



Source: Plants and Landscapes for Summer-Dry Climates of the San Francisco Bay Region East Bay Municipal Utility District 2004

The Orange County area and most of California west of the Sierra Nevada, enjoys what is called a Mediterranean climate. This distinctive climate pattern is found in only two percent of the world's land mass and in only four other areas of the world: the region surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, southern and western parts of Australia, central Chile and the western Cape Province of South Africa.

Two of these regions are in the northern hemisphere and three are in the southern hemisphere, but all are on the west coasts of continental land masses, adjacent to the sea, and a little less than halfway between the equator and either the north or the south pole. All are influenced by subtropical high pressure systems that inhibit summer rainfall.

Many plants from other Mediterranean regions adapt to our summer-dry climate and blend well with plants native to the Orange County area. However, in selecting plants for the regionally appropriate garden, gardeners should compare the native habitats of the plants they want to grow with the soils and seasonal characteristics of their own microclimates.

Just as not all plants native to California are suited to all California microclimates, not all Mediterranean plants grow well or easily in all parts of the Orange County area.