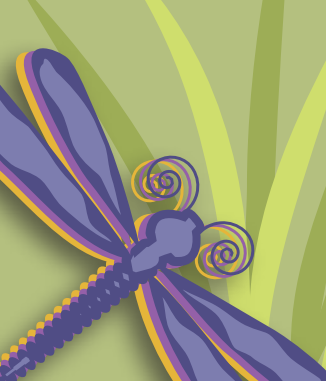


# Right Plant for the Right Place



## Don't Plant a Pest

Invasive plants are non-native plant pests that can grow extensively because they are no longer controlled by natural predators. Invasive plants can escape from landscapes and aggressively invade wild land areas, destroying wildlife habitat and increasing the risk of fire and flooding. Common examples of invasive garden plants include English ivy, iceplant, periwinkle, scotch broom, and cotoneaster. Learn more at the California Invasive Plant Council website: [www.cal-ipc.org](http://www.cal-ipc.org).

## The Right Plant for the Right Place

Choosing the right plants is the secret for success in sustainable gardening. Plants native to Santa Clara Valley are a great choice, as are other California natives. Many plants adapted to Mediterranean climates will also thrive locally with our cool, wet winters and dry summers. Pesticides and fertilizers are not needed, protecting the environment and your health, and saving you time and money.



Diverse plantings limit the spread of diseases by creating buffers between susceptible plants; attract beneficial insects to control pests; flower successively through much of the year; and may also offer food and shelter to wildlife.

## Placement

A Plant may be in the wrong place if it does not thrive, outgrows its space, or is prone to diseases and insect pests. The best solution is to replace the plant with one better suited to the site.

## Get to Know Santa Clara Valley Natives

Using local natives connects your landscape to the natural ecosystem. Advantages include:

- Natives thrive in the local soil and climate, and resist local diseases and pests.
- Local birds, butterflies, and pollinators are adapted to live with and benefit from them.

Consult a designer or native plant nursery professional to help you choose the right plants.



Replace English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) with Woodland Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca* ssp. *Californica*)



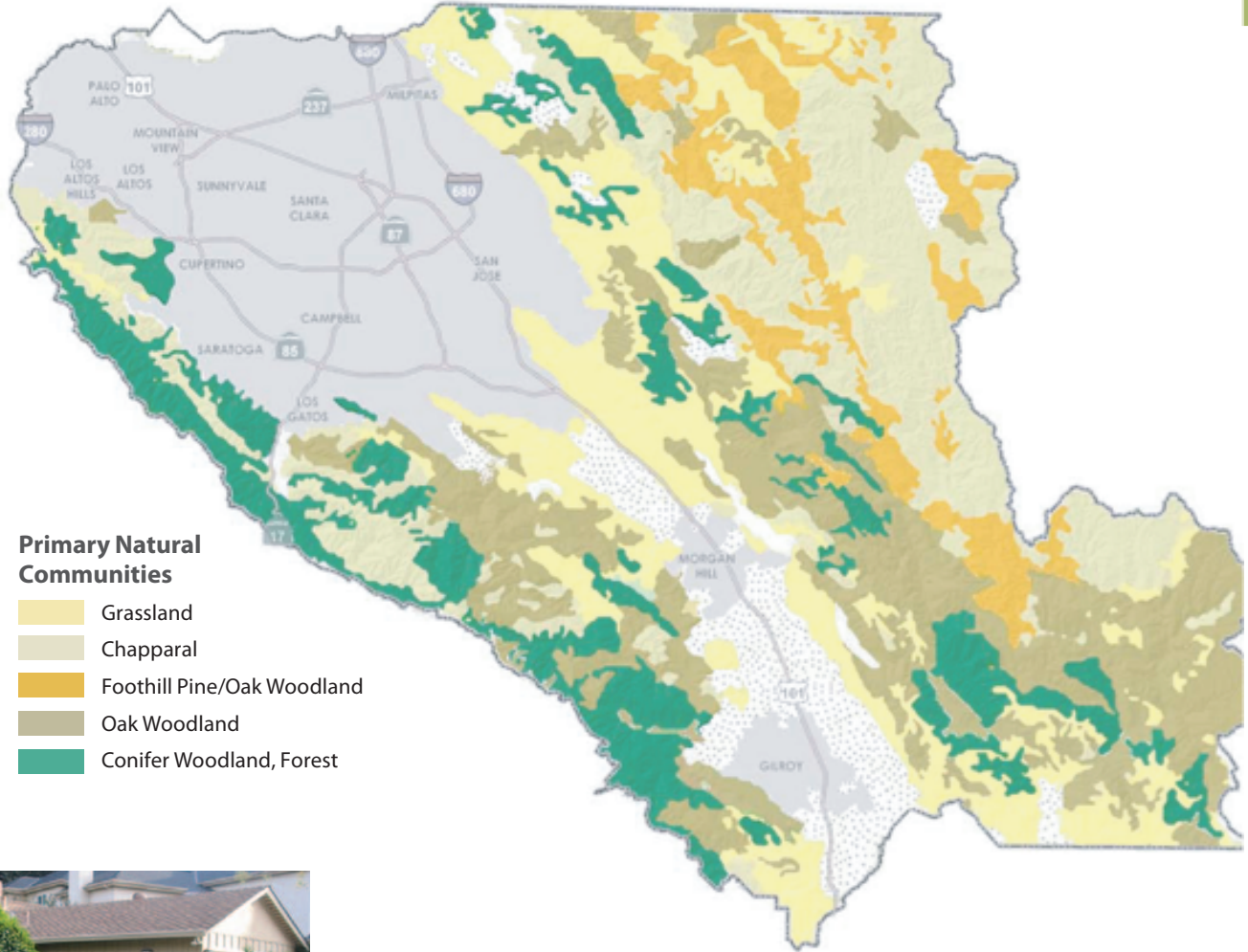
City of San José:  
the IPM Innovator  
Award Winner 2010



