



Recommended Plants for Sonoma County

Sonoma Superstars

The selection of plants on this list is not intended to be exhaustive. There are many more plants that can be—and are—grown successfully in Sonoma County. The selected plants are likely to be the most successful. Our 30 very favorites, which we call the Sonoma Superstars, are marked with a star in the left margin.

These are some of the best performers for Sonoma County.

See our glossary of plant list descriptors at [http address] for explanations of these descriptors.

- ★ = Sonoma Superstars
- s = small
- m = medium
- g = large
- H = high water
- M = moderate water
- L = low water
- V = very low water
- S = full sun
- A = afternoon shade
- P = part shade
- F = full shade
- N = CA native
- W = wildlife habitat
- B = beneficial insects
- E = evergreen
- D = deer resistant
- C = erosion control
- T = frost tender
- X = poisonous
- 1 = for ground covers
- 2 = for dry shade
- 3 = for small gardens
- 4 = for Garden Sense

Trees

- ★ *Cercis occidentalis* (western redbud) s V S A P N W D C 2 3 4
Can be grown as a large shrub or small tree. Remove dead or twiggy branches. Clean up seed pods as they drop.
- ★ *Lagerstroemia indica* (crape myrtle) s m L S D 4
Select plant in bloom. Many colors available. Decorative bark.
- ★ *Pistacia chinensis* (Chinese pistache) m L S D 4
Fall color bright orange/red. Plant named male cultivars only.
- ★ *Ulmus parvifolia* (Chinese evergreen elm) g L S 4
Striking bark texture. Semi-evergreen. Named cultivars vary in height, leaf size, and habit.

Shrubs

- ★ *Arctostaphylos* spp (manzanita) s m g L S A P N W B E D C 1 2 3 4
Plants vary from creeping groundcovers to treelike shrubs. A. densiflora 'Howard McMinn' is one of the most garden tolerant manzanitas and is native to Sonoma County. Remove dead or twiggy branches.
- ★ *Berberis thunbergii* and cvs (barberry) s m g M S A P W D C X 3
Some species are deciduous. Many cultivars have attractive foliage colors such as lime green and burgundy. Dwarf varieties available. Remove dead or twiggy branches.
- ★ *Ceanothus* spp and cvs (California lilac) m g M L S A P N W B E D C 3 4
The most drought tolerant and deer resistant have small, dark green, crinkly leaves. Those with larger glossy foliage benefit from summer irrigation and shade inland. Remove dead or twiggy branches.
- ★ *Choisya ternata* (Mexican mock orange) m M A P F W E D
Full shade in hottest locations.
- ★ *Correa* spp (Australian fuschia) s m L S A P W B E D 2 3 4
May be hedged.
- ★ *Heteromeles arbutifolia* (toyon, California holly) m g L S A P N W B E D C X 2 4
Excellent fall/winter interest. Usually grown as a shrub but can reach tree size.
- ★ *Hydrangea quercifolia* (oak leaf hydrangea) m g M S A P X 2 3
Tolerates dry conditions. Great fall color. Prune immediately after bloom. Dwarf cultivars available.

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★ Loropetalum chinense (fringe flower) <i>Burgundy-leaved cultivars make wonderful specimen plants. New dwarf varieties available. Remove dead interior branches.</i>	s	g	L	S A P	E		2	3	4	
★ Nandina domestica & cvs (heavenly bamboo) <i>Dwarf varieties available.</i>	s	m	g	M L	S A P F	E D	X	2	3	4
★ Rhamnus [Frangula] californica (coffeeberry)	m	g	L	S A P	N W B E D C		2	4		
★ Ribes spp (currant or gooseberry) <i>Thornless species are called currants; thorned species are called gooseberries.</i>	m	g	M L V	S A P F	N W	D C	2	4		
★ Sarcococca ruscifolia (sweet box)	m		L	P F	E D		2	4		

Ground Covers

★ Arctostaphylos uva-ursi and cvs (kinnikinnick) <i>Prostrate, spreading and rooting as it grows. Slow to establish. Recommended varieties are 'Radiant' and 'Point Reyes'. 'Point Reyes' is more tolerant of heat and drought. Remove dead or twiggy interior branches.</i>	s	m	g	L	S A P	N W B E D C	1	2	4	
★ Ceanothus spp and cvs (California lilac) <i>The most drought tolerant and deer resistant have small, dark green, crinkly leaves. C. griseus 'Yankee Point' is a superior form; 'Diamond Heights' is lime green and variegated. Neither of these is deer resistant. Remove dead or twiggy branches.</i>	m	g	M L	S A P	N W B E D C		1	4		
★ Dymondia margaretae (dymondia) <i>Excellent walk-on lawn substitute.</i>	s		L	S A P F	E D		1	2	3	4
★ Thymus praecox (creeping thyme) <i>Excellent as a walkable groundcover.</i>	s		L	S A P	B E D		1	4		
★ Verbena spp (verbena)	s		M L	S	B E D		1	3	4	

Perennials

★ Achillea spp & hybrids (yarrow) <i>Flowers in a wide range of colors. Named varieties vary in height, color, and vigor.</i>	s	m	M L	S A P	B D		3		
★ Helleborus spp (hellebore, Christmas rose) <i>Water requirements vary greatly by species. H. orientalis needs moderate water. H. argutifolia and H. foetidus are most drought-tolerant.</i>	m		M L	A P F	E D	X	2	3	4
★ Nepeta spp (catmint or catnip)	s	m	L	S A P	B D		3	4	
★ Salvia spp, CA native (sages) <i>Recommended species are S. apiana, S. leucophylla, and cv 'Poza Blue'</i>	s	m	L V	S A P	N W B E D C		4		
★ Salvia spp, non-native (sages) <i>Many varieties available. Recommended species are S. leucantha, S. chamaedryoides, S. officinalis</i>	s	m	g	M L	S A P	W B D T	3	4	
★ Santolina spp (lavender cotton)	m		L	S A P	E D		2	3	4
★ Teucrium chamaedrys (germander)	s		L	S	B E D		3	4	

Grasses and Grass-like Plants

★ Calamagrostis foliosa (Cape Mendocino reed grass)	s	m	M	S A P	N B E D		3		
★ Carex spp (sedge) <i>Brown, green, or variegated varieties provide contrast in color and texture.</i>	s	m	M	S A P F	W B E D C		3		
★ Festuca idahoensis (Idaho blue fescue) <i>Small, low clumps need replacing every few years.</i>	s		V	S A P	N B E D		2	3	4

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★ <i>Lomandra longifolia</i> (mat rush)	m	L	S A P	E D	2 3 4
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Extremely drought tolerant once established.