California Native Plants that Attract Hummingbirds
Nevada and Placer County Region of the Northern Sierra Nevada

In general, all of the flowers that attract hummingbirds also attract other nectar and pollen seekers—butterflies, bees, other insects—to varying degrees. The fruits and seeds that result from the pollinated flowers then attract an array of other wildlife, from insects to birds to an assortment of furry critters, in addition to what goes into the soil seed bank for future generations of plants. Then there are the plants the leaves of which serve as browse, from deer to rabbits and other rodents to caterpillars (larvae) for butterflies and moths and many other insects. Larger plants, particularly shrubs and trees, serve as cover, roosting, and nesting sites. The plant-by-plant details of all this are beyond the scope of this handout.

**Blooming Period:** This varies by elevation, site exposure, habitat, and weather for that particular year. The time span listed for each species roughly covers when it may start blooming at the low end of its elevation range to when it may finish at the upper end of its range. Individual plants don’t generally bloom for the full time span listed.

*Plants listed alphabetically by botanical name and family.*

**Alismataceae – Water Plantain Family**

*Sagittaria sanfordii*  
Herbaceous perennial  
Sanford’s Arrowhead*  
July–Sept

Huge cana-like leaves and spectacular white flowers with yellow centers on 2–4’ foot stalks. Good for setting on a shelf inside a pond; place soil level at water line. Sun to part sun; sandy loam to clay soil; wet (aquatic). Extirpated from southern California, and mostly extirpated from the Central Valley. Threatened by grazing, development, and channel alteration.

**Aristolochiaceae – Pipevine Family**

*Aristolochia californica*  
Semi-deciduous, woody vine  
Pipevine, Dutchman’s Pipe*  
Jan–Apr

Climbing stems with heart-shaped leaves twine beautifully over an arbor, chain-link fence, or through a shrub. Will also carpet the ground, grow into the trees (not smothering), and bloom prolificly, if it is happy. Curious 2–4″ flowers shaped like fat little pipes; patterned maroon-brown and greenish cream. Part to full shade; clay tolerant; semi-dry to semi-moist.

**Asclepiadaceae – Milkweed Family**

*Asclepias cordifolia*  
Herbaceous perennial  
Purple Milkweed*  
Apr–July

Attractive purplish green foliage topped with purple flowers. A nice plant for a hot dry spot along a path or on a slope; 1–3’ tall. Sun; dry to semi-dry. Winter dormant.

*Asclepias speciosa*  
Herbaceous perennial  
Showy Milkweed*  
May–July

Large clusters of antique or Victorian rose-color flowers, like a Fourth of July firework. Can form large clump by spreading rhizomes; 1–4’ tall. Needs cross-pollination for fruit and seed development; pollen is self-incompatible. Winter dormant. Full sun to part shade; tolerates alkaline soil; quite drought tolerant, once established.

*native to Nevada and Placer County region*
Berberidaceae – Barberry Family

Berberis (Mahonia) aquifolium

var. aquifolium evergreen shrub/thicket Barberry or Oregon-grape* Mar–May
Clusters of showy yellow flowers followed by blue-purple berries. Similar in appearance to holly. Can be used as hedge; to 10′ tall. (B. a. var. repens: ground cover form; 1–3′ tall.) Sun to shade; tolerates clay soil and dry as well as some irrigation.

Bignoniaceae – Bignonia Family

Chilopsis linearis deciduous shrub/small tree Desert Willow Apr–Sept
Seldom-seen willow-like plant grows by washes and oases in the desert. Graceful, open structure with lacy foliage; to 20′ tall. Beautiful, sweetly fragrant, trumpet-like rose-lavender flowers; needs heat to bloom. Full to part sun; sandy to rocky soil; semi-dry; drought tolerant. Does need some water, but will do poorly if given regular water once established. Native to: Southern California coastal mountains; to Utah, New Mexico, northern Mexico.

Boraginaceae – Borage Family

Cynoglossum grande herbaceous perennial Grand Hound’s Tongue* Feb–May
A native forget-me-not found in open woods. Goes completely dormant in summer. Striking foliage of broad tongue-shaped leaves appears in early January, soon followed by 1–3′ tall spikes of intense blue flowers with white centers. Dry shade; clay tolerant. Best with little or no supplemental water; will tolerate summer water in a well drained spot.

