

A close-up photograph of a hummingbird hovering near a cluster of bright pink, tubular flowers. The bird is in sharp focus, showing its iridescent green and blue feathers and its long, thin beak. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blur of more pink flowers and green foliage.

# 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

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

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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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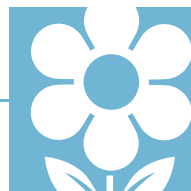
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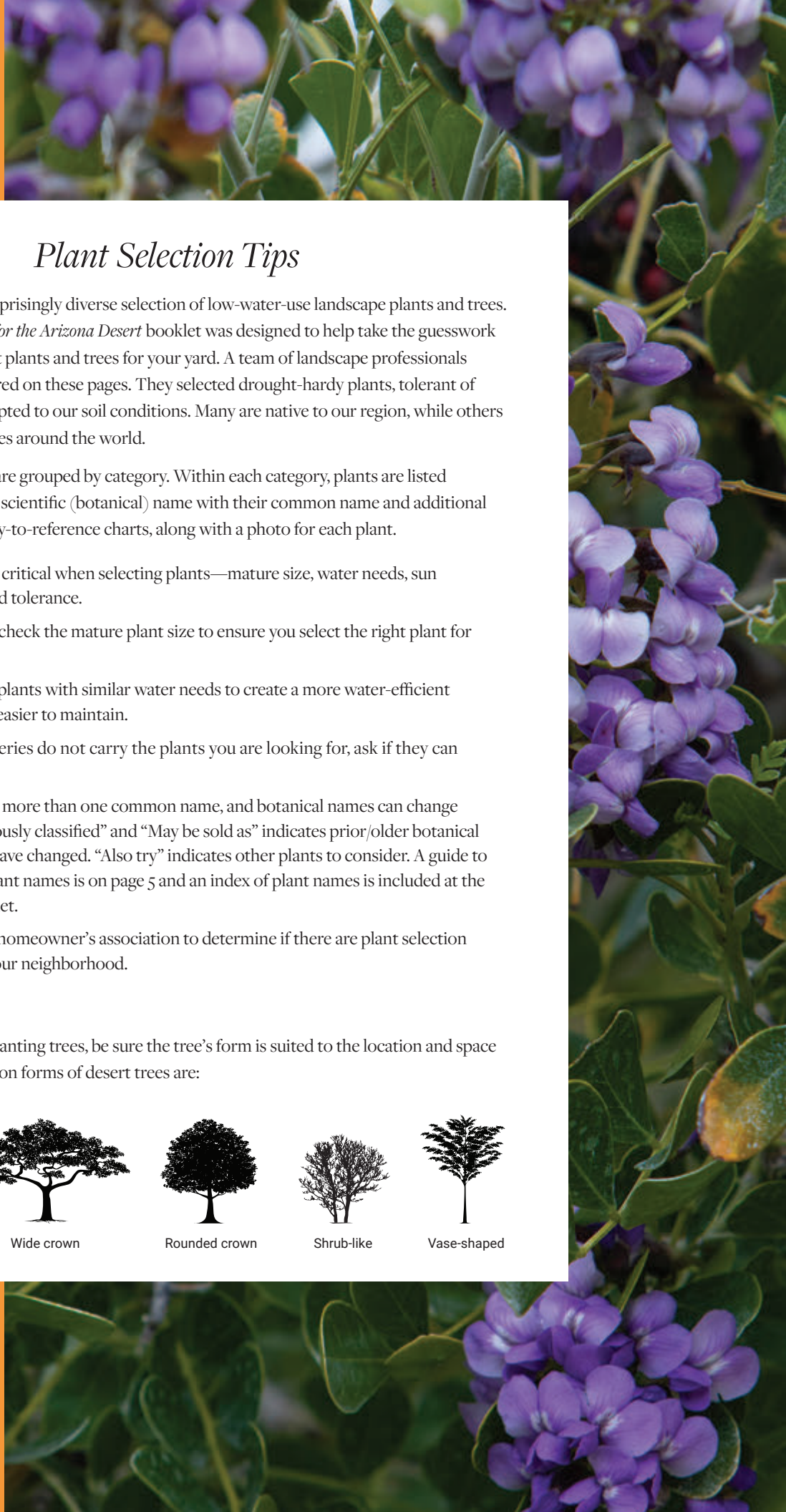
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## *Plant Selection Tips*

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



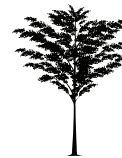
Wide crown



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.

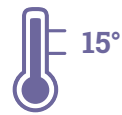


**Partial sun** is for plants that do best with moderate sun. Plant them where they will have afternoon shade, such as an eastern exposure, or in filtered sun beneath the canopy of trees.