## Understand Your Site Conditions

Not all native plants are made for the same site condition. The Santa Clara Valley has a wide variety of microhabitats such as sunny grasslands, under shady oaks, or wet creek banks. Understanding the unique site conditions or “microclimates” of the landscape is important for selecting the right plants. The microclimates in your landscape may be similar to one or more local habitats such as those shown on the map. Plants from other Mediterranean climates can be grouped together with natives that share similar growing requirements.

## Santa Clara Valley Microhabitats



*Grassland community plants can be used to replace a lawn with a beautiful, low maintenance meadow.*

## Choosing Plants That Fit Your Landscape

**Sunny, and Flat with Deep or Heavy Soil:** try wildflowers, perennial plants, and bunchgrasses from the Grassland community.



**Yarrow**  
*Achillea Millefolium*  
**Functions:** Groundcover, erosion control, habitat, cut flower



**Idaho Fescue**  
*Festuca idahoensis* 'Siskiyou Blue'  
**Functions:** Border plant, habitat



**Purple Needlegrass**  
*Nassella pulchra*  
**Functions:** Mix with other grassland plants for lawn substitute.



**Full Sun:** Sites with south and west exposure, and well-drained soil, try plants from the Chaparral community.



**Manzanita**

*Arctostaphylos species*

**Howard McMinn Manzanita**

*Arctostaphylos 'Howard McMinn'*

**Functions:** Several species available may serve as groundcovers, privacy hedges or screens, small trees, and wildlife habitat.



**Sages**

*Salvia species*

**Purple Sage** *Salvia leucophylla*

**Functions:** Attracts hummingbirds, bees, butterflies



**California Fuschia**

*Epilobium canum*

**Functions:** Attracts hummingbirds, seasonal color



## Creating a Habitat Garden

If your landscape provides food, water, and places for wildlife to raise their young, you can register your garden with the National Wildlife Foundation as a Certified Wildlife Habitat. Learn more at [www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife.aspx](http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife.aspx)

**Dry Shade:** Sites with shade from a building or mature trees for part of the day, try plants from the Oak Woodland community.



**Hummingbird Sage**

*Salvia spathacea*

**Functions:** Groundcover, attracts hummingbirds, bees, butterflies



**Coffeeberry**

*Rhamnus californica*

**Functions:** Informal privacy screen as a shrub or small tree, seasonal color, berries attract birds



**Pink-flowering Current**

*Ribes sanguineum var. glutinosum*

**Functions:** Accent shrub, seasonal color, attracts birds



**Seasonally Damp:** Sites with low drainage or bordering a creek or seasonal waterway. Try plants from the Riparian community.



