

# **EROSION/SLOPE CONTROL & FIRESCAPING with California NATIVE PLANTS**

(Central and Bay Area Coastal Counties)

*(Most Current 2020 Version-Subject to Revision)*

## **DROUGHT TOLERANT & FIRE RESISTANT SHRUBS**

<b><u>Common Name</u></b>	<b><u>Scientific Name</u></b>
Lemonade Berry	<u><i>Rhus integrifolia</i></u>
Coffee Berry	<u><i>Frangula californica</i></u>
California Fuchsia	<u><i>Epilobium canum</i> (<i>Zauschneria californica</i>)</u>
California Lilac, Blue Blossom	<u><i>Ceanothus thyrsiflorus</i> (+ other cultivars)</u>
Golden Yarrow	<u><i>Eriophyllum confertiflorum</i></u>
California Rose	<u><i>Rosa California</i></u>
Snowberry	<u><i>Symphoricarpos albus</i></u>
Bush Poppy	<u><i>Dendromecon rigiela</i></u>
Manzanita	<i>Note: Some lower fire hazard cultivars</i>
Silk Tassel	<u><i>Garrya elliptica</i></u>

## **FIRE RESISTANT TREES (upland)**

Coast Live Oak	<u><i>Quercus agrifolia</i></u>
Black oak	<i>Quercus kelloggii</i>
Madrone	<u><i>Arbutus menziesii</i></u>
CA Buckeye	<u><i>Aesculus californica</i></u>
Toyon	<u><i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i></u>
California Wax Myrtle	<u><i>Myrica californica</i></u>
Catalina Ironwood	
Yellow Willow	<u><i>Salix lucida</i></u>
Western Redbud	<u><i>Cercis occidentalis</i></u>
Tanoak (Northern CA)	<u><i>Lithocarpus densiflora</i></u>

**FIRE RESISTANT TREES & SHRUBS (riparian, irrigated or wet areas)**  
**Where soil is moist year-round, all vegetation has higher moisture content, making it more fire-resistant than plants growing in dry locations**

Valley oak Quercus lobata

Coast Redwood	Sequoia sempervirens
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California black walnut	Juglans hindsii
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black oak	Quercus kelloggii
valley oak	Quercus lobata
sandbar willow	Salix exigua
coastal or Hooker's willow	Salix hookeriana
red willow	Salix laevigata
yellow willow	Salix lasiandra
arroyo willow	Salix lasiolepis
willows	Salix scouleriana

Western Sycamore	<u>Platanus racemose</u>
Willow (red, yellow, arroyo)	<u>Salix, spp</u>
Big Leaf Maple	<u>Acer macrophyllum</u>
Blue Elderberry	<u>Sambucus Mexicana</u>
Thimbleberry	<u>Rubus parviflorus</u>
California Hazelnut	<u>Corylus cornuta var.californica</u>
Creek Dogwood	<u>Cornus sericea ssp. occidentalis</u>
Flowering Currant	<u>Ribes sanguineum var. glutinosum</u> And/or California Blackberry
Bush Anemone	<u>Carpenteria californica</u>
Red or White Alder	<u>Alnus rubra</u> (red); <u>Alnus rhombifolia</u> (white)
Ribes	Any of them <u>Lupinus arboreus</u> <u>Physocarpus capitatus</u> <u>Calacanthus occidentalis</u>
CA Rush Grass	<u>Juncus</u>

## **FIRE RESISTANT NATIVE PERENNIAL FORBS**

Yarrow	<u><i>Achillea</i> spp.</u>
California Poppy	<u><i>Eschscholzia californica</i></u>
Penstemon	<u><i>Penstemon</i> spp.</u>
Blue-Eyed Grass	<u><i>Sisyrinchium bellum</i>.</u>
California Buttercup	<u><i>Ranunculus californica</i></u>
Bracken Fern	<u><i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> var. pubescens</u>

## **FIRE RESISTANT NATIVE GRASSES & GROUNDCOVERS**

### **Grasses:**

Dudleyas	<u><i>Dudleya</i>, spp.</u>
Pine Grass	<u><i>Calamagrostis rubescens</i></u>
Idaho Fescue	<u><i>Festuca idahoensis</i></u>
California Fescue	<u><i>Festuca californica</i></u>
Molate Fescue	<u><i>Festuca rubra</i></u> (shade/drought tolerant)
California Oat Grass	<u><i>Danthonia californica</i></u>
Needlegrass	<u><i>Stipa lepidota</i></u>

### **Ground covers:**

Douglas/Mt. Iris and related spp.	<u><i>Iris douglasiana</i></u> and other native Iris
Alum Root	<u><i>Heuchera</i>, spp.</u>
Sword Fern	<u><i>Polystichum munitum</i></u>
Redwood Sorrel	<u><i>Oxalis oregana</i></u>
Yerba Buena	<u><i>Satureja douglasii</i></u>
Wild strawberry	<u><i>Fragaria californica</i></u>
	<u><i>Sedum spathulifolium</i></u>
Dicentra	
Bee's Bliss	<u><i>Salvia</i> spp</u>

*Note: All the above plants have soil erosion and protection qualities. Many of the above plants are also drought tolerant but may require some supplemental irrigation during initial establishment.*

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In general, fire-resistant plants:

1. Have a low sap or resin content;
2. Grow without accumulating dead branches, needles or leaves;
3. Are easily maintained and pruned;
4. Grow low to the ground with exception of trees and some shrubs;
5. Have low biomass or low density;
6. Have large and/or thick leaves with high moisture content that don't ignite quickly like plants with small leaves such as chamise and junipers.

Note: Space plants so there is horizontal and vertical discontinuity. Keep space between tree canopies and shrubs beneath them. This will decrease the likelihood of the fire spreading to tree canopies and from plant to plant.

### **INVASIVE AND/OR HIGH FIRE HAZARD SHRUBS AND TREES**

Stay clear of non-native plants including but not limited to: Acacia; pampas and Jubata grasses; juniper; eucalyptus; bamboo; palms; periwinkle/vinca; Algerian, English or German ivy; French, Spanish and Scotch broom, Arundo and hemlock.

Discourage the establishment of the following native plants in close proximity of homes and high value property improvements: Chamise; most conifers (except redwood); coyote brush/greasewood and other plants that have a high oil content and/or produce a lot of dead plant materials. These types of plants all have a higher fire hazard.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Regarding other plant choices and fire-resistant landscaping ideas Contact:  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) [www.ca.usda.nrcs.gov](http://www.ca.usda.nrcs.gov)

California Native Plant Society: [cnps@cnps.org](mailto:cnps@cnps.org)/firerecovery & [Calscape.org](http://Calscape.org) (photos and full description of plants) for more information on post fire plant materials and a Fire Recovery Guide.

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*Note: This list was prepared by Rich Casale, Certified Professional Erosion & Sediment Control Specialist #3 following the 2008 Summit Fire, Martin and Trabing Fires in Santa Cruz County and 2017-19 Wine Country Fires in Sonoma and Napa Counties, when he was employed by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The list was developed in consultation with the Santa Cruz & Sonoma Chapters of the California Native Plant Society, Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, NRCS Plant specialists, and Kathy Lyons, native plant ecologist.*