**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](http://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.

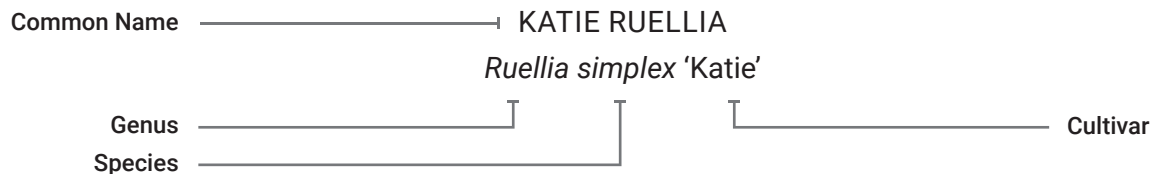
### THORNS

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



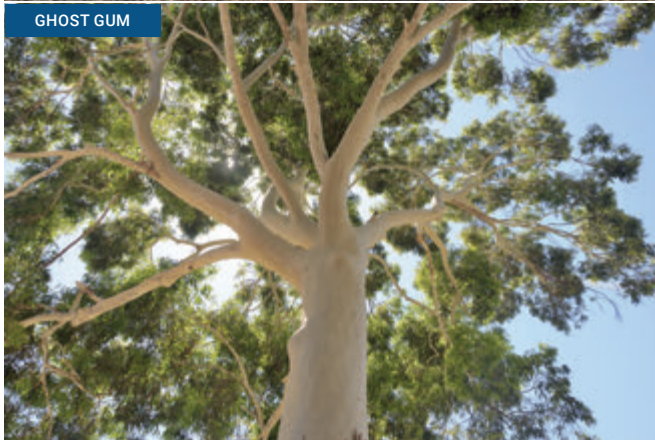
Moderate  
25 x 25  
Sprawling










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 <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
<b>MEDITERRANEAN FAN PALM</b> <i>Chamaerops humilis</i> Native to Mediterranean, Africa	   10°  M	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
<b>DESERT WILLOW</b> <i>Chilopsis linearis</i> Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico Look for selections that offer a variety of flower colors, branching structures, and leaf forms	  0°  L	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  
<b>GHOST GUM</b> <i>Corymbia papuana</i> Native to New Guinea, Australia Previously classified as <i>Eucalyptus papuana</i> Also try <i>E. torquata</i>	  22°  L	Moderate 40 x 25 Upright, open	Evergreen Gray-green Medium texture	White Summer	Moderate litter No thorns Smooth, bright-white bark
<b>TEXAS MOUNTAIN LAUREL</b> <i>Dermatophyllum secundiflorum</i> Native to southeastern New Mexico, southern Texas, northeastern Mexico Previously classified as <i>Sophora secundiflora</i>	  5°  L	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



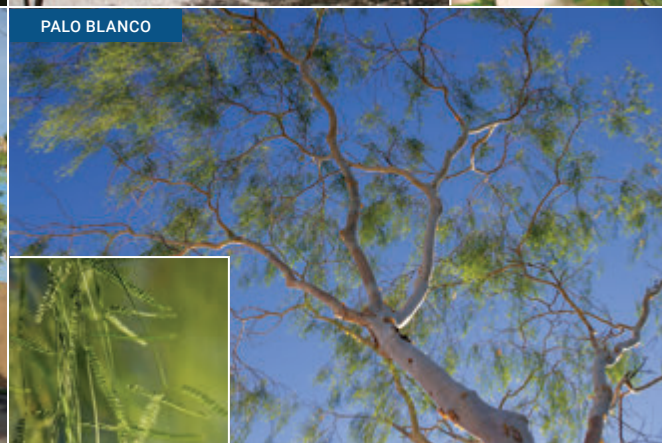
Moderate  
15 x 10  
Shrub-like

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	
<b>FRUITLESS OLIVE</b> <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	
<b>IRONWOOD</b> <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	 
<b>BLUE PALO VERDE</b> <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	 
<b>HYBRID PALO VERDE</b> <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



