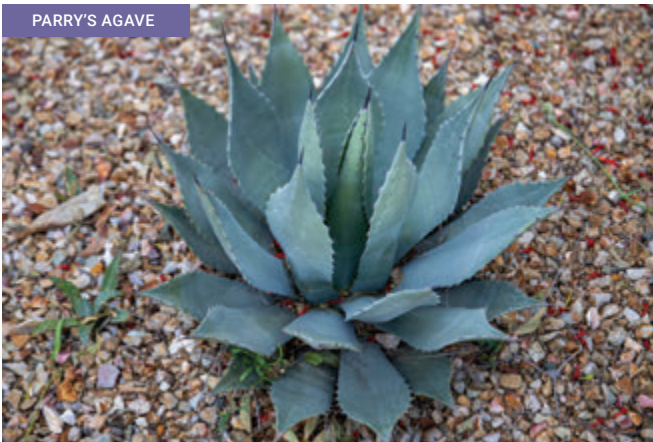
SMOOTH AGAVE



TWIN-FLOWERED AGAVE



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
COW'S HORN AGAVE <i>Agave bovicornuta</i> Native to mountains of northern Mexico	 20° VL	Moderate 4 x 4 Open rosette	Evergreen Dark green Coarse texture	Yellow Late winter to spring	Low litter Sharp tips Reddish brown marginal teeth are highly decorative Stalk bloom attracts nocturnal pollinators
MESCAL CENIZA <i>Agave colorata</i> Native to southern Sonora, northern Sinaloa Also try <i>A. chrysantha</i> , <i>A. murpheyi</i> , and <i>A. palmeri</i>	 15° VL	Moderate 3 x 3 Compact rosette	Evergreen Gray-green Coarse texture	Yellow Spring	Low litter Sharp tips Striking banded leaves Distinctive toothed margins Stalk bloom attracts nocturnal pollinators
SMOOTH AGAVE <i>Agave desmettiana</i> Horticultural selection Also try <i>A. desmettiana</i> 'Variegata' and <i>A. angustifolia</i>	 25° VL	Fast 4 x 4 Open rosette	Evergreen Light green Coarse texture	Bright yellow Spring	Low litter Sharp tips Very attractive Smooth leaf margins Stalk bloom attracts nocturnal pollinators
TWIN-FLOWERED AGAVE <i>Agave geminiflora</i> Native to west central Mexico Also try <i>A. ocahui</i> and <i>A. victoriae-reginae</i>	 25° VL	Fast 3 x 3 Open rosette	Evergreen Dark green Coarse texture	Yellow Winter	Low litter Sharp tips Symmetrical slender leaves with smooth margins Stalk bloom attracts nocturnal pollinators



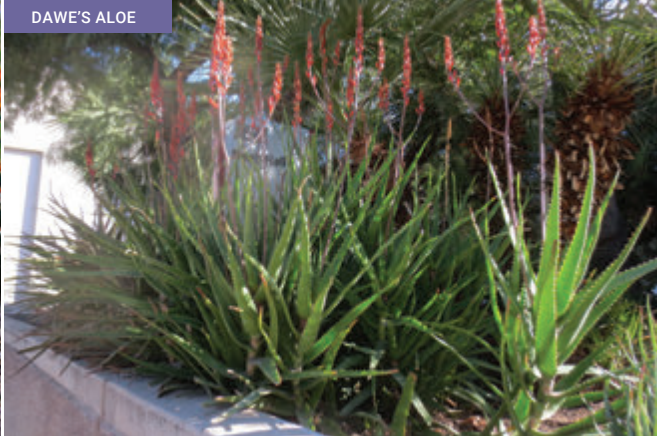
PARRY'S AGAVE



OCTOPUS AGAVE



WEBER'S AGAVE



DAWE'S ALOE

COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
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PARRY'S AGAVE <i>Agave parryi</i> Native to upland areas of Arizona to western Texas and south to central Mexico Also try <i>A. macroacantha</i> , <i>A. parryi</i> spp. <i>neomexicana</i> , and <i>A. parryi</i> v. <i>truncata</i>	15° VL	Slow 2 x 2 Compact rosette	Evergreen Gray-green Coarse texture	Bright yellow Summer	Low litter Sharp tips Particularly decorative Distinctive leaf impressions Stalk bloom attracts nocturnal pollinators	
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OCTOPUS AGAVE <i>Agave vilmoriniana</i> Native to central Mexico Also try <i>A. bracteosa</i>	20° VL	Fast 4 x 5 Open rosette	Evergreen Light green Coarse texture	Yellow Spring	Low litter Soft tips Smooth margins and soft terminal thorns Stalk bloom attracts nocturnal pollinators	
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WEBER'S AGAVE <i>Agave weberi</i> Horticultural selection Also try <i>A. americana</i> 'Mediopicta' and <i>A. salmiana</i>	12° VL	Moderate 6 x 6 Open rosette	Evergreen Blue-green Coarse texture	Yellow Spring to summer	Low litter Sharp tips Bold specimen plant with smooth margins Stalk bloom attracts nocturnal pollinators	
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DAWE'S ALOE <i>Aloe dawei</i> Native to central Africa	27° VL	Moderate 2 x 3 Shrub-like	Evergreen Reddish green Coarse texture	Red spikes Winter	Low litter Soft tips Striking winter color Attracts hummingbirds	
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COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

CAPE ALOE

Aloe ferox
Native to South Africa
Also try *A. marlothii* and
Aloidendron dichotomum



Moderate
8 x 3
Upright
rosette

Evergreen
Blue-green
Coarse
texture

Orange-red
spikes
Winter to
spring

Low litter
Sharp leaf tips
Provides "oasis" feel
Showy candelabra-
shaped flower spikes
attract hummingbirds



MEDICINAL ALOE

Aloe vera
Horticultural selection
May be sold as
A. barbadensis



Fast
2 x 5
Clumping

Evergreen
Gray-green
Coarse
texture

Yellow
spikes
Spring

Low litter
Soft tips
A prolific and
tough aloe
Attracts
hummingbirds



DESERT MILKWEED

Asclepias subulata
Native to Mohave
and Sonoran Deserts
Also try *A. linaria*



Moderate
4 x 4
Upright,
open

Evergreen
Gray-green
Coarse
texture

White
clusters
Spring to
fall

Low litter
No thorns
Strong vertical accent
Important butterfly
host plant
Attracts bees and
other pollinators



YELLOW BULBINE

Bulbine frutescens
Native to South Africa
Look for selections
with orange flowers



Fast
1 x 2
Clumping

Evergreen
Bright green
Medium
texture

Yellow
spikes
Winter to
spring

Low litter
No thorns
This small, charming
succulent does well
in containers
Attracts bees, butterflies,
and hummingbirds





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

SAGO PALM

Cycas revoluta
Native to Japan



Very slow
5 x 4
Palm-like

Evergreen
Dark green
Coarse texture

Small brown
cones
Spring

Low litter
Pointed leaflets
Provides "oasis" feel
Good for containers
All plant parts are
poisonous