Brassicaceae – Mustard Family

Erysimum capitatum herbaceous biennial/perennial Western Wallflower* Apr–Aug
Bright yellow-orange, sweetly fragrant flowers, in dense, rounded cluster atop 6–40″ tall stems. Hummingbirds prefer manzanitas, but like to add a little spice to their life with a tasty treat from a wallflower. Full sun to partial shade; sand or clay soil; semi-dry to regular water.

Cactaceae – Cactus Family

Opuntia spp. perennial shrub to tree size Prickly-pear Cacti Mar–Aug (varies by species)
Yes, cacti are used by hummingbirds. All need full sun, sandy/gravelly/rocky soil, and excellent drainage. Native to: So. Calif. region, coast ranges, deserts, and desert mountains; to western, southwestern, and Mexican deserts.

O. basilaris woody perennial Beavertail Cactus Mar–July
A small (to 16″), well-behaved cactus, native to the pinyon-juniper woodland habitat in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, which includes a portion of the southern Sierra. Luscious magenta-pink flowers. Very difficult in clay soils, acid soils, shade, or conifer forest areas. Native to: most of genus range.

Campanulaceae – Bluebell Family

Lobelia cardinalis herbaceous perennial Cardinal Flower Aug–Oct
Native next to streams and springs. Intense, day-glow red flowers on 2′ spikes bring hummingbirds from miles around. Best in filtered light with regular water; sand to clay soil. Good container plant, hardy. Winter dormant. Native to: Southern California inner coastal mountains, Panamint Mountains (Mojave Desert); to west Texas, Mexico.

Caprifoliaceae – Honeysuckle Family

Lonicera hispidula var. vacillans semi-evergreen, woody perennial vine

Hairy or Wild Pink Honeysuckle* Mar–May
Found in nature as a loose groundcover or growing through native shrubs in oak woodlands and forests. Quite attractive planted as it occurs in nature; twining through a shrub, gives good display of pink flowers and cherry red fall fruit at the ends of 3–6′ stems; not a suitable vine for trellis. Part sun to shade; clay soil; seasonal flooding. Easy to grow in dry shade. Responds well to irrigation; very fast growing if kept moist.

Lonicera involucrata var. involucrata deciduous shrub Twinberry* Apr–June
Known as Twinberry because the paired, yellow to red-tinted, tubular flowers produce a fused pair of black berries atop a red to purple bract. Grows well in shade; occasional water; sand to clay soil. A large, fast growing shrub to 10′. Prune heavily in fall to produce a well-shaped plant.

Sambucus mexicana large, deciduous shrub/small tree Blue Elderberry* Apr–Aug
Plant as an informal, fast growing screen with grass green foliage, or prune up for a stunning small tree with a weeping habit. Adorned with broad clusters of creamy flowers in spring and edible, blue fruit in summer. Sun to shade; sandy to rocky to decomposed granite soil; clay tolerant; semi-dry to moist. Vigorous, easy to grow; to 25′ tall. Most parts of this plant are toxic to humans. One of the best genera for attracting wildlife species in sheer numbers.

*Sambucus mexicana, Blue Elderberry

* native to Nevada and Placer County region
**Symphoricarpos albus**

*Symphoricarpos var. laevigatus* deciduous shrub/thicket

Snowberry* May–June

Small, pink flowers; beautiful white berries from late winter to late summer. Excellent large-scale ground cover for dry to damp shady areas; erosion control. Trailing, rooting stems to 3′ tall. Sun to part sun; sand to clay soil; semi-dry to semi-moist, seasonal flooding; drought tolerant.

**Symphoricarpos mollis** deciduous shrub

Creeping Snowberry, Trip Vine* June–Aug

Dainty, bright pink, bell-shaped flowers in small clusters followed by clusters of pure white berries that persist through fall. Soft, small, rounded, gray-green leaves turn golden in fall. Excellent large-scale ground cover for dry to damp shady areas; erosion control. Trailing, rooting stems to 3′ long × 1′ tall. Part sun to shade; sand to clay soil; semi-moist.

**Symphoricarpos rotundifolius** deciduous shrub

Roundleaf Snowberry* (above 3,500′ var. rotundifolius June–Aug

Lovely, white to pink, elongated bell-shaped flowers; beautiful white berries in the fall. Larger berries and rounder leaves than other subspecies; 3–4′ tall. Sun to part sun; sandy to rocky to granitic soil; semi-dry to semi-moist.

