



## Audubon at Home in California



### Twelve Native Plants that are Attractive and Easy to Grow

#### San Diego Audubon Society

##### **Manzanita** (*Arctostaphylos* species)

Manzanita plants are available in a numerous varieties to fit your garden or landscaping needs. These plants are slow getting started, but once established provide an attractive component to the garden because of their colorful bark and interesting form.

##### **Cleveland Sage** (*Salvia clevelandii*)

Of all the local species of sage, the most people credit the Cleveland sage with having the best fragrance. This species has abundant blue blossoms from May to August. Cut back by about 1/4 in the fall to retain the compact shape and to remove stems and spent blossoms.

##### **California Wild Lilac** (*Ceanothus* species)

This evergreen California native is available in over 40 varieties to meet every landscape requirement. Most varieties produce attractive clusters of blue flower each spring and the ceanothus leaves retain their rich green color throughout the year. Like many of the coastal sage scrub species, these lilacs require well-drained soil.

##### **California Buckwheat** (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*)

Numerous species of wild buckwheat are found in the California landscape and several of these can be easily grown in our yards. Buckwheat is especially attractive to bees and other insects. During the late summer the white or pinkish flowers of spring turn a rich brown adding a new color to the landscape.

##### **Island Bush Snapdragon** (*Galvezia* species)

This coastal shrub can be trained to grow on a trellis or left to form a large mound. Its scarlet tubular flowers, a favorite of humming birds, bloom throughout the year but are most abundant in the spring. The flowers form large seed clusters which should be pruned to improve the plant's appearance.

##### **Toyon or California Holly** (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*)

This shrub can grow into a 20-foot tree if pruned for that effect. Toyon makes a colorful component to any garden since the creamy white blossoms of spring turn into bright red berries in the fall. Many consider toyon the best all-around landscape shrub because it's both hardy and attractive. Since toyon is in the rose family, it sometimes has a problem with fungus that causes the leaves to have a rusty appearance. This fungus is most commonly found in young plants.

**Bush Monkey Flower** (*Mimulus aurantiacus*)

*Mimulus longiflorus* (yellow monkey flower) and *Mimulus puniceus* (red monkey flower) are the best choices for local gardens. These evergreen shrubs produce beautiful trumpet shaped flowers that hummingbirds love. The plants require little care other than removing old blooms and occasional pruning of scraggly growth.

**Lemonadeberry and Laurel Sumac** (*Rhus* species)

*Lemonadeberry* is probably one of the easiest native plants to grow and it can easily become 10-feet high and 15 feet wide under the right conditions. It can be pruned or shaped to any form including a solid hedge or a bank cover.

*Laurel sumac*, along with lemonadeberry, provides excellent habitat for wildlife as well as a food source. The taco-shaped leaves of laurel sumac bushes have a reddish tinge when new, thus adding more color to the garden. Both plants are very drought tolerant.

**Dwarf Coyote Bush** (*Baccharis pilularis* 'Pigeon Point')

This subspecies of the common coastal sage scrub *Baccharis* is an excellent ground cover for areas of low water use. It forms a low mound up to one foot high and spreads to five feet. The foliage is light green and the plant can be shaped for the desired effect.

**California Tree Mallow** (*Lavatera assurgentiflora*)

There are several varieties of varieties of *Lavatera* ranging from a rapidly growing ground cover to the more common tree form that can reach 15 feet. All produce attractive flowers and have maple shaped leaves. Be sure the variety selected is the right one for your situation.

**Fuchsia-Flowered Gooseberry** (*Ribes speciosum*)

The Chinese lantern shaped flowers of this deciduous shrub are striking in their delicate beauty. In late summer or fall the plant's thorny branches appear dead, but winter rains bring new life, both in rich green leaves and bright red flowers. Hummingbirds are attracted to this source of nectar.

**California Fuchsia** (*Epilobium californicum* or *Zauschneria* species)

This herbaceous perennial or subshrub blooms in late summer or fall adding bright color to the garden, just as many other species are going dormant. The abundant orange-red flowers are a favorite source of nectar for hummingbirds during their fall migration. Cut fuchsias back to one-inch stubs in January (but not first year plants) to produce healthy new growth in spring. Many cultivars are available offering choices of size and color for the garden.