GRASS TREE

Dasyliirion quadrangulatum
Native to northeastern
Mexico
May be sold as
D. longissimum



Slow
6 x 6
Grassy
rosette

Evergreen
Medium green
Coarse texture

White to
cream
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Exceptional
specimen plant



DESERT SPOON

Dasyliirion wheeleri
Native to Chihuahuan
and Sonoran Deserts
Also try *D. acrotriche*
for shady areas



Moderate
4 x 4
Open rosette

Evergreen
Gray-green
Coarse texture

Cream on
tall stalks
Late spring
to summer

Low litter
Sawtooth leaves
Distinct accent plant
with twisting leaves
Stalk bloom attracts
bees, butterflies, and
other pollinators



CANDELILLA

Euphorbia antisiphilitica
Native to Chihuahuan Desert
Also try *E. resinifera*



Moderate
1.5 x 4
Upright,
open

Evergreen
Pale green
Medium
texture

Pink and
white
Spring to
summer

Low litter
No thorns
Cluster of slender,
upright, leafless stems
Good in containers
Sap may irritate skin





SLIPPER FLOWER



BLUE EUPHORBIA



FIRESTICK



OCOTILLO

COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

SLIPPER FLOWER

Euphorbia lomelii

Native to Baja California and Sonora, Mexico

Previously classified as *Pedilanthus macrocarpus*



Moderate
3 x 3
Upright, open

Evergreen
Light green
Medium texture

Red slipper-like
Late spring to summer

Low litter
No thorns
Sap may irritate skin
Unique plant form
Good in containers
Attracts hummingbirds



BLUE EUPHORBIA

Euphorbia rigida

Native to Mediterranean



Slow to moderate
2 x 3
Mounding

Evergreen
Blue-green
Coarse texture

Chartreuse
Midwinter to spring

Low litter
No thorns
Sap may irritate skin
Striking foliage and flowers



FIRESTICK

Euphorbia tirucalli

Native to Africa



Moderate
10 x 6
Upright, open

Evergreen
Light-medium green in summer
Coarse texture

Yellow (insignificant)
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Sap is toxic and may irritate skin
Orange and red stems during winter months
Frost sensitive



OCOTILLO

Fouquieria splendens

Native to Chihuahuan, Mohave, and Sonoran Deserts

Also try *F. diguetii* and *F. macdougallii*



Slow
12 x 10
Strong vertical

Deciduous
Medium green
Coarse texture

Red to orange clusters
Spring

Low litter
Medium thorns
Striking silhouette
Attracts carpenter bees and hummingbirds





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
--------------------------------------	--------	--------------------------------	---------	--------------------	---------------------------

PARTRIDGE BREAST ALOE

Gonialoe variegata
Native to South Africa and Namibia
Also try hybrid A. x 'Blue Elf' and A. *striata*

20°
 VL

Moderate
1 x 1
Clumping

Evergreen
Spotted green
Coarse texture

Salmon spikes
Winter to spring

Low litter
No thorns
Good for small spaces and containers



GIANT HESPERALOE

Hesperaloe funifera
Native to southern Texas and northeastern Mexico

10°
 VL

Moderate
5 x 5
Upright rosette

Evergreen
Medium green
Coarse texture

Greenish white on tall stalks
Late spring to summer

Low litter
No thorns
This unusual accent adds drama
Attracts bees, hummingbirds, and nocturnal pollinators



RED YUCCA

Hesperaloe parviflora
Native to western Texas and northeastern Mexico
Look for selections with yellow flowers

10°
 VL

Fast
3 x 5
Upright rosette

Evergreen
Dark green
Coarse texture

Coral-red spikes
Spring to summer

Low litter
No thorns
Tolerates tough conditions
Attracts hummingbirds



BEARGRASS

Nolina microcarpa
Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico

0°
 L

Moderate
3 x 4
Grassy clump

Evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Pale green to cream
Late spring to early summer

Low litter
No thorns
Softens hard elements
Good in containers





SOAPTREE YUCCA



PALELEAF YUCCA



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

ELEPHANT'S FOOD

Portulacaria afra
Native to southern Africa
Look for smaller cultivars,
as some selections can
reach 12' or taller



Moderate
3 x 4
Sprawling
shrub

Evergreen
Medium
green
Medium
texture

Pink (rarely
occurs)
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Adapted to many
different conditions
Good in containers



BANANA YUCCA

Yucca baccata
Native to southwestern US,
northern Mexico
Also try *Y. aloifolia*



Moderate
3 x 5
Clumping

Evergreen
Blue-green
Coarse
texture

White
clusters on
tall stalks
Spring to
summer

Low litter
Sharp tips
Striking show
of flowers
Effective security plant
Pollinated by yucca moths



SOAPTREE YUCCA

Yucca elata
Native to southwestern US,
northern Mexico
Also try *Y. faxoniana* and
Y. treculeana



Moderate
20 x 10
Tree-like

Evergreen
Pale green
Coarse
texture

White
clusters on
tall stalks
Late spring

Low litter
Sharp tips
Leave dead leaves
on trunk to avoid
sunburn damage
Pollinated by yucca moths



PALELEAF YUCCA

Yucca pallida
Native to central Texas
Also try *Y. gloriosa* v.
recurvifolia (*Y. recurvifolia*)
and *Y. rupicola*



Moderate
2 x 4
Clumping

Evergreen
Blue-gray
Coarse
texture

White
clusters on
tall stalks
Late spring
to summer

Low litter
Sharp tips
Good for small spaces
and in containers
Pollinated by yucca moths



BLUE YUCCA



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

BLUE YUCCA

Yucca rigida

Native to northern Mexico

Also try *Y. rostrata*



Moderate
12 x 8
Tree-like

Evergreen
Blue-gray
Coarse
texture

White
clusters on
tall stalks
Late spring
to summer

Low litter
Sharp tips
Striking bluish color
makes it a great accent
Pollinated by yucca moths



**THE AMWUA
PLANTS
WEBSITE**

If you want to fine-tune your search before grabbing a shovel, the *Landscape Plants for the Arizona Desert* website has an advanced search feature that allows you to filter your exact needs—size, sun exposure, or specific flower colors. Visit AMWUA.org/plants for additional help.



NOCTURNAL POLLINATORS

Did you know that many agaves, yuccas, and cacti bloom at night and are visited by hawk moths, nectar-feeding bats, and other nocturnal pollinators?

These night-blooming specimens often have spectacular flowers that open after dark and only last until just after the sun rises!

Check individual plant descriptions for information about these special features and consider adding them to your landscape to increase visual interest and help your local pollinators along the way.

Left: Weber's agave, page 59



Grasses

Ornamental grasses add a softening element and motion to your landscape, especially when planted next to boulders or other hard surfaces. The color and form of grasses change through the year, creating seasonal interest, and birds are attracted to seed-laden spikes after the bloom period.

Many types of ornamental grass are excellent for revegetation; however, some can reseed in landscapes. Watering with drip irrigation will generally eliminate or minimize reseeding. Ornamental grasses should be watered, as you would groundcovers, not grass lawns. Rejuvenate their growth by cutting them back close to the ground every one to three years.



