

Fire Resistant Plants

No plant is fire-proof. Evergreen plants that hold moisture and have a watery or milky sap are more resistant to fires than resinous plants or plants with volatile oils. Some plants are fire resistant when young but accumulate dead wood in their mature state thus making them fire-prone. Choosing fire resistant plants to reduce the probability of wildfire damage is only as good as your maintenance scheduling of pruning, irrigating and cleanup.

Large Shade Trees

***Juglans californica*, California Black Walnut**

This is a deciduous tree that prefers moderate water. It can handle garden water.

***Platanus racemosa*, Western Sycamore**

A very large deciduous tree that requires ample water if not planted adjacent to a water source. Maintenance required for removal of dead fallen leaves.

***Quercus spp.*, Oaks**

Established oak trees need little to no supplemental water but may require a deep soaking a couple of times a year during drought conditions.

Accent Trees

***Cercis occidentalis*, Western redbud**

Established trees need little or no supplemental irrigation during the summer but will tolerate infrequent watering in well drained soils. They thrive with colder winters.

***Chilopsis linearis*, Desert willow**

Minimal summer water needs but will tolerate some summer irrigation. Does best in well drained soils.

Shrubs

***Abutilon palmeri*, Indian mallow**

Low water requirements. Needs well drained soil. Can be drought deciduous without additional water during dry times.

***Baccharis pilularis*, Coyote bush**

Low water need during summer. An early bloomer for pollinators. Pay attention to dead wood.

***Calliandra Californica*, Red fairyduster**

Showy shrub. Requires little supplemental water but additional water may encourage a longer bloom season. Good in sandy soils or on slopes.

***Ceanothus spp.*, California lilac**

Many species available. Larger ones can be trained as an accent tree and smaller ones used as a groundcover. Can be subject to diseases with too much summer water.

***Diplacus spp.*, Bush monkeyflower**

Small shrub, up to 4'. Many colors available. Drought tolerant but may go dormant under heat stress. Needs well drained soil and hates overwatering.

***Heteromales integrifolia*, Toyon or Christmas berry**

Grows in any soil. Produces flowers in summer for pollinators and berries in winter for birds. Will tolerate regular water inland. Can be trained as a small tree or used as a hedge.

***Malosma laurina*, Laurel sumac**

Very drought tolerant and prefers well drained soils. It doesn't do well in areas that freeze. Can grow up to 20' high and wide and can be trimmed up to tree form.

Penstemon spp.

Many varieties and many colors available. The popular 'Showy Penstemon' can reach 4' high. They can survive in almost any soil. A little bit of supplemental water (1x a month) may increase the bloom time.

***Rhus integrifolia*, Lemonade berry**

Can be sheered as hedge or trimmed up to small tree size. Once established, it needs little or no supplemental water. Grows good at seaside locations. For hotter inland locations see *Rhus ovata*.

***Rhus ovata*, Sugarbush,**

A good slope stabilizer it can get up to 30' high and wide. It can be trimmed up as a tree or hedged. It needs little or no summer water but will survive in garden conditions with a watering schedule of 1x a month.

****Salvia spp.***

Salvias are drought resistant and many varieties can adapt to garden conditions. *It is important to cut out any dead wood and prune to keep this plant fire-resistant.

Groundcovers

***Achillea millefolium*, Yarrow**

Low water requirements, grows in most soils and spreads readily. It is easy to grow and is a good lawn replacement.

***Baccharis pilularis* 'Pigeon point' Dwarf coyote bush**

Adapts to almost any soil this 1' high groundcover is good for stabilizing slopes and covering large areas. Tolerates seaside conditions.

***Ceanothus thyrsiflorus var. griseus* 'Yankee Point'**

A taller groundcover reaching 3-4' high. It does good in most soils and stabilizes slopes. It does well in seaside conditions and inland areas.

***Epilobium canum*, California fuschia**

Spreads by rhizomes and seeds. Adapts to most soils and needs little water. Can be kept low by cutting back after bloom. A hummingbird favorite.

***Fragaria chiloensis*, Beach strawberry**

A smaller groundcover 3"-1'. It does well in sandy soil and will except garden conditions. Full sun on the coast or partial shade inland.

References

Calscape, CNPS

Theodore Payne Foundation

Las Pilitas Native Plants