**Caryophyllaceae – Pink Family**

**Silene californica** herbaceous perennial

Indian Pink* Mar–July

Native to brushy and rocky slopes, which they colonize with a stout taproot and rhizomes. Very showy, dark green, compact plant (6–12″) contrasts well with the brilliant scarlet-red flowers up to 1″ across with deeply lobed petals. (“Pink” in the common name refers to the petal lobing.) Filtered sun or light shade; sandy to rocky soil; semi-dry to dry. Very attractive to snails (especially if irrigated); does well in hanging baskets.

**Cornaceae – Dogwood Family**

**Cornus glabra** deciduous shrub/thicket

Brown Twig Dogwood* Apr–June

Native in woodlands on moist flats and along streams. Clusters of creamy white flowers followed by white to bluish berries. Great ornamental shrub or small tree, 4–15′ tall. Sun to shade; clay soil; moist.

**Crassulaceae – Stonecrop Family**

**Dudleya cymosa** perennial succulent

Canyon Dudleya, Live Forever* Apr–June

Naturally grows in rock outcroppings; excellent rock wall plant. Very drought and heat tolerant. Bright red and yellow flower clusters on pink stems to 1′ tall.

**Sedum obtusatum** ssp. *obtusatum* perennial succulent

Sierra Sedum or Stonecrop* June–July

Part sun; sandy to rocky, well-draining soil; semi-dry. Fast, low-growing and hardy plant. Basal rosette of light blue-gray-green, spoon-shaped leaves. Pale, creamy yellow flowers age to a pink tinge on erect stems to 9″. Excellent in rock or alpine garden.

**Sedum spathulifolium** perennial succulent

Pacific Sedum, Common Stonecrop* June–July

Dense, compact succulent with soft, textured leaves in flat rosettes. Bright yellow flowers on erect stems to 9′. Part sun; sandy to rocky, well-draining soil; semi-dry. Easy care. Recommended for container or rock garden.

**Ericaceae – Heath Family**

**Arbutus menziesii** evergreen tree

Pacific Madrone* Apr

Prized for its satiny orange-red bark and dark green leaves. Large clusters of white flowers, followed by bright red berries in late summer. Erect, single or multistemmed, often crooked and slanted; typically 25′ tall, can exceed 100′. Crowns broad, irregular, and sparse; may live 400–500 years. Best in well-drained soil. Can be difficult to establish.

**Arctostaphylos** spp.

evergreen, mat-forming to upright shrubs and small trees

Manzanita Jan–Mar (lower) | May–June (high country)

Many species and cultivars. Beautiful smooth red bark. Clusters of small white to pink, nodding, urn-shaped flowers. Part sun to light shade in dryland habitat (drought tolerant). One of the earliest blooming Sierran plant groups, making it important to hummingbirds.

**A. mewukka**, **mewukka** ssp. *truei* evergreen shrubs

Indian, True’s Manzanita* (above 2,500′) Feb–Mar | May–June

**A. nevadensis** prostrate, evergreen shrub, to 2′

Pinemat Manzanita* (above 3,000′) Feb–Mar | May–June

**A. patula** erect shrub, 3–7′

Greenleaf Manzanita* (above 4,500′) Mar–Apr

Above-named species best in their native ranges and habitats; do not adapt well to gardens.

**A. viscosa** ssp. *viscosa* erect shrub

Whiteleaf or Sierra Manzanita* Feb–Mar

Great addition to woodland garden or as specimen. Native to mid elevations; grows well with pines; 5–12′ × 4–5′. Granitic and acidic, well draining soils; semi-dry.

**Rhododendron occidentale** large, deciduous shrub

Western Azalea* May–Aug

Spectacular in bloom. Large clusters of 2″ long funnel-shaped, glowing white flowers, flushed yellow and pink. Has exotic, sweet, spicy fragrance. Dark green leaves turn yellow, red, purple, or orange in fall, sometimes all on a single specimen. Usually 3–6′; up to 12′. Best in moist, filtered shade.

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**Sarcoedes sanguinea**  
*herbaceous perennial*  
Snow Plant* 
(May–July)  
Native in thick humus in coniferous forests, typically Red Fir; emerges after snow recedes. A fleshy, upright plant with thick stalk; lower portion covered with scalelike leaves, upper portion covered with urn-shaped flowers—all a stunning, intense red. A root parasite, as it has no chlorophyll. A fascinating plant to be enjoyed in its native habitat.