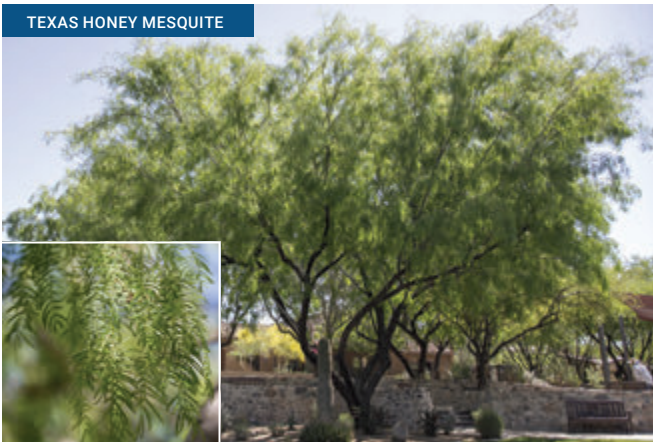
Slow  
15 x 20  
Shrub-like



















Evergreen  
Dark green  
Medium texture

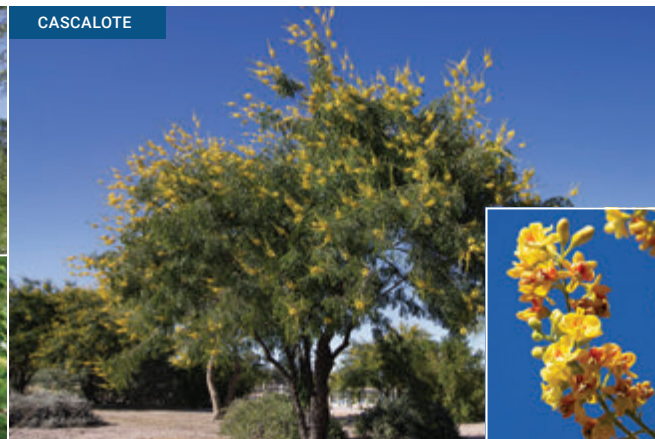
Green  
(nonshowy)  
Spring

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
<b>TEXAS HONEY MESQUITE</b> <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)  
<b>SOUTH AMERICAN MESQUITE HYBRID</b> <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)  
<b>VELVET MESQUITE</b> <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)  
<b>LIVE OAK</b> <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 <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
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**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
<b>SUPERSTITION MALLOW</b> <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 
<b>BEE BRUSH</b> <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 
<b>TRIANGLELEAF BURSAGE</b> <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 
<b>FLAME HONEYSUCKLE</b> <i>Anisacanthus quadrifidus 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  
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,  
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/  
Season

Comments/Special Features

**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

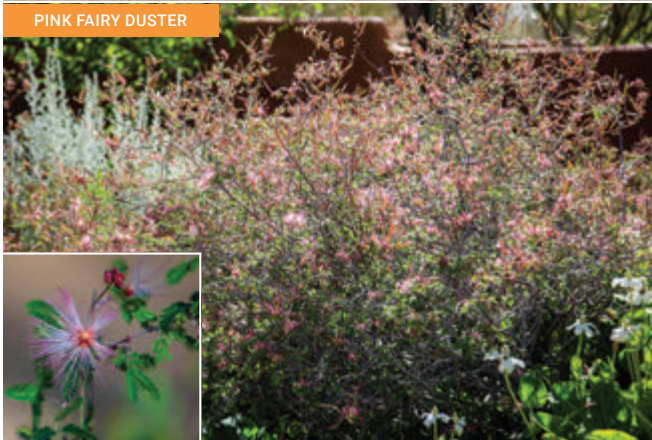




RED BIRD OF PARADISE



BAJA FAIRY DUSTER



PINK FAIRY DUSTER



NATAL PLUM

COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
<b>RED BIRD OF PARADISE</b> <i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i> Native to West Indies, Mexico Look for selections with yellow flowers	30° M	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
<b>BAJA FAIRY DUSTER</b> <i>Calliandra californica</i> Native to Baja California May be sold as <i>C. peninsularis</i>	20° M	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
<b>PINK FAIRY DUSTER</b> <i>Calliandra eriophylla</i> Native to southwestern US into central Mexico	5° VL	Moderate 3 x 4 Upright, airy	Semi-evergreen Medium green Fine texture	Pink powderpuffs Spring	Low litter No thorns Attracts butterflies and hummingbirds
<b>NATAL PLUM</b> <i>Carissa macrocarpa</i> Native to South Africa Previously classified as <i>Carissa grandiflora</i> . Look for dwarf cultivars for use in smaller landscape spaces	26° M	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
<b>BUSH DALEA</b> <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
<b>WEeping DALEA</b> <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
<b>HOP BUSH</b> <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
<b>BRITTLEBUSH</b> <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



DESERT TEA



BLUE BELLS



RED EREMOPHILA



TURPENTINE BUSH

COMMON NAME  
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,  
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/  
Season

Comments/Special Features

**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
<b>FLATTOP BUCKWHEAT</b> <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
<b>YELLOW BIRD OF PARADISE</b> <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
<b>LITTLE LEAF ASH</b> <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
<b>SAN MARCOS HIBISCUS</b> <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 <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
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**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 <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
<b>RED JUSTICIA</b> <i>Justicia candicans</i> Native to southern Arizona and western Mexico May be sold as <i>J. ovata</i> Also try <i>J. spicigera</i>	 25° M	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	 
<b>CREOSOTE BUSH</b> <i>Larrea tridentata</i> Native to Chihuahuan, Mohave, and Sonoran Deserts May be sold as <i>L. divaricata</i>	 5° VL	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	 
<b>VIOLET SILVERLEAF</b> <i>Leucophyllum candidum</i> Native to Chihuahuan Desert Look for 'Cloud' series, which offers a variety of plant sizes	 10° VL	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	 
<b>TEXAS SAGE</b> <i>Leucophyllum frutescens</i> Native to Chihuahuan Desert Look for 'Cloud' series, which offers a variety of flower and foliage colors	 10° VL	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	 



