

Native Plant Selection

There is a plant finder search engine at the Cal Flora Nursery website (www.calfloranursery.com). After checking choices in a wide range of categories (plant type, water needs, flower color, exposure, deer resistant, under oaks, attracts beneficial insects, attracts birds, etc.), it will guide you to plants that suit your particular conditions and preferences. If you have questions, call the nursery at (707) 528-8813. They are very friendly folks and will be happy to answer your questions.

Another excellent resource is the Tree of Life Nursery website (www.californianativeplants.com). Their Sage Advice feature offers valuable information on selecting plants based on a variety of categories, such as slope planting, poolside, groundcovers, replacing your lawn, screens, songbirds, butterflies, hummingbirds, and dry shade. They also provide a list of the Thirty Most Reliable Native Plants and another list of the Top Ten Native Plants. Sage Advice also provides in-depth advice on a wide variety of topics related to growing native plants.

In addition, the California Native Plant Society website (www.cnps.org) provides a wealth of information about native plants, including articles about planning your garden (including sample garden plans), habitat gardening for attracting native wildlife, and patio gardening.

If you are interested in planting in your landscape naturalistically, with plants that reflect your local native plant community, Tree of Life's Sage Advice "The California Garden" provides some basic information, or you can go to the Las Pilitas Nursery website (www.laspilitas.com) and by typing in your zipcode you can identify the type of native plant community in which you live and generate a list of the native plants that grow in that community.

A word on heavy clay soils and plant selection: The most important consideration when planting native plants is good soil drainage. If you have heavy clay soil, don't despair. The soil can be amended with a ratio of 1/3 compost to 2/3 native soil at planting time. In addition, some plants are known to tolerate heavy clay soils. All of the plants in our demonstration garden were selected on this basis.

Additional information about selecting and growing native plants may be obtained at:
www.kenwoodschool.org/terwilliger/oceanguardian.html