**Fabaceae – Pea Family**

**Cercis occidentalis**  
*deciduous shrub/small tree*  
Western Redbud*  
(Feb–Apr)

Profusion of half-inch pea flowers open magenta from purple buds that mature to pink on bare branches prior to leafing out. Grows rounded on clustered, erect branches; to 2½–3½ tall. Full sun to light shade in dryland habitat (drought tolerant). Tolerates regular irrigation in well-drained soil.

**Hoita macrostachya**  
*herbaceous perennial*  
Large Leather Root*  
(June–Sept)

Native to moist situations. Spikes of purple pea flowers, to 6′ tall, last over a month before the plant slowly goes dormant for winter. Bright green shoots appear in early spring. Can be used as a soil stabilizer along a sunny stream, in a marsh, or at pond edges.

**Lotus scoparius**  
*evergreen, woody perennial*  
Deer Weed*  
(May–June)

Airy, elegant look with thin green stems and yellow-red flowers; 3–6′ × same. Sun; rocky soil; dry to semi-dry; drought deciduous. Deer relish the foliage.

**Lupinus albifrons**  
*semi-evergreen, woody perennial*  
Bush or Silver Lupine*  
(Mar–July)

A lovely if unassuming silver-leaved 4′ shrub much of the year—showstopper when its bright purple, 1′ flower spikes cover the plant. Needs full sun, good drainage, and a fairly dry situation to do its best, but will take a little extra water. Tolerates heat, nutrient-poor soil. Beautiful dry bank cover or accent for shrub border. Long-lived and reliable.

**Lupinus nanus**  
*annual*  
Sky Lupine*  
(Mar–June)

Blue-purple flowers with vertical, whitish zone in the center of the banner petal that turns rosy with pollination. Erect plant, to 2′ tall. Sun to part sun; sandy or rocky soil; dry to semi dry. One of our earliest lupines, along with similar looking *L. bicolor*, Miniature Lupine.

**Lupinus succulentus**  
*annual*  
Arroyo or Succulent Lupine*  
(Mar–June)

Gorgeous deep purple-blue flowers on fleshy plant with white zone on banner petal similar to *L. nanus*. Sky Lupine. Easy to grow; 8–24″ tall; common in disturbed areas; competes with weeds; adds nitrogen to soil. Sun to part sun; sandy to clay soil; dry to semi dry.

**Pickeringia montana**  
*evergreen shrub*  
Chaparral Pea*  
(Apr–May)

Native to hot, dry, rocky chaparral habitat. Very showy in bloom, with glowing magenta-pink pea flowers contrasting with small, dark green leaves. If you have a hot dry hillside or well drained area, though, there is hardly a showier native shrub out there; 2–6′ × same. Sun; clay tolerant; well drained; summer dry. Difficult plant to establish successfully (or propagate).

**Grossulariaceae – Gooseberry Family**

**Ribes aureum var. aureum**  
*deciduous shrub*  
Golden Currant*  
(Apr–May)

Native to moist areas. Bright yellow, scented flower clusters age to red; tasty and tart berries are yellow, orange, red, or purple-black. Use as a backdrop to a woodland planting or around oaks; 3–8′ tall; best in a light shade. May require some winter chill to break dormancy and to fruit. Sun to partial sun; clay to sandy soil; tolerates standing in water to drought. Very easy to grow. Just water.

**Ribes malvaceum**  
*semi-evergreen shrub*  
Chaparral Currant  
(Dec–Mar)

Native to chaparral, oak woodland, foothills, canyons. Does well in hot inland conditions; tolerates drought, heat, poor soil. Recommended for dry shade under oaks or pines. Many erect stems from base; 3–8′ × same. Fragrant, olive-green foliage; drought deciduous, do not water it then; to keep foliage longer through summer; mulch and water a little extra in spring. Fragrant pink flowers; berries red to blue. Sun to part sun; more shade inland; sand to clay soil, good drainage; semi-dry to semi-moist. Native to central Sierra Nevada foothills, inner North Coast Ranges, SF Bay Area, South Coast Ranges, Channel Islands; northern Baja.