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



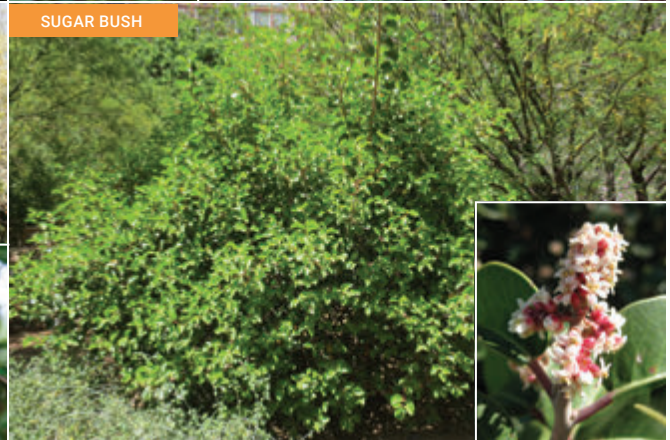
Slow  
6 x 6  
Mounding





















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	
<b>OLEANDER</b> <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 
<b>WHITE PLUMBAGO</b> <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	  
<b>POMEGRANATE</b> <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	
<b>SUGAR BUSH</b> <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 <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
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**BAJA RUELLIA**

*Ruellia peninsularis*  
Native to southern Baja California and Sonora, Mexico  
Also try *R. californica*

Moderate  
 28°  
 L

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  
 30°  
 L

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  
 20°  
 VL

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  
 10°  
 VL

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

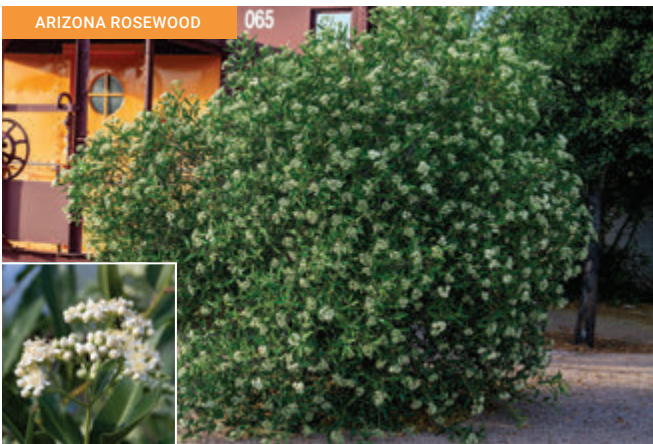
Fast  
6 x 6  
Upright, open

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	
<b>TRAILING ACACIA</b> <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	
<b>TRAILING DESERT BROOM</b> <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	 
<b>BUSH MORNING GLORY</b> <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	
<b>TRAILING INDIGO BUSH</b> <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	  



TRAILING GAZANIA



LANTANA



TRAILING LANTANA



MYOPORUM

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





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
<b>TUFTED EVENING PRIMROSE</b> <i>Oenothera cespitosa</i> Native to western US, northern Mexico	 10° L-M	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
<b>SALTILLO PRIMROSE</b> <i>Oenothera stubbei</i> Native to northeastern Mexico Also try <i>O. berlandieri</i> , although it can spread easily	 15° L-M	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
<b>TRAILING ROSEMARY</b> <i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> 'Prostratus' Horticultural selection	 15° L	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
<b>KATIE RUELLIA</b> <i>Ruellia simplex</i> 'Katie' Horticultural selection May be sold as <i>R. brittoniana</i> 'Katie.' Look for selections that offer pink or white flowers	 28° M	Moderate 1 x 2 Mound	Evergreen Dark green Medium texture	Purple Spring to fall	Low litter No thorns Refined groundcover for small area



