

# USE WATER-WISE "ALTER-NATIVE" PLANTS IN YOUR LANDSCAPE

Native plants take care of themselves because they evolved to grow naturally in your own back yard. Desert native plants thrive in one of the harshest environments on our planet, and they flourish when invited back into our southwest desert yards.

Instead of choosing exotic nursery plants that come from different climates, other countries and distant continents, consider using these “Alter-Natives” for your yard that are all indigenous to the Mojave Desert:

- **These Hi-Desert natives are natural evergreen hedges:**

Creosote	Jojoba
Holly-leaf Cherry	California Juniper
Scrub Oak	Sugarbush
- **These Hi-Desert natives are dramatic accents:**

Mojave Yucca	Whipple Yucca
Desert Willow	Deergrass
Honey Mesquite	Parry's Nolina
- **These Hi-Desert natives are evergreen groundcovers:**

White Sage	California Buckwheat
Desert Sage	Ephedra or Mormon Tea

**Resources for Water-Wise Desert Landscaping**

**Books**  
*Low Water-Use Plants for California and the Southwest*, by Carol Schuler - Photos and descriptions of drought-tolerant Southwest native plants and tips on xeriscape gardening.

*Native Landscaping from El Paso to L.A.*, by Sally Wasowski - Native garden designs, photos and descriptions of drought-tolerant desert plants.

**Websites**  
Tree of Life Nursery ([www.californianativeplants.com](http://www.californianativeplants.com)) and Las Pilitas Nursery ([www.laspilitas.com](http://www.laspilitas.com)) - Both websites offer terrific gardening information & color photos of hundreds of California native plants.

**H2Ouse** - Water Saver Home: ([www.h2ouse.org/tour/index.cfm](http://www.h2ouse.org/tour/index.cfm)) Take a virtual tour of southwest desert gardens. Zoom in on each plant to learn about it. Fun!

**The Power of Plants** ([www.powerofplants.com](http://www.powerofplants.com)) - Photos and lists of beautiful, low-maintenance desert native plants for high-desert southwest landscapes, plus tips on how to plant and care for your desert natives.

# DISCOVER THE BEAUTY OF WATER-WISE NATIVE DESERT PLANTS



# PICTURE THESE EXCITING NATIVE DESERT PLANTS IN YOUR YARD



**Great Basin Sagebrush**  
*Artemisia tridentata*  
Rounded shrub with silvery, aromatic foliage 2-4 feet high and 3 feet across. Very drought tolerant and cold hardy.



**Desert Almond**  
*Prunus fasciculata*  
Fast-growing deciduous shrub to 6 feet tall. Produces edible miniature almonds in summer. Can be pruned into hedge or multi-branched small “tree”. Needs no water after established.



**Ephedra or Mormon Tea**  
*Ephedra californica*, *E. nevadensis*, *E. viridis*  
Hardy, evergreen groundcovers spreading 3 feet tall and wide. Greenish leafless stems vary in color: Calif. Ephedra-deep green; Nevada-bluish green; Mountain-bright green.



**Apache Plume**  
*Fallugia paradoxa*  
Lovely semi-deciduous shrub 4-6 feet tall and 5 feet wide. Rose-like, white flowers spring through summer produce silky pink plumes May-December.



**Cleveland or Chaparral Sage**  
*Salvia clevelandii*  
Extremely fragrant sage 4 feet tall and 5 feet wide. Deep blue flowers attract butterflies and hummingbirds. Native to nearby Santa Ana Mountains.



**California Buckwheat**  
*Eriogonum fasciculatum*  
Attractive, evergreen groundcover 3 feet high and 4 feet wide. Among the most drought-tolerant of California native plants. White flower heads turn reddish in fall.



**Brittlebush & Acton Brittlebush**  
*Encelia farinosa* & *E. virginensis* var. *actoni*  
Native sunflowers 3 feet high and wide, Brittlebush at lower elevations & Acton Brittlebush at higher elevations. Bountiful yellow flowers on long stems.



# KNOW YOUR VALUABLE NATIVE PLANT NEIGHBORS

*Plants native to our High Desert thrive here.* They have adapted to our harsh desert extremes of heat and cold, high winds, intense sun, and sporadic rain. Native plants, when incorporated into our local landscape plans, are hardy, drought tolerant, very long-lived, and nearly care-free in maintenance after they become established. Showcased here are examples of some of our native plant neighbors available at nurseries that will perform beautifully with only minimal care and water in your yard

## WHY PLANT NATIVE?

**Whenever we move** into a new area, we have been trained to remove the native plants growing on our new site and replace them with plants from wherever we were before, or with plants we are familiar with. The plants we introduce into our new setting are not necessarily the ones best adapted to that area, but are the ones that have been marketed to us as the industrial standards that are the “right” ones to use: mass-produced, mass-marketed, available, cheap, and familiar.