**Ribes nevadense**  
*deciduous shrub*  
Mountain Pink Currant*  
(Above 3,000′)  
(May–July)

Leaves are large, soft, and fragrant. Flowers in 6″ hanging pink cascades followed by blue-black berries. Upright, open branching; 3–6′. Looks very similar to *R. sanguineum* var. glutinosum (Jan–May). Survives drought well but can grow almost in standing water.

**Ribes roezlii var. roezlii**  
*deciduous shrub*  
Sierra Gooseberry*  
(Feb–July)

Small, showy clusters of bicolored flowers with reflexed red sepals and straight white petals followed by masses of dark red, bristle-covered berries; great for gooseberry jam. In fall, foliage offers a stunning array of intense colors—yellow, red, orange, reddish-purple, salmon, pink—often many different shades on an individual plant. Prostrate form in full sun and dry conditions; taller and fountain shaped in shady, moist conditions; 18″–4′ × 3–4′. Thorns not a major problem.

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* native to Nevada and Placer County region
**Ribes sanguineum** var. **glutinosum** deciduous shrub

Pink-flowered Currant

Jan.–May

Perfect for woodland garden; especially nice around oaks because of their drought tolerance, or as foundation shrub, specimen, or informal hedge. Open and erect, to 12’. Long panicles of pale pink to rose-purple flowers; Bluish black berries. Sun to part sun; more shade inland; sand to clay soil; some summer water. **Native to:** northern and central California coastal areas.

**Ribes speciosum** semi-deciduous shrub

Fuchsia-flowering Gooseberry

Jan.–Apr

California’s showiest gooseberry. Compact, to 10’. Spiny, arching branches covered in inch long, dangling, cherry red blossoms followed by red, bristle-covered berries, which persist through summer. Partial sun to shade; loam to clay soil; dry to semi-dry. Drought tolerant and heat deciduous; will leaf out in late fall to early winter. **Native to:** central and southern California coastal areas.

**Ribes viburnifolium** evergreen shrub

Catalina Currant

Feb.–Apr

An “un-currant-like” currant with handsome, fragrant, dark glossy green leaves and dark stems. Excellent under oaks and for erosion control in dry shade. Rambling shrub makes a loose ground cover; long, arching branches root at the tips in moist soil; 3’ × 3–6’. Red flowers followed by red berries. Partial sun to shade; rocky soil, clay tolerant; dry to semi-dry. **Native to:** Santa Catalina Island, All Saints Bay; Baja.

**Hippocastanaceae — Buckeye Family**

**Aesculus californica** deciduous shrub/small tree

California Buckeye*

May

Candles of fragrant white to pinkish flowers in striking, foot-long clusters. One of the earliest plants to leaf out in winter; drops its leaves in late summer. Erect, single or multiple trunks with silvery white bark and pear-shaped fruit. Crowns flat topped to rounded; 12–30’ tall; may live 200 years. Sun to shade; moist to dry soil.

**Hydrophyllaceae — Waterleaf Family**

**Phacelia camporum** annual

Desert Blue Bells

Apr.–June

In a good year, forms a brilliant blue mass on the desert floor in open, sandy or gravelly areas. Bright royal blue flowers; very showy in interior heat; well adapted to cultivation; 12–24″. Sun; sandy to gravelly soil; semi-dry to semi-moist. **Caution:** may produce dermatitis in sensitive people. **Native to:** Mojave and Colorado Deserts.

**Iridacae — Iris Family**

**Iris douglasiana** ‘Pacific Coast Hybrids’ evergreen, herbaceous perennial

Pacific Coast Iris hybrids

Apr.–June

Elegant flowers in a broad range of colors grace the clumps of evergreen foliage (2’ × 2’). Recommended under canopy of oaks or pine trees. Part sun to shade; well drained, sandy to loam soil; semi-dry. Tolerates garden water; best kept dry during the summer. Mass plantings for best effect.

**Species native to:** California and Oregon coastal region.

**Iris missouriensis** evergreen, herbaceous perennial

Western Blue Flag* (above 3,000’)

May–July

Native in sunny, open, moist areas such as meadows, surrounded by forests. Flowers 2–3”, medium blue, lower petals (falls) intricately patterned with cream and yellow on 8–36” stems. Plant looks very much like familiar garden iris. Does not spread beyond watered areas.

