



ABOUT CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANTS

Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants

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WHAT NATIVE PLANTS ARE (AND WHAT THEY AREN'T)

- According to the California Native Plant Society, "Native plants grew here prior to European contact. California's native plants evolved here over a very long period, and are the plants that the first Californians knew and depended on for their livelihood. These plants have co-evolved with animals, fungi and microbes, to form a complex network of relationships. They are the foundation of our native ecosystems, or natural communities."
- California is home to a wide range of ecosystems and plant communities. Though many native plants are extremely drought tolerant, others grow naturally in wet habitats. You can find a native plant for almost any garden condition.
- California is unique in that it is home to more than 6,000 native plant species, subspecies and varieties, and contains one-quarter of all plants native to North America, north of Mexico. Approximately one-third of our native species do not occur anywhere else on Earth.
- Many plants marketed as drought tolerant are from mediterranean-climate regions other than California. Though these plants may conserve water, they are not necessarily adapted to our area in other ways – such as to our soils, climate and pollinators. For greatest success, choose plants that are adapted to **all** of your garden's conditions.
- "Naturalized" is not the same as native. Naturalized plants are non-native species that have escaped cultivation and spread into wild lands. Without their natural predators and competitors, some of these plants, such as mustard and fountain grass, have become invasive. Although drought tolerant, such plants reduce habitat and biodiversity by outcompeting native plants for space and resources.
- Being adapted to our soils, climate and drought, native plants are a beautiful, sustainable, environmentally friendly choice for California gardens.

WHAT NATIVE PLANTS CAN DO

- **Reduce water consumption.** Once established in a garden, California native plants use, on average, one-seventh the water of most non-natives.
- **Reduce pesticide use.** Because they have co-evolved with native wildlife, native plants typically have fewer pest problems than non-natives.
- **Reduce your carbon footprint.** Native plants like lean nutrient-poor soils and do not require soil amendments or fertilizers. Most California native plants are commercially grown in our state and travel short distances to your nursery.
- **Reduce maintenance.** A well-designed native garden – planted for the mature size of the plants – can require very low maintenance, once established.

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WHAT NATIVE PLANTS CAN DO, continued

- **Add beauty.** Native plants are beautiful for their many colors, forms, textures and aromas. With good design, your garden can have flowers year round.
- **Attract wildlife.** Native plants provide birds, hummingbirds, butterflies and pollinators with food and shelter.
- **Support essential ecosystem services.** Think about this: only 10% of herbivorous insect species can eat non-native plants, and insects comprise over 90% of the diet of baby birds, making native plants (and insects) an essential part of any bird habitat. Insects also provide other important services, such as decomposition, pollination and predation (on other insects).

ABOUT THEODORE PAYNE, PIONEERING CALIFORNIA HORTICULTURIST

Theodore Payne (1872-1963) devoted his life to the plants of California. At the age of 20, this British nurseryman moved to Southern California and fell in love with its rich flora, especially its wild flowers. He opened his first nursery and seed business in 1903 in downtown L.A.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Payne brought more than 400 species of native plants into cultivation and developed dozens of private and public gardens in Southern California, including Descanso Gardens, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, the original Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, and native gardens at Exposition Park in Los Angeles and Cal Tech in Pasadena.

Mr. Payne worked tirelessly to educate Californians about the intrinsic beauty and value of their native plants and is considered the father of the native plant movement in California.

ABOUT THE THEODORE PAYNE FOUNDATION

The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants, Inc. (TPF) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization established in 1960 to continue Mr. Payne's legacy. The following year, Mr. Payne bequeathed all of his plants, seed and equipment to the Foundation. Since that time, TPF has become the leading source for native plants in the region. The Foundation also provides extensive plant information and education in our nursery, on our website, and through adult education, K-12 field trips and outreach programs.

The Foundation is open to the public year round and located on 22 acres in Sun Valley, CA (in the northeast San Fernando Valley, about 10 miles from downtown Los Angeles). Our canyon site is home to a retail nursery, education center, demonstration gardens, picnic areas and hiking trail. There is no admission charge.

Each spring, the Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour features 40 or more gardens throughout the Los Angeles region. TPF operates a booth at the Hollywood Farmers' Market, provides a free Wild Flower Hotline every spring, exhibits botanical art in the Theodore Payne Gallery, and maintains a library about California flora and natural history.

Members are the heart of the Foundation and receive benefits, including discounts on plants, seed and classes. Volunteers are essential to our success and volunteer hours earn free classes.

In April 2011, the Foundation was awarded \$930,000 by the State of California to construct new nature educational facilities that will include new classrooms, interpretive signage, expanded restrooms, improved ADA access, new demonstration gardens and increased parking. The estimated completion date for the project is early 2015.

Please visit our website, theodorepayne.org, for hours, directions, class schedule, weekly nursery inventory and much more!