**If our new place** (due to its own climate or soil, for instance) does not support the plants we have been trained to want, we change the place. We remove the native plants (often considered “weeds”), take out the native soil, bring in new soil, install irrigation, and add pesticides and fertilizers to the introduced plants.

*Our best approach to landscaping is to select plants appropriate to our place, and not try to change our place to fit inappropriate plants.*

*By selecting plants that have evolved with our region’s climate and soils, we eliminate the need to constantly add resources not supplied naturally by our climate. Let’s change our way of thinking: pick the plant that fits the place, instead of changing the place to fit the plant.*



# STAR GARDEN PERFORMERS FROM OUR NATIVE LANDSCAPE

**Jojoba, Goat-nut**  
*Simmondsia chinensis*  
Rounded evergreen shrub 4-8 feet tall blooms Feb-Mar. Female plants produce nutlike fruit. Very hardy, drought-tolerant, attractive plant.

**Desert Penstemon, Firecracker Penstemon, etc.**  
*Penstemon pseudospectabilis, P. eatonii, etc.*  
Showy perennial 1-3 feet high attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. Pink, red, or rose-purple flowers from stalks 2-5 feet tall.

**Sugarbush**  
*Rhus ovata*  
Deep green, dense foliage on multi-branched, evergreen shrub 15 feet tall and wide. Can be pruned up into attractive shade tree. Pinkish flower clusters produce summer “berries” coated with sugar.

**White Sage**  
*Salvia apiana*  
A striking white-woolly shrub to 3 feet high and 5 feet wide. White flowers on tall willow-like spikes in spring. Extremely drought tolerant. Aromatic leaves.

**Desert & Woolly Marigold**  
*Baileya multiradiata; B. pleniradiata*  
Perennial wildflower 1 feet high and wide from across our desert floors. Woolly, gray foliage and yellow daisy-like flowers nearly year-round. Rabbit-resistant.

**Beavertail Cactus**  
*Opuntia basilaris*  
Low-growing groundcover of light blue-green pads with short tufts of fuzzy spines grows 1 foot high and 4 feet wide. Striking fuchsia flowers in spring.

**Bladderpod**  
*Cleome isomeris*  
Hardy, drought-tolerant evergreen shrub to 4 feet tall with lacy leaves and showy yellow flowers year-round with occasional water. Pea-like fruits enclosed in inflated pods.

**Honey Mesquite**  
*Prosopis glandulosa*  
Beautiful deciduous tree grows up to 20 feet high, providing cool, filtered shade during spring, summer and fall. Edible seed pods mature in late summer.

**Hollyleaf Cherry**  
*Prunus ilicifolia*  
Dense evergreen shrub, or tree if pruned, 7-20 feet tall with bright green, holly-like leaves. Cherry-like fruits. Superb as tall hedges.

**Creosote**  
*Larrea tridentata*  
One of our most valuable plants for desert landscaping. Can be pruned into dense, evergreen hedge, multi-branched “tree”, or left in its natural form 6 feet tall and 8 feet wide. Extremely drought tolerant. Bright yellow flowers.



# BY USING NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR YARD, YOU BENEFIT IN MANY WAYS

## - SAVE WATER, SAVE MONEY -

Native plants need almost no extra water, care, fertilizers or other soil additives after becoming established in your garden. In desert areas, a yard that includes drought-adapted native plants provides an energy-efficient garden that keeps down costs.

## - PRESERVE A LEGACY -

Many desert native plants are extremely long-lived, with some living hundreds to thousands of years. Mature examples of these plants are extremely expensive and are sometimes impossible to replace, so if you have native plants already established on your property, you have a priceless treasure that will naturally enhance your home without any maintenance.

## - PROTECT HABITAT -

Long-lived desert native plants are the cornerstones of this area’s plant and wildlife community. They provide food, shelter and protection for songbirds and other wildlife, and harbor living root partners that sustain plant and soil health. What we plant in our yards affects the health of our songbirds and wildlife, our soil and its resistance to erosion, our air quality and our water supply.

## - ADD VALUE -

Native desert plants are attractive and popular additions to any landscape and may increase your property value and stimulate sales appeal. Native plants that you install today may live to support dozens of generations of humans and thousands of generations of animals.



PLANTING NATIVE  
HONORS OUR RICH LEGACY  
OF UNIQUE CALIFORNIA TREASURES.