SIDEOATS GRAMA



BLUE GRAMA

COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
SIDEOATS GRAMA <i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i> Native to North and South America Also try <i>Aristida purpurea</i> , especially for naturalistic landscapes	 	Fast 2 x 2 Bunchgrass	Tan in fall Blue-green Fine texture	Green, dried to tan Tall spikes Summer to fall	Low litter No thorns Allergenic Interesting seed stalks are relished by birds	
BLUE GRAMA <i>Bouteloua gracilis</i> Native to North America	 	Fast 2 x 2 Bunchgrass	Tan in fall Blue-green Fine texture	Green, dried to tan Tall spikes Summer	Low litter No thorns Allergenic Unique seedheads resemble eyelashes Good for meadows	





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

PINK MUHLY

Muhlenbergia capillaris

Native to Texas and southeastern US

Look for selections with deep pink flower plumes



Fast
3 x 3
Mounding

Tan in fall
Medium green
Fine texture

Pink airy plumes
Fall

Low litter
No thorns
Locate where pink flower plumes will be backlit by the sun



BAMBOO MUHLY

Muhlenbergia dumosa

Native to southern Arizona, northern Mexico



Moderate
4 x 4
Clumping

Tan in fall
Bright green
Fine texture

Green, dries to tan
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Resembles short bamboo
Good in containers



DEER GRASS

Muhlenbergia rigens

Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico

Also try *M. emersleyi*, *M. lindheimeri*, and *M. rigida*



Fast
4 x 4
Mounding

Tan in fall
Medium green
Fine texture

Green, dries to tan
Summer

Low litter
No thorns
Versatile grass with lush foliage and interesting flowers



NATURAL DESERT LANDSCAPES

Place native bunch grasses near rocky areas or cluster around larger boulders to simulate a riparian area or a natural desert wash in your landscape. Blue grama (opposite page) is in the foreground.



Perennials





























Perennials are a reliable way to add splashes of color to your landscape. Some perennials are short-lived, lasting two to four years; however, they often reseed, so new plants will grow and liven up your garden year after year. Others live much longer and can become a permanent part of the landscape.

Many of the perennials listed here are considered perennial wildflowers and are frequently used in combination with annual wildflowers. Others in this adaptable group of plants can be used as groundcovers, accents, borders, or in containers.

To keep perennials looking fresh, remove flowerheads after the bloom period and lightly prune occasionally to encourage new growth.



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
DESERT MARIGOLD <i>Baileya multiradiata</i> Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico	  	Fast 1 x 1 Low mound	Evergreen Silver-gray Medium texture	Yellow daisy-like Year-round	Low litter No thorns Long period of color, reseeds easily Seeds attract birds and small mammals Attracts native bees    
CHOCOLATE FLOWER <i>Berlandiera lyrata</i> Native to southwestern US into central Mexico	  	Fast 1 x 2 Rosette	Evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Yellow daisy-like Spring to fall	Low litter No thorns Flowers have distinctive chocolate scent  
DAMIANITA <i>Chrysactinia mexicana</i> Native to New Mexico, western Texas, Mexico	  	Slow 2 x 2 Mounding	Evergreen Dark green Fine texture	Golden yellow, daisy-like Spring and fall	Low litter No thorns Fragrant foliage Good for courtyards Attracts butterflies, other pollinators Seeds eaten by birds and small mammals    
HUMMINGBIRD TRUMPET <i>Epilobium canum</i> Native to western US and northwestern Mexico Previously classified as <i>Zauschneria californica</i>	  	Moderate 1 x 2 Low arching shrub	Semi-evergreen Gray-green Medium texture	Orange-red Summer to fall	Low litter No thorns Attracts hummingbirds    



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

GOODDING'S VERBENA

Glandularia gooddingii

Native to southwestern US,
northern Mexico

Previously classified as
Verbena gooddingii



Moderate
1 x 3
Low growing

Medium green
Fine texture

Lavender to
pink clusters
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in fall
Attracts butterflies
Fragrant flowers



MOSS VERBENA

Glandularia tenera

Native to South America

Previously classified as
Verbena tenera. Also try *G. peruviana* and *Verbena rigida*



Fast
1 x 3
Spreading

Semi-evergreen
Dark green
Fine texture

Purple
clusters
Spring
to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Colorful cover
for bare surfaces
Attracts butterflies



MAXIMILIAN SUNFLOWER

Helianthus maximiliani

Native to North America



Moderate
10 x 2
Upright
clump

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Coarse texture

Yellow
daisy-like
Fall

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in spring
Attracts butterflies
Birds love to eat
the seeds



BLACKFOOT DAISY

Melampodium leucanthum

Native to Arizona, east to
Kansas and central Texas,
and northeastern Mexico



Fast
1 x 2
Low mound

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium
texture

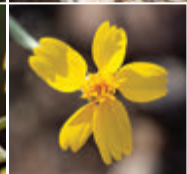
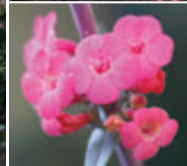
White
daisy-like
Year-round

Low litter
No thorns
Bright and colorful
groundcover
Plant in well-drained
soil





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
GAURA <i>Oenothera lindheimeri</i> Native to Louisiana and eastern Texas	 10° L	Fast 2 x 3 Rosette	Semi-evergreen Medium green Medium texture	White or pink on long spikes Summer to fall	Low litter No thorns Flowers resemble butterflies	
ROCK PENSTEMON <i>Penstemon baccharifolius</i> Native to southern Texas and northeastern Mexico	 10° M	Slow-moderate 1 x 2 Rosette	Evergreen Medium green Medium texture	Cherry red Late spring into late summer	Low litter No thorns Attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds	
FIRECRACKER PENSTEMON <i>Penstemon eatonii</i> Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico	 0° L	Moderate 1 x 1.5 Rosette	Evergreen Bright green Medium texture	Scarlet spikes Late winter to spring	Low litter No thorns Reseeds Plant in fall for spring flowers Attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds	
PARRY'S PENSTEMON <i>Penstemon parryi</i> Native to southern Arizona into Sonora, Mexico Also try <i>P. palmeri</i>	 15° L	Moderate 1.5 x 1.5 Rosette	Evergreen Blue-green Medium texture	Hot pink spikes Spring	Low litter No thorns Reseeds Plant in fall for spring flowers Attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds	



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate, Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/Season

Comments/Special Features

CANYON PENSTEMON
Penstemon pseudospectabilis
Native to southwestern US and northern Sonora, Mexico
Also try *P. triflorus*



Moderate
1.5 x 2
Rosette

Evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Rose-purple spikes
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Reseeds
Plant in fall for spring flowers
Attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds



CORAL PENSTEMON
Penstemon superbus
Native to Chihuahuan Desert



Moderate
2 x 3
Large clump

Evergreen
Blue-green
Medium texture

Bright coral
Late spring

Low litter
No thorns
Reseeds
Plant in fall for spring flowers
Attracts bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds



