

More Outstanding Plants for Alameda County

Attractive Plants that Thrive on Little Care

When we published our first list of recommended plants, *Outstanding Plants for Alameda County*, we realized that we were barely scratching the surface and that there were many wonderful plants that we were leaving off the list. This second list seeks to bring still more outstanding plants to the gardener's attention. As with our first list, the plants listed are those with which Master Gardeners have had success either at our Livermore Demonstration Garden, at our Oakland Trials Garden, or in our own gardens.

To qualify as "outstanding," a plant must be easy to grow, require little maintenance and use less water than your standard garden plant. In addition, outstanding plants - frequently California natives - have value to wildlife by providing either food or shelter. Further, outstanding plants add beauty to your yard with their flowers and/or foliage, refuting the myth that drought tolerant gardens are uninteresting or unattractive. Look for examples of these plants in our Demonstration Garden in Livermore or in the Trials Garden at Lake Merritt in Oakland.

When planting, bear in mind that Alameda County contains many climatic zones or "micro-climates," so a plant that tolerates full sun in coastal Berkeley may require afternoon shade in Livermore. Similarly, plants that need no summer water in San Leandro, might benefit from an occasional deep soaking in Pleasanton. Also, *all plants* need water until they become established (during their first year).

For more information, go to: http://acmg.ucdavis.edu/Outstanding_Plants_for_Alameda_County/

Key

-  No summer water required beyond what is naturally available.
-  Full Sun - All day minimum of 8 hours of sun.
-  Some summer water - deep soaking every 3-4 weeks.
-  Part Shade - filtered light, or, 4-5 hours of sun.
-  Summer water required - deep soaking every 1-2 weeks.
-  Shade - less than 3 hours of sun.
-  Endemic to California
-  Deer resistant.**

Note: some varieties may have specific needs that differ from the genus/species. **Deer may resort to resistant plants during times of severe drought or other extreme pressure to avoid starvation.

Shrubs and Trees

Australian Fuchsia

Correa pulchella



Australian evergreen shrub with low, wide growth (2-3' high by 4-5' wide). Long blooming stalks of beautiful, fuchsia-like, tubular flowers in reddish orange, pink or white are set off by dark green leaves with felted undersides. Good in dry shade in warmer locations. Tolerates alkaline soil. Suggested varieties: 'Pink Flamingo' (salmon pink), 'Mission Bells' (dark pink or red). Other: Attracts birds and butterflies. Winter bloomer.

Rosemary

Rosmarinus officinalis



A culinary herb and excellent landscape plant. Upright or draping over walls with needlelike, aromatic leaves. Edible blue flowers in late winter/early spring and sometimes fall. Can control erosion. Suggested: Upright types are 'Tuscan Blue' (4-6' x 3-5') and 'Collingwood Ingram' (2-3' x 2-3'). Creeping/cascading types: 'Huntington Carpet' (1-2' x 4-8') and 'Prostratus' (2' x 4-8'). Other: Attracts birds, butterflies and bees. Overwatering/feeding causes displeasing woodiness.

Western Redbud

Cercis occidentalis



Multi-trunked native grown as a large shrub or small tree. An all season plant with a gorgeous display of magenta flowers on silvery branches in late winter-early spring; dark purple seed pods and blue-green, heart-shaped leaves follow. Winter chill promotes a profuse bloom. Other: Likes good drainage, yet tolerant of clay soils. Responds well to winter pruning.

Strawberry Tree

Arbutus unedo

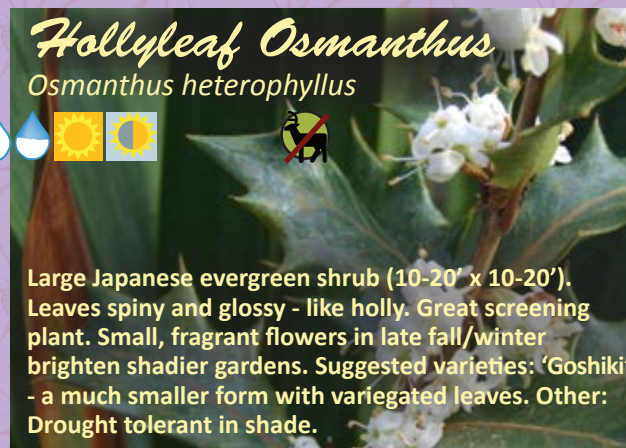






   

Mediterranean evergreen, multi-stemmed shrub/tree with stunning red bark/trunk. Leaves: dark green, red stemmed, and finely-toothed. Clusters of small, pink tinged white flowers and 3/4" strawberry-like fruit appear together in fall and winter. Suggested varieties: A. 'Marina' grown as a single stemmed tree (25-40' x 30') with rosy pink flowers. 'Elfin King' and 'Oktoberfest' are dwarf forms staying under 8'. Other: Attracts birds. Good drainage. Fruit is edible but not sweet. Prefers acidic soil.