**Lamiaceae — Mint Family**

**Lepechinia calycina** woody perennial

Pitcher Sage*

Apr.–June

Native to openings and edges of chaparral, usually on brushy or rocky slopes. Pungent smelling, broad green leaves are topped with clusters of 1” tubular, white flowers tinged with lavender; 1–5’. Full to part sun; rocky to heavy well draining soil. If kept completely dry, plant will drop its leaves in midsummer; water every few weeks will keep it green through to fall.

**Monardella odoratissima** herbaceous perennial

Mountain or Western Pennyroyal*

June–Sept

Long-blooming, with pale-colored flowers ranging from white to lavender. Fast growing, 1’ × 3’; invigorating foliage fragrance. Excellent for container gardens in sunny spot. Full to part sun; acidic to rocky soil; good drainage; semi-dry to dry tolerates occasional moisture.

**Monardella villosa** herbaceous perennial

Coyote Mint*

June–Sept

Dark green leaves contrast nicely with long-blooming, typically lavender flowers, though can be purple, pink, or white. Cut back heavily in winter for compact plant next season or allow to grow naturally into mats; 1–2’ × 2’. Full to part sun; good drainage; little to no summer water.
**Salvia apiana**  
White Sage  
June–July

Striking structural form brings a sense of drama to the dry garden. Spectacular in a moon garden or with night lighting. Unassuming 3’ shrub in the fall and winter shoots up 2–5’ arcing spikes of white flowers. Flowering stems flushed with pink in full sun and nutrient-poor soil. Foliage is strongly scented. Full to part sun; sandy to loam soil; good drainage; dry. **Native to:** coastal So. California to desert margins; Baja.

**Salvia clevelandii**  
Cleveland or Musk Sage  
Apr–Aug

Native in chaparral and coastal scrub on dry slopes. Quilted, dull green leaves release a wonderful aroma that carries on hot summer days. Blooms profusely in whorls of blue-purple flowers on 3–5’ shrubs. Full to part sun; sand to clay soil; good drainage; dry to semi-moist; very drought tolerant; occasional water during the dry season. Does best on sunny coastal slopes and hot dry areas. **Native to:** Southern California coastal region; to northern Baja.

**Salvia leucophylla**  
Purple Sage  
May–July

Native on dry, open hills in areas with coastal influence. Beautiful silvery foliage and pink flowers distinguish this sage: “A grey, gray, cloud with some pink, a dream for one who loves grey, or gray.” Hardy; 3–6’ with white tomentose (kinda fuzzy grey) leaves. Sun; sandy to rocky to clay soil; dry (grows rank to 8’ with irrigation); drought-deciduous. **Native to:** coastal California from Monterey to Baja.

**Salvia mellifera**  
Black Sage  
Apr–May

Native on dry foothill and lower mountain slopes. Erect, very aromatic, to 5’ tall. Numerous flowers in compact whorled clusters, white to pale blue and lilac. Useful for covering dry banks and to control soil erosion. Sun to part shade; sandy to rocky soil; clay tolerant; dry to semi-dry. Sunny exposure, well-drained soil; little or no summer water. **Native to:** California coastal regions, SF Bay to northern Baja.

**Salvia sonomensis**  
Creeping or Sonoma Sage  
June–Sept

Commonly found in shade under chaparral shrubs; low, trailing stems sometimes drape down and festoon steep banks. Ground-hugging, pale gray-green foliage combines well with many different plants; wonderful groundcover. Flowers range from light blue or purple to creamy white. Sun to shade; sandy to clay soil; dry.

**Salvia spathacea**  
Hummingbird Sage  
Mar–May

Native to woodland, chaparral, coastal-sage scrub; open or shady slopes. Very fragrant foliage to 1’; showy, fragrant, magenta flowering spikes will top 3’. Spreads by root sprouts. While not necessary, cutting the plant to the ground in January will make it look nicer the following year. Sun to shade; sandy to rocky to decomposed granite soil; clay tolerant; dry to regular water; drought and garden water tolerant. **Native to:** southern Sacramento Valley (Solano Co.), central to southern coastal region.

**Stachys ajugoides var. rigida**  
herbaceous perennial

Rigid Hedge Nettle  
May–Sept

Native in moist areas; sometimes found in drier areas, typically in the shade of shrubs. Low, spreading plant, usually with cobwebby woolly hairs covering the stems and leaves. Flowering stems rise 1–2’; widely spaced whorls of white flowers with rose-purple to purple veins. Quite variable. Use in a cool flower bed that gets some water.