JERUSALEM SAGE
Phlomis fruticosa
Native to Mediterranean



Moderate
3 x 3
Shrub-like

Evergreen
Gray-green
Coarse texture

Intense yellow
Spring to summer

Low litter
No thorns



PAPERFLOWER
Psilostrophe cooperi
Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico



Moderate
1 x 2
Rounded

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium texture

Yellow daisy-like
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Great summer color
Flowers following monsoon rains





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

MEXICAN HAT

Ratibida columnifera
Native to North America
from Canada into Mexico



Moderate
2 x 1
Upright
clump

Deciduous
Gray-green
Fine texture

Yellow or
maroon
cone-like
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Good cut flower



PURPLE RUELLIA

Ruellia simplex
Native to Mexico, West
Indies, South America
Previously classified as
R. brittoniana



Moderate-fast
3 x 6
Upright
clump

Semi-evergreen
Dark green
Coarse
texture

Purple
Spring to
fall

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts bees
and butterflies
Spreads easily with ample
water and no containment



CHAPARRAL SAGE

Salvia clevelandii
Native to coastal
southern California
and northern Baja
California



Fast
4 x 4
Rounded
shrub

Evergreen
Gray-green
Medium
texture

Blue to
violet
clusters
Spring to
summer

Low litter
No thorns
Foliage is
highly fragrant
Attracts bees, butterflies,
and hummingbirds
May be short-lived



MEALY CUP SAGE

Salvia farinacea
Native to Texas,
southeastern New Mexico,
and northeastern Mexico



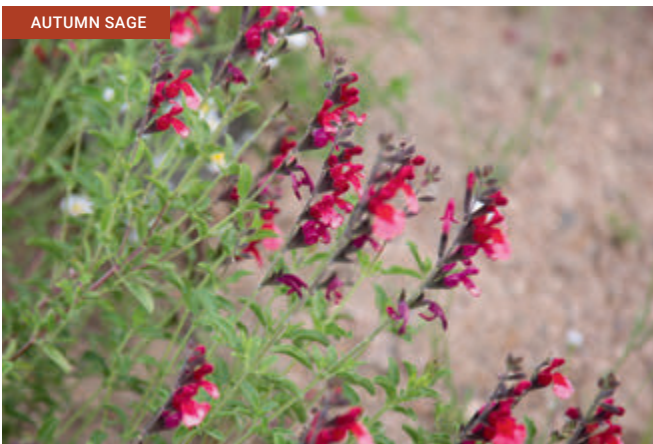
Moderate
1.5 x 1.5
Low growing

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Medium
texture

Blue-purple
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts bees,
butterflies, and
hummingbirds





COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

AUTUMN SAGE

Salvia greggii
Native to central/western Texas, northeastern Mexico

5°

L-M

Moderate
2 x 2
Sprawling shrub

Evergreen
Dark green
Medium texture

Red, pink, or white flowers
Spring and fall

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts bees and hummingbirds



MEXICAN BUSH SAGE

Salvia leucantha
Native to Mexico

10°

M

Moderate
4 x 4
Rounded shrub

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Purple velvety
Late spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts bees and hummingbirds



DESERT SENNA

Senna covesii
Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts

25°

VL-L

Moderate
1.5 x 1.5
Shrub-like

Semi-evergreen
Medium green
Medium texture

Bright yellow
Spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts bees and butterflies



GLOBE MALLOW

Sphaeralcea ambigua
Native to southwestern US and northwestern Mexico
Look for selections that offer a wide range of flower colors when in bloom

5°

VL

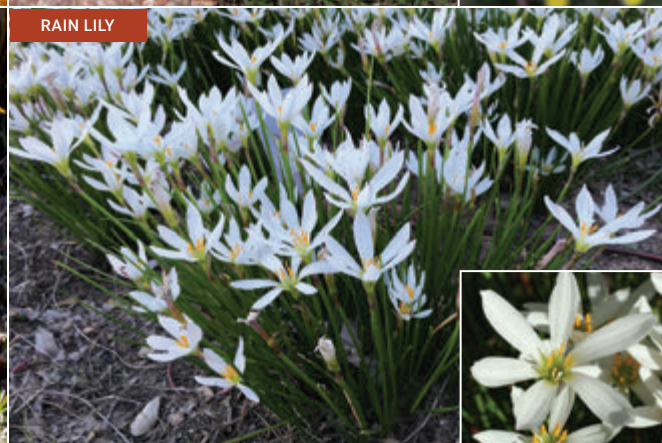
Fast
3 x 3
Rounded shrub

Evergreen
Gray-green
Coarse texture

Orange, white, pink, or lavender
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Leaves may irritate eyes and skin
Attracts bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and moths





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
MT. LEMMON MARIGOLD <i>Tagetes lemmonii</i> Native to mountains of southern Arizona and northern Mexico	 10° L-M	Moderate 3 x 3 Mounding shrub	Semi-evergreen Medium green Fine texture	Orange-yellow Fall to winter	Low litter No thorns Fragrant foliage	
ANGELITA DAISY <i>Tetraneuris acaulis</i> Native to western US into Canada Previously classified as <i>Hymenoxys acaulis</i>	 10° L	Fast 1 x 1 Round clumps	Evergreen Medium green Fine texture	Golden yellow daisy-like Year-round	Low litter No thorns Colorful and persistent Good for small spaces	
ORANGE ZEXMENIA <i>Wedelia acapulcensis v. hispida</i> Native to South Texas, Mexico, Central America Previously classified as <i>Zexmenia hispida</i> , <i>W. texana</i>	 5° L-M	Moderate-fast 2 x 3 Sprawling	Evergreen Medium green Coarse texture	Orange-yellow Late spring to summer	Low litter No thorns	
RAIN LILY <i>Zephyranthes candida</i> Native to South America Also try <i>Z. grandiflora</i> , pink flowers; and <i>Z. citrina</i> , yellow flowers, and hybrids	 20° L	Moderate 1 x 1 Upright clump	Evergreen Dark green Fine texture	White Summer	Low litter No thorns Flowers often appear after summer rains	



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

DESERT ZINNIA

Zinnia acerosa

Native to southwestern US,
northern Mexico



Moderate
6" x 1
Low
mounding
cover

Evergreen
Gray-green
Fine texture

White
daisy-like
Spring
to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Prefers good
drainage



PRAIRIE ZINNIA

Zinnia grandiflora

Native to southwestern US,
northern Mexico



Fast
1 x 1
Spreading

Semi-evergreen
Light green
Fine texture

Yellow-orange
daisy-like
Summer
to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Summer color
Attracts
butterflies



Desert marigold combined with Parry's penstemon provides bright flashes of complementary colors starting in early spring and lasting for several months. See plant details on pages 72 and 74.



Annuals



Most wildflowers are grown from seeds sown in the fall, though some species can be found in containers at nurseries in spring. A few of the selections recommended here are cultivated annuals, not true wildflowers. When purchasing seeds, look for quality, locally grown or collected seeds, and avoid “instant” meadow mixes because they may not be suitable for our region.