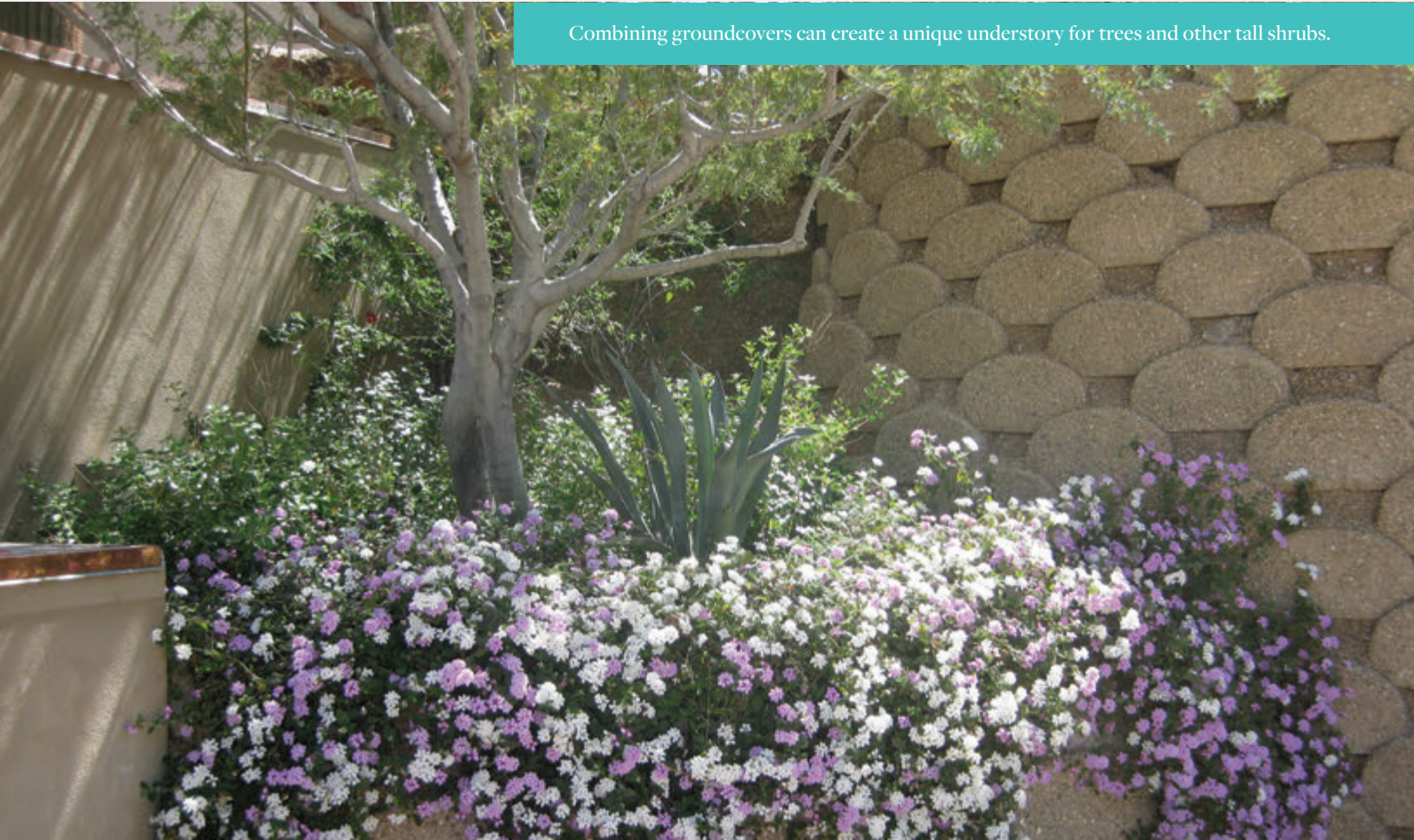
# Groundcovers



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
<b>YELLOW DOT</b> <i>Sphagneticola trilobata</i> Native to Central and South America Previously classified as <i>Wedelia trilobata</i>	 30° M	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
<b>CREEPING GERMANDER</b> <i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i> 'Prostratum' Horticultural selection	 0° M	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.





## *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](http://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
<b>QUEEN'S WREATH</b> <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
<b>BOUGAINVILLEA</b> <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
<b>YELLOW ORCHID VINE</b> <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
<b>GRAPE IVY</b> <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





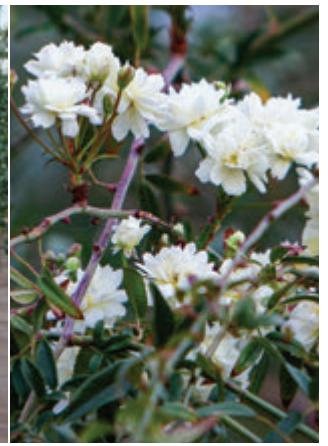
Moderate  
10 x 10  
Twining

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
<b>PINK TRUMPET VINE</b> <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
<b>LADY BANK'S ROSE</b> <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