**Trichostemma lanatum**  
Wooly Blue Curls  
May–Aug

Native to dry, coastal serpentine clay to gravel slopes. Unusual, rosemary-like foliage on a 3–4’ shrub. Wonderful, woolly, royal blue flowers on stems to 1’ long. Flowers and foliage both have a sweet fragrance like freshly cut cedar with a bouquet of lavender. Excellent next to a large rock, if available. Full sun; decomposed granite to rocky, well-drained soil; dry; no summer water once established. **Native to:** Southern California coast ranges.

**Liliaceae – Lily Family**

**Calochortus albus**  
perennial bulb

Fairy Lantern, White Globe Lily  
Apr–June

Beautiful white to blush pink, pendulous flowers on 15–30” stems. Sun to part shade; well drained soil; regular moisture in growth; dry in dormancy.

**Calochortus luteus**  
perennial bulbs

Yellow Mariposa Lily, Gold Nuggets  
Apr–June

Beautiful yellow flowers with dark interior markings on 8–18” stems. Native in clay soils on slopes. Sun to part shade; well drained soil; regular moisture in growth; dry in dormancy.

**Calochortus superbus**  
perennial bulb

Superb Mariposa Lily  
late May–July

Flowers usually white—sometimes cream, yellow, or magenta-pink, solid or tinted—with multicolored interior markings; on 18–24” stems. Sun to part shade; well drained soil; regular moisture in growth; dry in dormancy.

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**Calochortus venustus**  
Butterfly Mariposa Lily*  
perennial bulb  
May–July  
Flowers may be pink, white, yellow, purple, or dark red with multicolored interior markings on 4–12” stems. Sun to part shade; well drained soil; regular moisture in growth; dry in dormancy.

**Camassia quamash**  
Common Camas Lily*  
perennial bulb  
May–July  
Easy to grow; will multiply rapidly under favorable conditions creating drifts of bright, sapphire blue flowers on 1–3’ stems. Full sun, fairly heavy soil, and moist during growing season, where bulbs can remain undisturbed for many years, as in their native meadow habitat.

**Dichelostemma capitatum**  
Blue Dicks*  
perennial bulb  
late Feb–May  
Easy, charming; excellent mixed with smaller native grasses in a meadow. Tight umbels of upright, bell-shaped blue flowers clustered at end of 12–24” stalk. Full sun to part sun; clay to sandy soil; regular moisture in growth, dry in dormancy.

**Lilium humboldtii**  
Humboldt Lily*  
perennial bulb  
June–July  
Spectacular large, spotted, orange Turk’s cap flowers, on 3–10’ stems. Does well under oaks. Shade or partial sun; well draining soil; dry. Give water in spring but very little in summer.

**Lilium pardalinum**  
Leopard Lily*  
perennial bulb  
May–July  
Native in moist areas. Beautiful, graceful lily with leopard-spotted, red-tipped, orange Turk’s cap blooms; on 2–7’ stems. Partial sun; well draining soil; regular water. Easy garden culture.

**Lilium parvum**  
Alpine or Fairy Lily* (above 4,000’)  
perennial bulb  
July–Sept  
Lovely upward-facing, orange trumpet-shaped flowers, on 3–5’ stems. Full to partial sun; sandy loam soil; wet.

**Lilium washingtonianum**  
Washington Lily* (above 3,500’)  
perennial bulb  
July–Aug  
Native to dry, coniferous forest habitats. Magnificent, 3” waxy, trumpet-shaped, deliciously fragrant, pure white flowers, held horizontally, on 4–6’ stems. Partial to full shade.

**Triteleia ixioides**  
Prettyface, Golden Brodiaea*  
perennial bulb  
June–Sept  
Large clusters of butter yellow flowers with dark stripes on sturdy 12” stems. Profuse bloomer. Sun to part shade; well drained; regular moisture in growth, dry in dormancy.

**Triteleia laxa**  
Ithuriel’s Spear, Wally Basket, Grass Nut*  
perennial bulb  
Apr–June  
Very large, open umbels of funnel-shaped, sky blue flowers with purple stripes and a sparkling sheen on 18–24” stems. Excellent mixed with smaller native grasses in a meadow. Sun to part shade; well drained; regular moisture in growth, dry in dormancy. Multiplies rapidly in heavy clay soils.