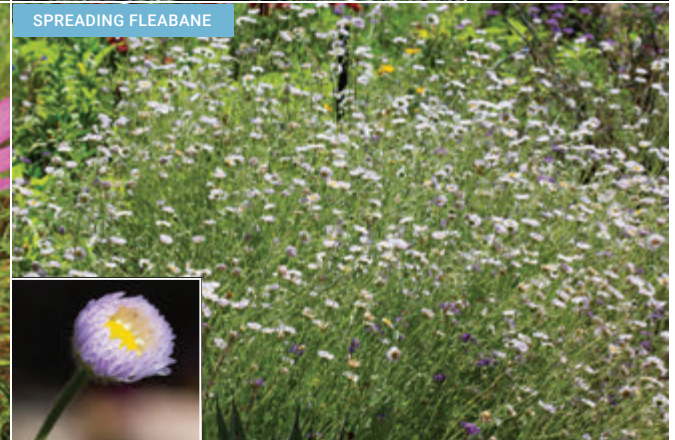
Start your wildflower garden by seeding small areas to gain experience and to see what you like. Select several species that will bloom simultaneously, and experiment with color combinations, such as the yellow-gold of the Mexican gold poppy with the purple of owl’s clover. Over the years, a wildflower garden will take on its own character as plants reseed, spread, and mature.



GARDEN COSMOS



SPREADING FLEABANE



COMMON NAME
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/
Season

Comments/Special Features

OWL'S CLOVER

Castilleja exserta
Native to southwestern US
Previously classified as
Orthocarpus purpurascens



Moderate
6" x 6"
Low mound

Medium green
Fine texture

Rose-pink to
purple spikes
Early to late
spring

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in
early fall
Charming wildflower



DESERT COREOPSIS

Coreopsis bigelovii
Native to southern
California



Moderate
1.5 x 1.5
Low mound

Medium green
Fine texture

Golden
yellow
Early spring
to early
summer

Low litter
No thorns
Attracts butterflies



GARDEN COSMOS

Cosmos bipinnatus
Native to Mexico



Moderate
3 x 3
Upright

Medium green
Fine texture

White, pink,
purple, red,
or magenta
Summer
to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in fall or
plant from containers
Attracts bees
and butterflies



SPREADING FLEABANE

Erigeron divergens
Native to western US
and northern Mexico



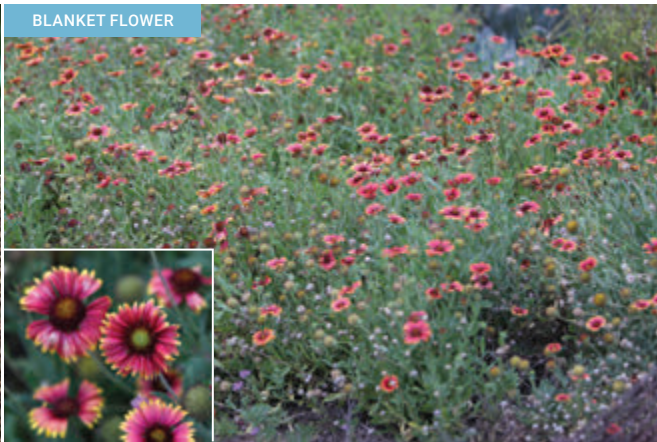
Moderate-fast
1.5 x 2
Low growing

Gray-green
Fine texture

White to pink
daisy-like
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in fall
Attracts butterflies





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
--------------------------------------	--------	--------------------------------	---------	--------------------	---------------------------

MEXICAN GOLD POPPY

Eschscholzia californica
ssp. mexicana

Native to southwestern US,
northern Mexico

0°
 0°
 L-M

Moderate
1 x 1
Upright clump

Medium green
Fine texture

Yellow
to gold
Late winter
to spring

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in fall
Reseeds readily



BLANKET FLOWER

Gaillardia pulchella

Native to North America

0°
 0°
 M

Moderate
1.5 x 1.5
Low mound

Medium green
Medium texture

Yellow and
maroon-red
Late spring
to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in fall
to spring
Summer bloomer
Attracts bees and
butterflies



ARIZONA POPPY

Kallstroemia grandiflora

Native to southwestern US,
northern Mexico

10°
 10°
 VL-L

Moderate
1 x 3
Upright,
open

Gray-green
Fine texture

Orange with
dark orange
center
Summer rainy
season

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in spring
Summer bloomer



RED FLAX

Linum grandiflorum 'Rubrum'

Native to southern Europe
to Africa

5°
 5°
 M

Moderate
2 x 2
Upright
clump

















Medium green
Fine texture

Bright red
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in fall





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
BLUE FLAX <i>Linum lewisii</i> Native to western US and northern Mexico	  	Moderate 2 x 2 Upright	Medium green Fine texture	Blue Spring	Low litter No thorns Sow seeds in fall Reseeds readily Needs partial shade	 
ARROYO LUPINE <i>Lupinus succulentus</i> Native to California, Arizona, and Baja California, Mexico Also try <i>L. arizonicus</i> , <i>L. sparsiflorus</i>	  	Moderate 3 x 3 Low mound	Medium green Medium texture	Violet-blue spikes Spring	Low litter No thorns Sow seeds in fall	 
FIVE SPOT <i>Nemophila maculata</i> Native to California	  	Moderate 8" x 8" Low growing	Medium green Fine texture	White petals with purple spots Spring	Low litter No thorns Sow seeds in fall Unusual flowers	
SHIRLEY POPPY <i>Papaver rhoeas</i> Native to Africa and tropical Asia	  	Moderate 2 x 1 Upright	Gray-green Medium texture	Red, pink, or white cup-shaped Spring	Low litter No thorns Sow seeds in fall or plant from containers Vibrant flower colors	



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
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DESERT BLUEBELLS

Phacelia campanularia

Native to southern California

Also try *P. tanacetifolia*



Moderate
1 x 1
Upright clump

Dark green
Medium texture

Brilliant blue bell-shaped
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Plant parts may irritate skin
Sow seeds in fall or plant from containers



MOSS ROSE

Portulaca grandiflora

Native to South America



Moderate
6" x 1.5
Low growing

Gray-green
Fine texture

Rose, red, yellow, or white
Summer to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in spring or plant from containers
Good summer bloomer



CHIA

Salvia columbariae

Native to southwestern US, northwestern Mexico



Moderate
1 x 1
Upright

Gray-green
Medium texture

Blue clusters
Spring

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in fall
Fragrant foliage



GOLDEN DYSSODIA

Thymophylla pentachaeta

Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico

May be sold as *Dyssodia pentachaeta*



Moderate
6" x 6"
Low mound

Medium green
Fine texture

Yellow daisy-like
Late spring to fall

Low litter
No thorns
Sow seeds in fall or plant from containers
Attracts butterflies



PLANT DIVERSITY



The desert offers a diverse selection of low-water-use landscape plants. Blending this distinctive palette of colors, forms, and textures allows you to create plant combinations to suit any landscape. Color can be achieved throughout the year by considering a diversity of plants that produce flowers or pods in different seasons. This will allow your yard to maintain visual interest and become a habitat for pollinators all year long.