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



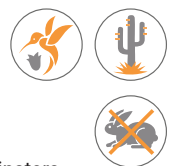


Very slow  
40 x 10  
Columnar

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 CERESUS**

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

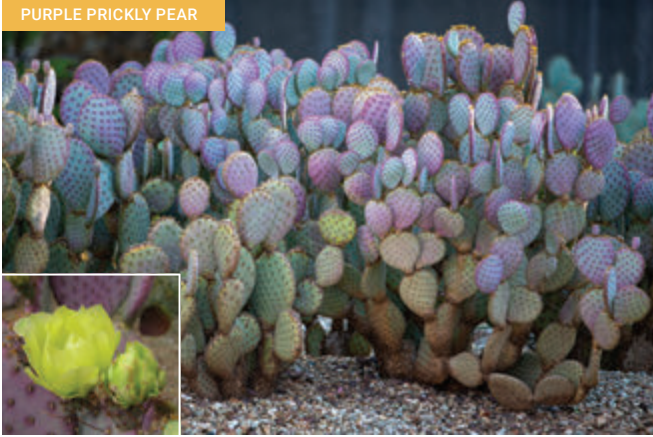
White, showy  
Spring

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
<b>COMPASS BARREL</b> <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
<b>BLUE MYRTLE CACTUS</b> <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
<b>BEAVERTAIL PRICKLY PEAR</b> <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
<b>ENGELMANN'S PRICKLY PEAR</b> <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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<b>INDIAN FIG</b> <i>Opuntia ficus-indica</i> Horticultural selection	  22°  VL	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	 
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<b>GIANT PRICKLY PEAR</b> <i>Opuntia robusta</i> Native to central Mexico	  15°  VL	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	
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<b>PURPLE PRICKLY PEAR</b> <i>Opuntia santa-rita</i> Native to Chihuahuan and Sonoran Deserts Also try <i>O. macrocentra</i>	  10°  VL	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	 
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<b>MEXICAN FENCEPOST</b> <i>Pachycereus marginatus</i> Native to central, southern Mexico May be sold as <i>Marginatocereus marginatus</i> or <i>Stenocereus marginatus</i>	  20°  VL	Moderate 10 x 6 Columnar	Evergreen Dark green White spines	Pink Spring	Low litter Medium spines A bold, dramatic accent Good in containers	
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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*



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*



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



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



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  
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,  
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/  
Season

Comments/Special Features

**COW'S HORN AGAVE**

*Agave bovicornuta*

Native to mountains  
of northern Mexico



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**

*Agave colorata*

Native to southern Sonora,  
northern Sinaloa

Also try *A. chrysantha*,  
*A. murpheyi*, and *A. palmeri*



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**

*Agave desmettiana*

Horticultural selection

Also try *A. desmettiana*  
'Variegata' and *A. angustifolia*



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**

*Agave geminiflora*

Native to west central  
Mexico

Also try *A. ocahui* and  
*A. victoriae-reginae*



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

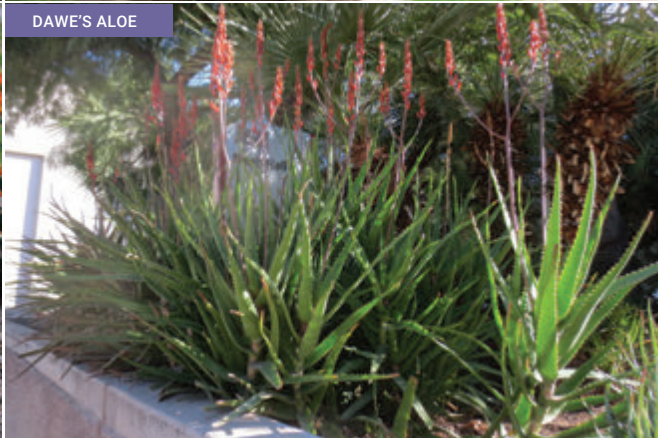




WEBER'S AGAVE



DAWE'S ALOE



COMMON NAME  
Botanical name

Basics

Growth Rate,  
Size, and Form

Foliage

Flowers/  
Season

Comments/Special Features

**PARRY'S AGAVE**

*Agave parryi*  
Native to upland areas of Arizona to western Texas and south to central Mexico  
Also try *A. macroacantha*, *A. parryi* spp. *neomexicana*, and *A. parryi* v. *truncata*

Sun icon  
Thermometer icon 15°  
Water drop icon 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



**OCTOPUS AGAVE**

*Agave vilmoriniana*  
Native to central Mexico  
Also try *A. bracteosa*

Sun icon  
Thermometer icon 20°  
Water drop icon 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



**WEBER'S AGAVE**

*Agave weberi*  
Horticultural selection  
Also try *A. americana* 'Mediopicta' and *A. salmiana*

Sun icon  
Thermometer icon 12°  
Water drop icon 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



**DAWE'S ALOE**

*Aloe dawei*  
Native to central Africa

Sun icon  
Thermometer icon 27°  
Water drop icon VL

Moderate  
2 x 3  
Shrub-like

Evergreen  
Reddish green  
Coarse texture

Red spikes  
Winter

Low litter  
Soft tips  
Striking winter color  
Attracts hummingbirds





COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
<b>CAPE ALOE</b> <i>Aloe ferox</i> Native to South Africa Also try <i>A. marlothii</i> and <i>Aloidendron dichotomum</i>	25° VL	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	
<b>MEDICINAL ALOE</b> <i>Aloe vera</i> Horticultural selection May be sold as <i>A. barbadensis</i>	25° VL	Fast 2 x 5 Clumping	Evergreen Gray-green Coarse texture	Yellow spikes Spring	Low litter Soft tips A prolific and tough aloe Attracts hummingbirds	
<b>DESERT MILKWEED</b> <i>Asclepias subulata</i> Native to Mohave and Sonoran Deserts Also try <i>A. linaria</i>	20° VL	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	
<b>YELLOW BULBINE</b> <i>Bulbine frutescens</i> Native to South Africa Look for selections with orange flowers	15° L	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	



SAGO PALM



GRASS TREE



DESERT SPOON



CANDELILLA

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. acrotliche*  
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





