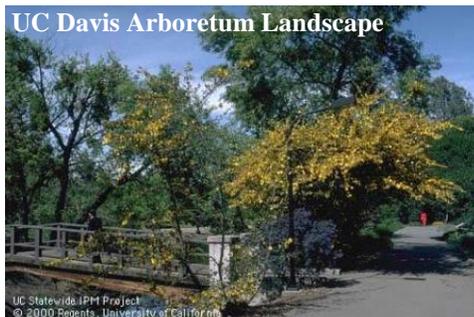


## "All Star" Plants by Marlys Bell

Garden clean up this spring has been unusually revealing. Too many plants in my oldest, most established gardens have passed their prime. A few simply did not make it through the winter, but more were so woody that they were not salvageable, leaving many large gaps in the landscape. Many of them were my favorites, such as lavender, salvia greggii and rosemary. Others have been too aggressive, such as yarrow, valerian and Japanese blood grass. When they appear in the paths and commingle with their neighbors, it is time for them to go. From now on, they will be in pots.

Others look ugly in the winter, like the California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*, previously known as *Zauschneria*), *Nepeta* and Santa Barbara daisy. They will be moved to less visible, more climate-friendly locations.

Instead of complaining, I'd rather think that they served me well for over five years. This is an opportunity to replace them with better choices. When considering replacements, I may look for something in the same family but with proven performances, such as a different lavender, yarrow or rosemary.



When making plant selections, an excellent place to start is the UC Davis Arboretum's "All Stars." It is a list of 100 plants that have been field tested and grown in a variety of California conditions over several years, and have proven to be good choices for sustainable landscaping. They can be viewed online at [http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum\\_all\\_stars.aspx](http://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/arboretum_all_stars.aspx).

Many of the "All Stars" are suited to zones 7 and 8 (Sonora and lower elevations) and some are native California plants. Many are deer resistant and drought tolerant. The list includes trees, shrubs, perennials, vines and ground covers. To be selected for the "All Star" list plants must thrive in California climates, tend to be drought tolerant once established, low maintenance and attract beneficial wildlife—including pollinating insects. Many are also power line-friendly (less than 25 feet tall).

Surprisingly, many of them are already winners in my garden, though maybe not the exact variety. Ten "All Star" favorites and winners in my garden are:

### Small Trees:

\*Pineapple guava (*Acca sellowiana* or *Feijoa sellowiana*): grows in the garden as well as in large pots. Evergreen, grows in sun/part shade; water 1-2 times per month.

\**Ceanothus* 'Ray Hartman': when flowering, it is a stunningly beautiful weeping native tree with its blue flowers in the spring. Likes full sun. Water 1-2 times per month.

\*Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia* hybrids and cultivars): deciduous; likes full sun. Has long bloom time in late summer with many color options and various sizes. Water deeply every 1-2 weeks.

### Shrubs:

\*Oregon Grape (*Berberis aquifolium* 'Compacta'): evergreen native, grows in partial to full shade, deer resistant. Ivy-like leaves, yellow flowers and berries for the birds. Water deeply every 2 weeks.

\* Western Spice Bush (*Calycanthus occidentalis*): deciduous, fast growing native shrub with maroon-red flowers that attract pollinators. Grows in partial to full shade and needs water 1-2 per month



\* Bush anemone (*Carpenteria californica*): evergreen shrub with white flowers in spring. Grows in partial shade, deer resistant and needs water 1-2 times per month.

\**Salvia clevelandii* 'Winnifred Gilman': evergreen native small shrub with blue flowers. Attracts hummingbirds, beneficial insects and butterflies. Heat and drought tolerant. Water 1-2 times per month.



\* Bush germander (*Teucrium fruiticans*): large evergreen silver shrub with blue flowers. Grows in full to partial sun. Water 1-2 times per month.

Perennials

\*Santa Margarita foothills penstemon (*Penstemon heterophyllus* 'Margarita

B.O. P.'): native bloomer in spring/summer blooms. Water deeply every 2 weeks.

\* Lenten rose (*Helleborus x hybrids*): shade-loving plant that starts blooming in early winter and lasts until summer in shade. Water deeply 1-2 times per week.

Over time, I plan to add to my garden the entire list of All Stars that are foothill friendly. If you are interested in All Star plants, check out the website for details, lists of plants, garden planting plans, plant sale dates and local retailers. Note: since our spring has become so hot and dry so quickly, it may be best to do your planning now and wait for autumn to plant. Happy gardening!

Marlys Bell is a Master Gardener who is dedicated to gardening sustainably.