**Wire Grass**

*Juncus Patens*



**Sedge**

*Carex tumulicola* or *Carex flagellifera*



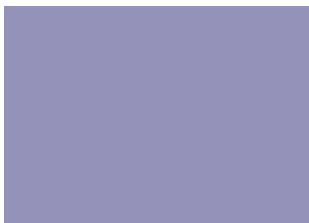
**Creek Dogwood**

*Cornus sericea* or **Blue elderberry**  
*Sambucas Mexicana*

## Succulent Gardens: A Water-Wise Splash of Color

Succulents come in many bright and bold colors with interesting flower blossoms in red, yellow and purple. Succulent plants prefer full sun, gravelly, well-drained soils and can survive for several weeks without water. When planted in the right place, succulent gardens are very low-maintenance and free of pests and diseases.

**Deep Shade:** Sites on the north side of a building or located under an evergreen (redwood, pine, or cypress tree), try plants from the Conifer Forest Community.



**Western Sword Fern**

*Polystichum munitum*



**Western Mock Orange**

*Philadelphus lewisii*

**Functions:** Scented flowers, specimen plant, informal hedge



**Coral Bells**

*Huechera species*

**Elegant Coral Bells** *Heuchera elegans*  
**Functions:** Groundcover, path border



# Tips for Planting Native and Drought Tolerant Plants

## Plant with the Rain

Planting in the cool months of October to February will reduce the risk of bacterial and fungal infections that can grow in warm, wet soil. Plants will establish more successfully and put down deep roots when rain waters them in.

## Soil Preparation

The Santa Clara Valley tends to have heavy, clay soils. Mixing one to two inches of good quality compost into the soil will improve drainage, prevent crown rot, and help plants establish successfully. Planting on small mounds or in raised beds can also improve drainage and add interest to the landscape.



**Gopher Protection:** If you have gophers, install a gopher basket in the hole to protect the roots while the plant establishes.



## Digging the Planting Hole

The planting hole should be as deep and about twice as wide as the root ball. This will allow feeder roots to grow out horizontally in the compost-amended soil. Adding additional fertilizers, compost, or soil amendments is not necessary unless the soil is very sandy and lacks organic matter.

## Planting for Success

Carefully remove the plant from its pot and gently loosen the roots. Hold the plant in the center of the hole and fill in with excavated soil. Make sure that the root crown (where the stem meets the roots) is level or slightly above the soil surface. Create a temporary irrigation basin around the plant by mounding soil into a berm. Water the basin so that the water level is below the root crown. Remove the berm before the rainy season to prevent ponding of rainwater at the root crown.

## Additional Resources

### Helpful Websites:

Santa Clara Valley Water District  
[www.valleywater.org/Programs/Landscaping.aspx](http://www.valleywater.org/Programs/Landscaping.aspx)

List of waterwise plants, where to find them at local nurseries and information about landscape water conservation rebate programs.

California Native Plant Society  
Santa Clara Valley Chapter  
[www.cnps-scv.org](http://www.cnps-scv.org)

California Native Garden Foundation  
<http://cngf.org/>

### Workshops and Classes on Plant Selection:

Bay Friendly Landscaping Coalition  
[www.bayfriendlycoalition.org/](http://www.bayfriendlycoalition.org/)

Green Gardener Certification Program  
[www.mywatershedwatch.org/greengardener.html](http://www.mywatershedwatch.org/greengardener.html)

### Books:

*Plants and Landscapes for Summer Dry Climates*  
East Bay Municipal Utility District, 2004

*Designing California Native Plant Garden*  
University of California Press, 2007

*California Native Plants for the Garden*  
Cachuma Press, 2006

*Sunset Western Garden Book*  
Sunset Books Inc.

### Factsheets:

To learn more about compost, plant choices, or other sustainable principles, see the other factsheets in this series at [www.sanjoseca.gov/environment](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/environment).

Developed by Ecology Action of Santa Cruz consulting with the City of San José IPM Program, 408-945-3000. Content reviewed by A. Sutherland, Urban IPM Advisor Alameda County, UC Statewide IPM Program.



Working together for the greener good



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