FIRESTICK



OCOTILLO



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

*Euphorbia lomeli*  
 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
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<b>PARTRIDGE BREAST ALOE</b> <i>Gonialoe variegata</i> Native to South Africa and Namibia Also try hybrid A. x 'Blue Elf' and A. <i>striata</i>	  	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	 
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<b>GIANT HESPERALOE</b> <i>Hesperaloe funifera</i> Native to southern Texas and northeastern Mexico	  	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	   
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<b>RED YUCCA</b> <i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i> Native to western Texas and northeastern Mexico Look for selections with yellow flowers	  	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	   
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<b>BEARGRASS</b> <i>Nolina microcarpa</i> Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico	  	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	  
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SOAPTREE YUCCA



PALELEAF YUCCA



COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features
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**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](http://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	
<b>SIDEOATS GRAMA</b> <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	  
<b>BLUE GRAMA</b> <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
<b>DESERT MARIGOLD</b> <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
<b>CHOCOLATE FLOWER</b> <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
<b>DAMIANITA</b> <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
<b>HUMMINGBIRD TRUMPET</b> <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

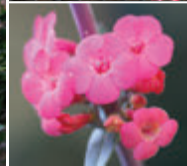
White  
daisy-like  
Year-round

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	
<b>GAURA</b> <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	
<b>ROCK PENSTEMON</b> <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	
<b>FIRECRACKER PENSTEMON</b> <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	
<b>PARRY'S PENSTEMON</b> <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



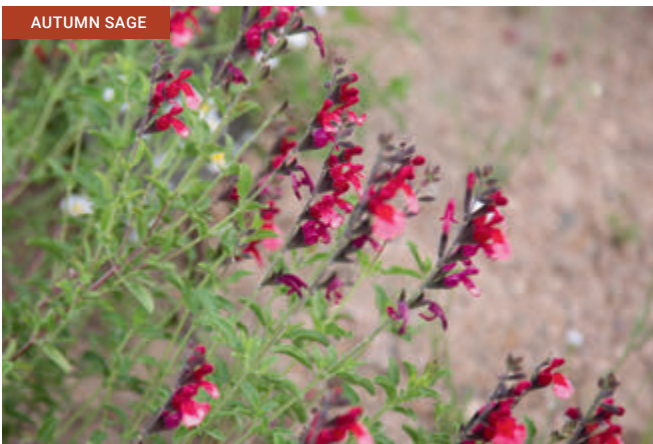
Moderate  
1.5 x 1.5  
Low growing

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

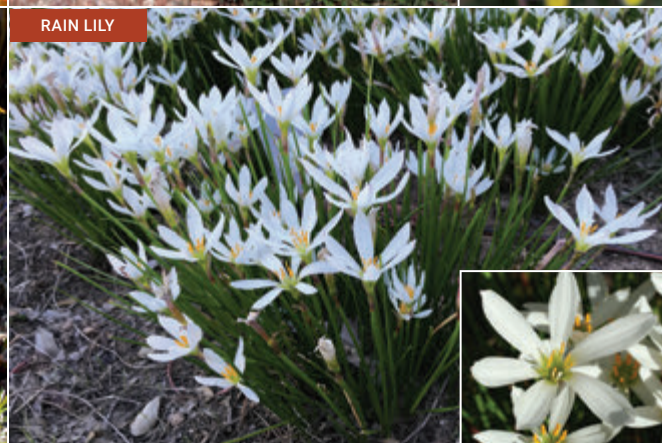
Fast  
3 x 3  
Rounded shrub

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	
<b>MT. LEMMON MARIGOLD</b> <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	 
<b>ANGELITA DAISY</b> <i>Tetaneuris 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	
<b>ORANGE ZEXMENIA</b> <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	 
<b>RAIN LILY</b> <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.

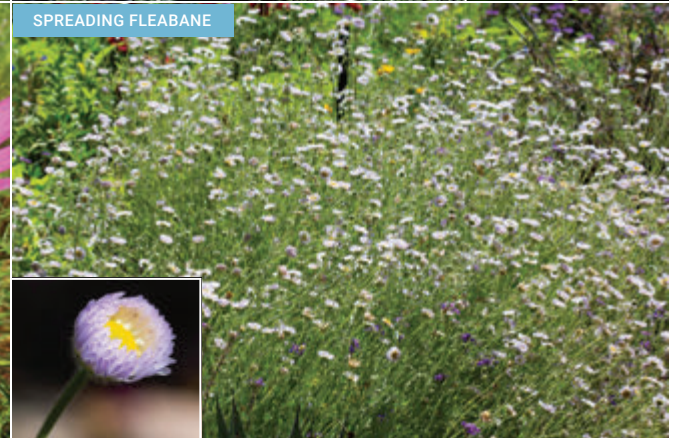
Start your wildflower garden by seeding small areas to gain experience and to see what you like. Select several species that will bloom simultaneously, and experiment with color combinations, such as the yellow-gold of the Mexican gold poppy with the purple of owl’s clover. Over the years, a wildflower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