Hollyleaf Osmanthus

Osmanthus heterophyllus



Large Japanese evergreen shrub (10-20' x 10-20'). Leaves spiny and glossy - like holly. Great screening plant. Small, fragrant flowers in late fall/winter brighten shadier gardens. Suggested varieties: 'Goshiki' - a much smaller form with variegated leaves. Other: Drought tolerant in shade.

Toyon

(Christmas Berry, California Holly)
Heteromeles arbutifolia



Large, long-lived, dense evergreen shrub (6-10' tall) or multi-trunked tree (15-25'). Leathery dark green, glossy leaves have serrated edges. Clusters of white flowers bloom in early summer with orange-red berries in fall and winter. Suggested varieties: 'Davis Gold' has yellow berries. Other: Good drainage. A good habitat plant. Birds relish berries and flowers attract bees.

Coast Rosemary

Westringia fruticosa



Fine-textured Australian evergreen shrub with green to gray-green needlelike leaves and small lavender or white flowers mid-winter through summer. Spreading, rather loose growth 3-6' tall, half as wide. Hardy to 10-15°F. Suggested varieties: 'Wynabbie Gem' has lavender blue flowers. 'Smoky' has white flowers. May be sold as *W. rosmariniformis*. Other: Good drainage. Tolerates wind, salt, and heavy soils.

Purple Hop Bush

Dodonaea viscosa

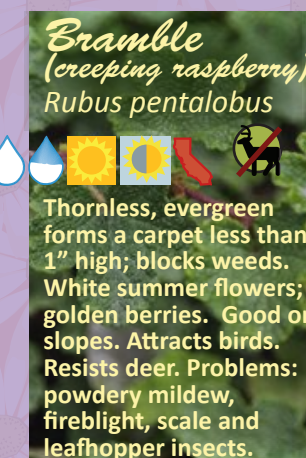







  

Tough, native shrub of the American Southwest which tolerates wind, poor soil, and heat. Foliage is finely divided and willowy. Creates a soft screen of foliage (10-15' x 10-15'). Suggested varieties: 'Purpurea' has bronzy-purple tinted foliage when planted in full sun. Color deepens in winter. Other: Prune to shape. Can suffer some frost damage but will recover.

Bramble (creeping raspberry)

Rubus pentalobus



Thornless, evergreen forms a carpet less than 1" high; blocks weeds. White summer flowers; golden berries. Good on slopes. Attracts birds. Resists deer. Problems: powdery mildew, fireblight, scale and leafhopper insects.

Cape Plumbago

Plumbago auriculata (capensis)

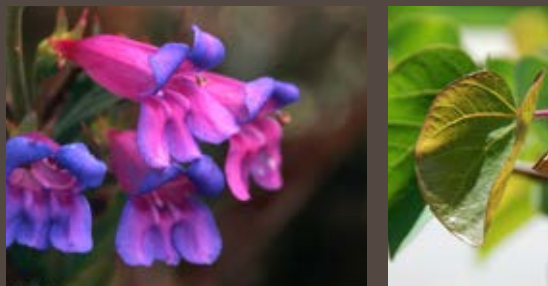
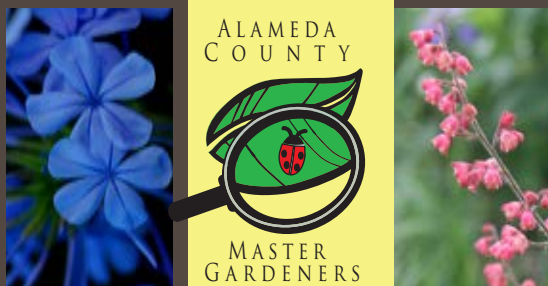
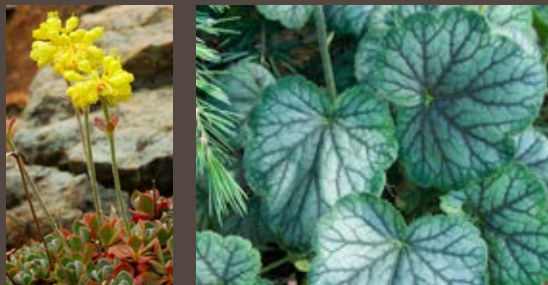


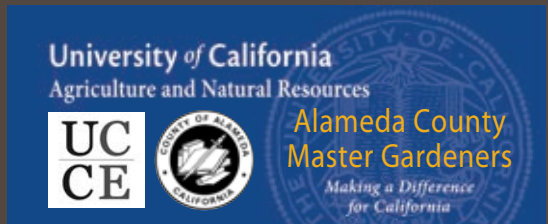
South African, large (8'x6') semi-evergreen mounding shrub or staked as a vine to 12'. Pale blue flower clusters spring to summer - all year in frost free areas. Suggested: 'Royal Cape', 'Imperial Blue'. Other: Hard pruning in late winter. Somewhat frost tender but recovers.