The Arizona poppy (below) is a great summer blooming wildflower. Spreading fleabane (opposite page), along with other wildflowers, brings seasonal interest to a drought-tolerant landscape with vibrant blooms.

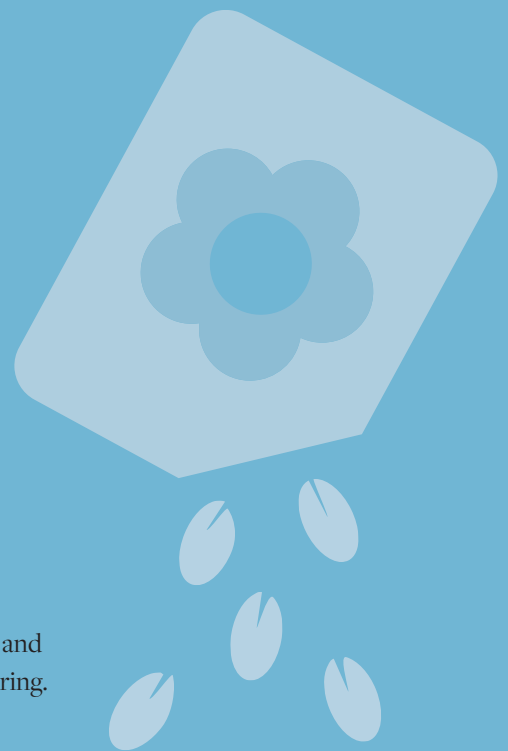




Seeding Tips

Spring-blooming wildflowers are best sown in the fall from mid-September through mid-November. Summer bloomers are best planted in early spring.

- ✿ Choose a sunny location that receives about 6 to 8 hours of sunlight a day.
- ✿ Rake to loosen the soil or decomposed granite to a depth of an inch or so.
- ✿ To help distribute tiny seeds more evenly, mix wildflower seeds with sand, fine soil, or fine organic mulch using two or more cups for each teaspoon of seed.
- ✿ Scatter seed mix and lightly rake to ensure the seeds make contact with the soil. Sowing too deeply can prevent seeds from germinating.
- ✿ Spring-blooming wildflowers will need the help of fall and winter rains to germinate. If rainfall is insufficient, water several times a week until seedlings are established. When seedlings are a few inches tall, water as needed when plants show signs of stress.
- ✿ After wildflowers have fully bloomed, they will set seeds. Allowing the plants to dry out and letting the seeds fall to the ground will set the stage for another blooming display next spring.
- ✿ Seeds can also be collected and used for planting next season.
- ✿ Keep in mind some communities have restrictions on wildflowers or guidelines for cleanup.