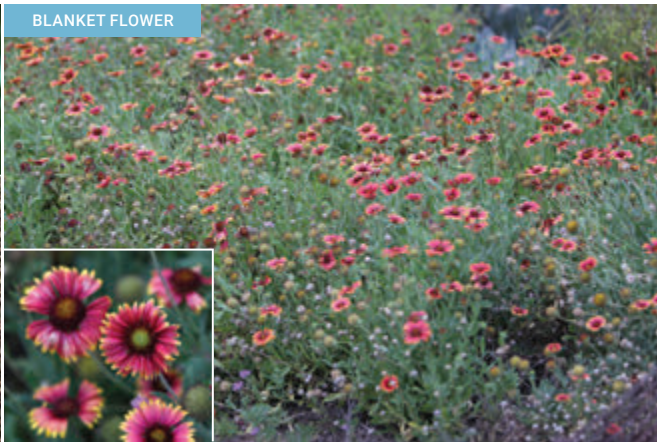
Moderate-fast  
1.5 x 2  
Low growing

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
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<b>MEXICAN GOLD POPPY</b> <i>Eschscholzia californica</i> <i>ssp. mexicana</i> Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico	  	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	 
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<b>BLANKET FLOWER</b> <i>Gaillardia pulchella</i> Native to North America	  	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	 
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<b>ARIZONA POPPY</b> <i>Kallstroemia grandiflora</i> Native to southwestern US, northern Mexico	  	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	 
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<b>RED FLAX</b> <i>Linum grandiflorum</i> 'Rubrum' Native to southern Europe to Africa	  	Moderate 2 x 2 Upright clump	Medium green Fine texture	Bright red Spring	Low litter No thorns Sow seeds in fall	
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COMMON NAME <i>Botanical name</i>	Basics	Growth Rate, Size, and Form	Foliage	Flowers/ Season	Comments/Special Features	
<b>BLUE FLAX</b> <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	 
<b>ARROYO LUPINE</b> <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	 
<b>FIVE SPOT</b> <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	
<b>SHIRLEY POPPY</b> <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



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### 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.

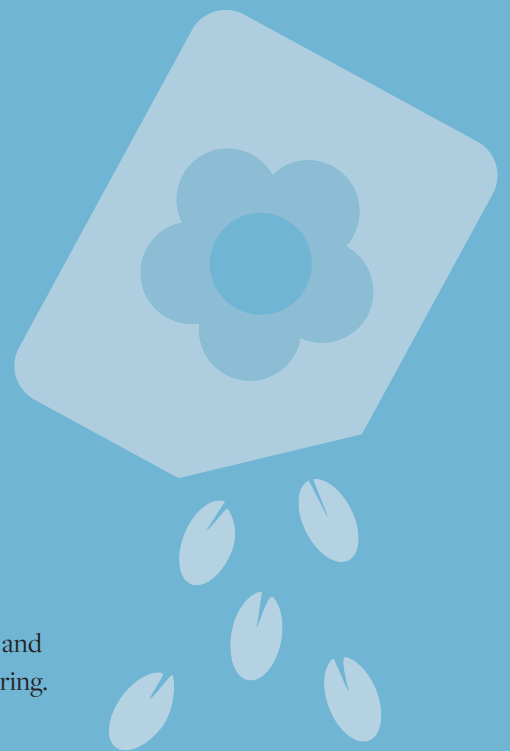




## Seeding Tips

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.



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MT. LEMMON MARIGOLD	78	<i>Portulacaria afra</i>	64	<b>T</b>			
<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	<i>v. 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 v. 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		
<b>N</b>		PURPLE PRICKLY PEAR	53	<i>Tetrandeureis acaulis</i>	78		
NATAL PLUM	22	PURPLE RUELLIA	76	<i>Teucrium chamaedrys</i>			
<i>Nemophila maculata</i>	84	<b>Q</b>		'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		
<b>O</b>		<b>R</b>		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	<b>U</b>			
ORGAN PIPE	54	<i>Russelia equisetiformis</i>	31	<i>Ulmus parvifolia</i>	16		
OWL'S CLOVER	82	<b>S</b>		<i>Ungnadia speciosa</i>	16		
<b>P</b>		SAGO PALM	61	<b>V</b>			
<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		
<i>f. 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	<b>W</b>			
<i>Parkinsonia florida</i>	13	SENITA	54	WEBER'S AGAVE	59		
<i>Parkinsonia hybrid</i>	13	<i>Senna artemisioides</i>		<i>Wedelia acapulcensis v. hispida</i>	78		
<i>Parkinsonia microphylla</i>	14	<i>ssp. artemisioides</i>	31	WEEPING DALEA	24		
<i>Parkinsonia praecox</i>	14	<i>Senna covesii</i>	77	WHITE PLUMBAGO	30		
PARRY'S AGAVE	59	<i>Senna wislizeni</i>	31	WHITETHORN ACACIA	17		



*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](http://AMWUA.org/landscape).