More
OUTSTANDING
PLANTS

FOR ALAMEDA COUNTY



PLANTS THAT THRIVE ON LITTLE CARE



Perennials & Grasses

Bearded Tongue
Penstemon spp.

Woody evergreen with narrow green/green-gray leaves and spikes of tubular flowers on tall stalks. Blooms summer to fall. Suggested varieties: 250+ species in every color. *P. gloxinioides*, border/garden penstemon (2-3' x 4'), compact and bushy: 'Apple Blossom' (clear pink), 'Firebird' (red), 'Garnet', 'Holly White', 'Lady Hindley' (lavender), 'Midnight' (dark purple), 'Sour Grapes'. *P. heterophyllus* 'Margarita BOP' (iridescent blue). Other: attracts hummingbirds. Good cut flowers. Cut back after flowering to renew.

Wild Buckwheat
Eriogonum spp.

Shrubby with dense, rounded flower clusters, showy in mass plantings. Long-blooming. Excellent in dried arrangements. Size depends on species. Suggested varieties: *E. grande var. rubescens* (red flowers, gray-green leaves, 1-2' tall), *E. umbellatum* (sulfur yellow flowers fade to yellow-orange, 2' tall). Other: Attracts birds, butterflies, and bees. Most are deer resistant. Tolerates wind, salt spray. Some water inland.

Blue Grama Grass
Bouteloua gracilis

Tufted grass with iridescent seed heads (its flowers) that have a 'toothbrush' or 'eyelash' appearance. Gray-green blades grow 16-24" tall, fading to straw in dormancy. Cut to 4-6" in late winter to keep from getting straggly. Plant en masse to create turf replacement which can be mowed monthly to three inches.

Narrow
Achillea millefolium

Mediterranean. Narrow fern-like leaves and dense flower clusters. Sometimes used as a lawn alternative as it makes a dense mat over a large area. Suggested varieties: 'Calistoga' (white flowers/silver foliage), 'Paprika' (red), 'Moonshine' (yellow). Other: attracts birds and butterflies. Dead heading lengthens bloom season. Aggressive in favorable sites. Leggy/toppling over with excessive irrigation. Susceptible to cottony cushion scale.

Hairy Canary Clover
Dorycnium hirsutum

This Portuguese native could be grown for its attractive, silver-gray foliage alone, but for 2-3 months each year it is covered in lovely white or lavender pea-like flowers that are highly attractive to native bees. Forms mounds 1-2' high and 2-3' wide. Good in rock gardens.

Idaho Fescue
Festuca idahoensis

Tight, clump forming grass growing 18-20" high. One of the most widespread in western states, it handles many different habitats. Blushed cream flowers are borne on 24" stalks in late spring through summer. Good for erosion control. Suggested varieties: 'Siskiyou Blue' is a lovely gray variety that sits well with lavenders and sages.

Coral Bells (Alum Root)
Heuchera spp.

Compact clumps of evergreen rounded or heart-shaped, scalloped-edged leaves. Graceful stalks of tiny bell shaped flowers in spring/summer, but often grown for foliage alone. Brightens shady spots and borders. Suggested: *H. maxima* Island alum root (1-2' x 3-4'), dark green leaves/pink or white flowers; *H. micrantha* (1' x 1-2') bronzy leaves/creamy white flowers; *H. sanguinea* Coral bells, 14-24" tall, red, coral flowers; hybrids have golden yellow, purple or marbled leaves. Other: Attracts hummingbirds. Good drainage. Full sun only in cool locations.

Berkeley/Foothill Sedge
Carex tumulicola

Clumping grass that takes shape in dense green tufts to 2' tall, spreading slowly with age. Tough, durable and drought tolerant. Grown in shade, it has a glossy green appearance. In full sun it becomes coarse, bronzy and sports seed heads. (Note: Some nurseries misidentify *Carex divulsa*, a European native, as *C. tumulicola*; verify species before planting.) Other: Performs better with afternoon shade inland.

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