A							
<i>Abutilon palmeri</i>	20	BUCKHORN CHOLLA	50	DESERT MARIGOLD	72	GLOBE MALLOW	77
<i>Acacia aneura</i>	8	<i>Buddleja marrubifolia</i>	21	DESERT MILKWEED	60	GOLDEN BARREL	50
<i>Acacia craspedocarpa</i>	8	<i>Bulbine frutescens</i>	60	DESERT SENNA	77	GOLDEN DYSSODIA	85
<i>Acacia redolens</i>	36	BUSH DALEA	24	DESERT SPOON	61	GOLDEN EYE	21
<i>Acacia salicina</i>	8	BUSH MORNING GLORY	36	DESERT TEA	25	<i>Gonialoe variegata</i>	63
<i>Acacia stenophylla</i>	8			DESERT WILLOW	10	GOODING'S VERBENA	73
<i>Agave bovicornuta</i>	58	C		DESERT ZINNIA	79	<i>Gossypium harknessii</i>	26
<i>Agave colorata</i>	58	<i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i>	22	<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>	24	GRAPE IVY	44
<i>Agave desmettiana</i>	58	<i>Callaeum macropterum</i>	44	<i>Dolichandra unguis-cati</i>	45	GRASS TREE	61
<i>Agave geminiflora</i>	58	<i>Calliandra californica</i>	22			GRAY THORN	33
<i>Agave parryi</i>	59	<i>Calliandra eriophylla</i>	22	E		<i>Guaiaacum coulteri</i>	27
<i>Agave vilmoriniana</i>	59	CANDELILLA	61	<i>Ebenopsis ebano</i>	11	GUAJILLO	16
<i>Agave weberi</i>	59	CANYON HACKBERRY	9	<i>Echinocactus grusonii</i>	50	GUAYACÁN	27
<i>Aloe dawei</i>	59	CANYON PENSTEMON	75	<i>Echinocereus engelmannii</i>	51		
<i>Aloe ferox</i>	60	CAPE ALOE	60	<i>Echinopsis candicans</i>	51	H	
<i>Aloe vera</i>	60	CAPE HONEYSUCKLE	32	<i>Echinopsis huascha</i>	51	<i>Hamelia patens</i>	27
<i>Aloysia gratissima</i>	20	CARDON GRANDE	51	<i>Echinopsis terscheckii</i>	51	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	45
<i>Ambrosia deltoidea</i>	20	<i>Carissa macrocarpa</i>	22	ELEPHANT'S FOOD	64	<i>Havardia mexicana</i>	12
ANACACHO ORCHID TREE	9	<i>Carnegiea gigantea</i>	50	<i>Encelia farinosa</i>	24	<i>Havardia pallens</i>	12
ANGELITA DAISY	78	CASCALOTE	16	ENGELMANN'S HEDGEHOG	51	<i>Helianthus maximiliani</i>	73
<i>Anisacanthus quadrifidus</i>		<i>Castilleja exserta</i>	82	ENGELMANN'S PRICKLY PEAR	52	<i>Hesperaloe funifera</i>	63
v. <i>wrightii</i>	20	CATCLAW VINE	45	<i>Ephedra nevadensis</i>	25	<i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i>	63
<i>Antigonon leptopus</i>	44	<i>Ceiba speciosa</i>	9	<i>Epilobium canum</i>	72	HILDMANN'S CEREUS	50
ARGENTINE GIANT	51	<i>Celtis pallida</i>	23	<i>Eremophila hygrophana</i>	25	HOP BUSH	24
ARGENTINE HEDGEHOG	51	<i>Celtis reticulata</i>	9	<i>Eremophila maculata</i> v. <i>brevifolia</i>	25	HUMMINGBIRD TRUMPET	72
ARIZONA POPPY	83	<i>Cereus hildmannianus</i>	50	<i>Ericameria laricifolia</i>	25	HYBRID PALO VERDE	13
ARIZONA ROSEWOOD	33	<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>	10	<i>Erigeron divergens</i>	82	<i>Hyptis emoryi</i>	27
ARIZONA YELLOW BELLS	32	CHAPARRAL SAGE	76	<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>			
ARROYO LUPINE	84	CHASTE TREE	17	v. <i>polifolium</i>	26	I	
<i>Asclepias subulata</i>	60	CHIA	85	<i>Erythrostemon gilliesii</i>	26	INDIAN FIG	53
<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	21	CHIHUAHUAN SAGE	29	<i>Erythrostemon mexicanus</i>	11	IRONWOOD	13
AUTUMN SAGE	77	<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>	10	<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>			
		CHINESE PISTACHE	14	ssp. <i>mexicana</i>	83	J	
B		CHOCOLATE FLOWER	72	<i>Eucalyptus microtheca</i>	11	JERUSALEM SAGE	75
<i>Baccharis hybrid</i>		<i>Chrysactinia mexicana</i>	72	<i>Euphorbia antisyphilitica</i>	61	JOJOBA	32
(male varieties only)	36	CHUPAROSA	27	<i>Euphorbia lomelii</i>	62	<i>Justicia californica</i>	27
<i>Bahiopsis parishii</i>	21	<i>Cissus trifoliata</i>	44	<i>Euphorbia rigida</i>	62	<i>Justicia candicans</i>	28
<i>Baileya multiradiata</i>	72	COMPASS BARREL	52	<i>Euphorbia tirucalli</i>	62		
BAJA FAIRY DUSTER	22	<i>Convolvulus cneorum</i>	36	EVERGREEN ELM	16	K	
BAJA PASSION VINE	45	COOLIBAH	11	<i>Eysenhardtia orthocarpa</i>	11	<i>Kallstroemia grandiflora</i>	83
BAJA RUELLIA	31	CORAL FOUNTAIN	31			KATIE RUELLIA	38
BAMBOO MUHLY	69	CORAL PENSTEMON	75	F		KIDNEYWOOD	11
BANANA YUCCA	64	<i>Cordia boissieri</i>	23	FEATHER BUSH	12		
BARBERRY	21	<i>Cordia parvifolia</i>	23	FEATHERY SENNA	31	L	
<i>Bauhinia lunarioides</i>	9	<i>Coreopsis bigelovii</i>	82	<i>Ferocactus cylindraceus</i>	52	LADY BANK'S ROSE	46
BEARGRASS	63	<i>Corymbia papuana</i>	10	FIREBUSH	27	LANGMAN'S SAGE	29
BEAVERTAIL PRICKLY PEAR	52	<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	82	FIRECRACKER PENSTEMON	74	LANTANA	37
BEE BRUSH	20	COW'S HORN AGAVE	58	FIRESTICK	62	<i>Lantana hybrid</i>	37
<i>Berberis trifoliolata</i>	21	CREEPING GERMANDER	39	FIVE SPOT	84	<i>Lantana montevidensis</i>	37
<i>Berlandiera lyrata</i>	72	CREOSOTE BUSH	28	FLAME HONEYSUCKLE	20	<i>Larrea tridentata</i>	28
BLACK DALEA	23	<i>Cycas revoluta</i>	61	FLATTOP BUCKWHEAT	26	LEATHERLEAF ACACIA	8
BLACKBRUSH ACACIA	17	<i>Cylindropuntia acanthocarpa</i>	50	FLOSS SILK TREE	9	<i>Leucophyllum candidum</i>	28
BLACKFOOT DAISY	73	D		FOOTHILLS PALO VERDE	14	<i>Leucophyllum frutescens</i>	28
BLANKET FLOWER	83	<i>Dalea frutescens</i>	23	<i>Fouquieria splendens</i>	62	<i>Leucophyllum laevigatum</i>	29
BLUE BELLS	25	<i>Dalea greggii</i>	36	FOURWING SALTBUSH	21	<i>Leucophyllum langmaniae</i>	29
BLUE EUPHORBIA	62	<i>Dalea pulchra</i>	24	<i>Fraxinus greggii</i>	26	LILAC VINE	45
BLUE FLAX	84	<i>Dalea versicolor</i> v. <i>sessilis</i>	24	FRUITLESS OLIVE	13	<i>Linum grandiflorum</i> 'Rubrum'	83
BLUE GRAMA	68	DAMIANITA	72			<i>Linum lewisii</i>	84
BLUE MYRTLE CACTUS	52	<i>Dasyliirion quadrangulatum</i>	61	G		LITTLE LEAF ASH	26
BLUE PALO VERDE	13	<i>Dasyliirion wheeleri</i>	61	<i>Gaillardia pulchella</i>	83	LITTLE LEAF CORDIA	23
BLUE YUCCA	65	DAWE'S ALOE	59	GARDEN COSMOS	82	LIVE OAK	15
<i>Bougainvillea spectabilis</i>	44	DEER GRASS	69	GAURA	74	<i>Lupinus succulentus</i>	84
BOUGAINVILLEA	44	<i>Dermatophyllum secundiflorum</i>	10	<i>Gazania rigens</i>	37	<i>Lycium fremontii</i>	29
<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	68	DESERT BLUEBELLS	85	GHOST GUM	10	<i>Lysiloma watsonii</i>	12
<i>Bouteloua gracilis</i>	68	DESERT COREOPSIS	82	GIANT HESPERALOE	63		
<i>Brahea armata</i>	9	DESERT HACKBERRY	23	GIANT PRICKLY PEAR	53	M	
BRITTLEBUSH	24	DESERT LAVENDER	27	<i>Glandularia goodingii</i>	73	MANGLE DULCE	29
				<i>Glandularia tenera</i>	73	<i>Mariosousa willardiana</i>	12

MASTIC TREE	14	PARRY'S PENSTEMON	74	SHIRLEY POPPY	84	WOLFBERRY	29
MAXIMILIAN SUNFLOWER	73	PARTRIDGE BREAST ALOE	63	SHOESTRING ACACIA	8	WOOLLY BUTTERFLY BUSH	21
<i>Maytenus phyllanthoides</i>	29	<i>Passiflora arida</i>	45	SHRUBBY SENNA	31	Y	
MEALY CUP SAGE	76	<i>Penstemon baccharifolius</i>	74	SIDEOATS GRAMA	68	YELLOW BIRD OF PARADISE	26
MEDICINAL ALOE	60	<i>Penstemon eatonii</i>	74	<i>Simmondsia chinensis</i>	32	YELLOW BULBINE	60
MEDITERRANEAN FAN PALM	10	<i>Penstemon parryi</i>	74	SLIPPER FLOWER	62	YELLOW DOT	39
<i>Melampodium leucanthum</i>	73	<i>Penstemon pseudospectabilis</i>	75	SMOOTH AGAVE	58	YELLOW ORCHID VINE	44
<i>Merremia aurea</i>	45	<i>Penstemon superbus</i>	75	SOAP TREE YUCCA	64	YUCA VINE	45
MESCAL CENIZA	58	<i>Phacelia campanularia</i>	85	SOUTH AMERICAN MESQUITE		<i>Yucca baccata</i>	64
MEXICAN BIRD OF PARADISE	11	<i>Phlomis fruticosa</i>	75	HYBRID	15	<i>Yucca elata</i>	64
MEXICAN BLUE PALM	9	PINK FAIRY DUSTER	22	<i>Sphaeralcea ambigua</i>	77	<i>Yucca pallida</i>	64
MEXICAN BUCKEYE	16	PINK MUHLY	69	<i>Sphagneticola trilobata</i>	39	<i>Yucca rigida</i>	65
MEXICAN BUSH SAGE	77	PINK TRUMPET VINE	46	SPREADING FLEABANE	82		
MEXICAN EBONY	12	<i>Pistacia chinensis</i>	14	SPRUCE CONES	54	Z	
MEXICAN FENCEPOST	53	<i>Pistacia lentiscus</i>	14	STENOCEERUS	54	<i>Zephyranthes candida</i>	78
MEXICAN GOLD POPPY	83	<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>	30	SUGAR BUSH	30	<i>Zinnia acerosa</i>	79
MEXICAN HAT	76	<i>Podranea ricasoliana</i>	46	SUPERSTITION MALLOW	20	<i>Zinnia grandiflora</i>	79
MOSS ROSE	85	POMEGRANATE	30	SWEET ACACIA	17	<i>Ziziphus obtusifolia</i>	
MOSS VERBENA	73	<i>Portulaca grandiflora</i>	85			v. <i>canescens</i>	33
MT. LEMMON MARIGOLD	78	<i>Portulacaria afra</i>	64	T			
<i>Muhlenbergia capillaris</i>	69	PRAIRIE ZINNIA	79	<i>Tagetes lemmonii</i>	78		
<i>Muhlenbergia dumosa</i>	69	<i>Prosopis glandulosa</i>		<i>Tara cacalaco</i>	16		
<i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i>	69	v. <i>glandulosa</i>	15	<i>Tecoma capensis</i>	32		
MULGA	8	<i>Prosopis hybrid</i>	15	<i>Tecoma hybrid</i>	32		
MYOPORUM	37	<i>Prosopis velutina</i>	15	<i>Tecoma stans</i> v. <i>angustata</i>	32		
<i>Myoporum parvifolium</i>	37	<i>Psilostrophe cooperi</i>	75	TENAZA	12		
<i>Myrtillocactus geometrizans</i>	52	<i>Punica granatum</i>	30	<i>Tephrocactus articulatus</i>	54		
N		PURPLE PRICKLY PEAR	53	<i>Tetrandeuria acaulis</i>	78		
NATAL PLUM	22	PURPLE RUELLIA	76	<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>			
<i>Nemophila maculata</i>	84	Q		'Prostratum'	39		
<i>Nerium oleander</i>	30	QUEEN'S WREATH	44	TEXAS EBONY	11		
<i>Nolina microcarpa</i>	63	<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	15	TEXAS HONEY MESQUITE	15		
O		R		TEXAS MOUNTAIN LAUREL	10		
OCOTILLO	62	RAIN LILY	78	TEXAS OLIVE	23		
OCTOPUS AGAVE	59	<i>Ratibida columnifera</i>	76	TEXAS SAGE	28		
<i>Oenothera cespitosa</i>	38	RED BIRD OF PARADISE	22	<i>Thymophylla pentachaeta</i>	85		
<i>Oenothera lindheimeri</i>	74	RED EREMOPHILA	25	TOTEM POLE	54		
<i>Oenothera stubbei</i>	38	RED FLAX	83	TRAILING ACACIA	36		
<i>Olea europaea</i>	13	RED JUSTICIA	28	TRAILING DESERT BROOM	36		
OLEANDER	30	RED YUCCA	63	TRAILING GAZANIA	37		
<i>Olneya tesota</i>	13	<i>Rhus ovata</i>	30	TRAILING INDIGO BUSH	36		
<i>Opuntia basilaris</i>	52	ROCK PENSTEMON	74	TRAILING LANTANA	37		
<i>Opuntia engelmannii</i>	52	<i>Rosa banksiae</i>	46	TRAILING ROSEMARY	38		
<i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i>	53	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>		TRIANGLELEAF BURSAGE	20		
<i>Opuntia robusta</i>	53	'Prostratus'	38	TUFTED EVENING PRIMROSE	38		
<i>Opuntia santa-rita</i>	53	<i>Ruellia peninsularis</i>	31	TURPENTINE BUSH	25		
ORANGE BELLS	72	<i>Ruellia simplex</i>	76	TWIN-FLOWERED AGAVE	58		
ORANGE ZEXMENIA	78	<i>Ruellia simplex</i> 'Katie'	38	U			
ORGAN PIPE	54	<i>Russelia equisetiformis</i>	31	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	16		
OWL'S CLOVER	82	S		<i>Ungnadia speciosa</i>	16		
P		SAGO PALM	61	V			
<i>Pachycereus marginatus</i>	53	SAGUARO	50	<i>Vachellia constricta</i>	17		
<i>Pachycereus schottii</i>	54	SALTILLO PRIMROSE	38	<i>Vachellia farnesiana</i>	17		
<i>Pachycereus schottii</i>		<i>Salvia clevelandii</i>	76	<i>Vachellia rigidula</i>	17		
f. <i>monstrosus</i>	54	<i>Salvia columbariae</i>	85	<i>Vauquelinia californica</i>	33		
PALELEAF YUCCA	64	<i>Salvia farinacea</i>	76	VELVET MESQUITE	15		
PALO BLANCO	12	<i>Salvia greggii</i>	77	VIOLET SILVERLEAF	28		
PALO BREA	14	<i>Salvia leucantha</i>	77	<i>Vitex agnus-castus</i>	17		
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i>	84	SAN MARCOS HIBISCUS	26				
PAPERFLOWER	75	<i>Senegalia berlandieri</i>	16	WEBER'S AGAVE	59		
<i>Parkinsonia florida</i>	13	SENITA	54	<i>Wedelia acapulcensis</i> v. <i>hispida</i>	78		
<i>Parkinsonia hybrid</i>	13	<i>Senna artemisioides</i>		WEEPING DALEA	24		
<i>Parkinsonia microphylla</i>	14	ssp. <i>artemisioides</i>	31	WHITE PLUMBAGO	30		
<i>Parkinsonia praecox</i>	14	<i>Senna covesii</i>	77	WHITETHORN ACACIA	17		
PARRY'S AGAVE	59	<i>Senna wislizeni</i>	31	WILLOW ACACIA	8		



In Arizona, we understand the importance of water conservation.

That is why each of the AMWUA communities has professional conservation staff dedicated to assisting their residents and businesses in using water efficiently. Additionally, each municipality has created and invested in its own unique blend of water conservation programs and resources tailored to meet its customers' needs.

City of Avondale
avondaleaz.gov

City of Chandler
chandleraz.gov

Town of Gilbert
gilbertaz.gov

City of Glendale
glendaleaz.com

City of Goodyear
goodyearaz.gov

City of Mesa
mesaaz.gov

City of Peoria
peoriaaz.gov

City of Phoenix
phoenix.gov

City of Scottsdale
scottsdaleaz.gov

City of Tempe
tempe.gov

For more information and resources on creating and maintaining a stunning and sustainable desert landscape, visit AMWUA.org/landscape.