**Triteleia lilacina**  
Glassy Hyacinth or Brodiaea, Foothill Triteleia*  
perennial bulb  
Mar–Apr  
Dainty bunches of white flowers, often tinted and striped blue or pink, with an inner diamond-like sparkle on 4–16” stems. Sun to part shade; well drained; regular moisture in growth, dry in dormancy.

**Malvaceae – Mallow Family**

**Sidalcea malvaeflora**  
ssp. asperella  
herbaceous perennial  
Checkerbloom*  
May–July  
Native to open dry places in forest or scrub. Bright to deep pink flowers, with white veins on leafy stems to 24” that may sprawl over a mat of gray-glaucous green leaves. Adds a woody effect to perennial border. Sun to shade; rocky to acidic soil; semi-moist; goes dormant with drought.

**Sidalcea oregana**  
herbaceous perennial  
Oregon Sidalcea, Mountain Hollyhock*  
June–Aug  
Carmine-pink flowers on a 2’ spike atop bright green foliage. Excellent as part of a native “cottage garden.” Native to meadows, streamsides, lake shores, and seeps. Tough, easy to grow. Sun to part sun; semi-moist to moist.

**Onagraceae – Evening Primrose Family**

**Clarkia unguiculata**  
anual  
Elegant Clarkia  
May–July  
Bright purplish flowers on erect, 3’ stems. One of the longest lasting flowers. Very showy and easily grown. Sun; sand to clay soil; dry to semi-dry.

**Epilobium angustifolium**  
ssp. circumvagum  
herbaceous perennial  
Red Fireweed* (above 3,500’)  
July–Sept  
Tall inflorescence heavily festooned with 1” deep pink to magenta flowers. Excellent to enhance a woodland or riparian site; 1–6’ in bloom. Full sun to fairly deep shade; moist; no mulch. A great plant for those of you who need your lawn but feel guilty. Called Fireweed because it comes back rapidly and in abundance after a fire, starting up the plant community.

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* native to Nevada and Placer County region
Epilobium canum (Zauschneria californica)

* native to Nevada and Placer County region

ssp. latifolium* (ground-hugging; moister)

ssp. canum (to 3’ tall; drier)

California or Hummingbird Fuchsia

June–Oct

Several varieties and cultivars. Species all have glowing scarlet red, tubular flowers. Cultivars include flowers in shades of white, pink, and orange. Ground-hugging to 3’ tall. Excellent in rock walls, on slopes, for erosion control; can be invasive where watered. Hardy; extremely drought and heat tolerant; garden tolerant. Full sun to part shade; rocky, sandy, clay soil; dry to semi-moist. Key species for tall migration of hummingbirds along Pacific Flyway and Rocky Mountains.

ssp. canum native to: coastal, central, and So. California.

Oenothera elata
Evening Primrose*

Biennial

June–Sept

Lemon yellow flowers, to 3″ across, unfurl at dusk—from tight bud to full open in minutes—and wither by mid-morning. Flowering stalks (1–4') arch up from basal rosette of leaves. Hardy; reseeds freely. Sun to part sun; rocky to sandy soil; dry to semi-moist. Does well in drier areas.

Paconiaaeae – Peony Family

Paeonia brownii
Western Peony* (above 4,000')

Herbaceous perennial

May–June

A stately gray perennial with maroon flowers tucked under shrubs on dry slopes in its native habitat in Northern California, where it grows best. Fleshy roots store food to carry the plant through the dry summers and produce new leaves and flowers the following spring (6–18” × 18”). Good example of a circumventor—a drought buster, grows quickly and flowers profusely. Needs partial shade; sand, rocky soil; regular water in growth; no water in summer. Needs perfect conditions, so difficult elsewhere.

Papaveraceae – Poppy Family

Dicentra formosa
Wild Bleeding Heart*

Herbaceous perennial

Mar–July

Native to moist woodland habitat. Clusters of pendulous, pale pink to deep rose flowers on leafless stems, 8–18” tall. Needs moisture and partial to full shade. Spreads readily in irrigated garden habitat.

Philadelphaceae – Mock Orange Family

Philadelphus lewisii
Wild Mock Orange*

Deciduous shrub

June–July

White flowers in ornamental clusters with fragrant of citrus flowers. Attractive foliage and rapid growth, to 10’. Use as informal hedge or foundation planting. Full to part sun; rocky and acidic soil; semi-dry to semi-moist.

Platanaceae – Sycamore Family

Platanus racemosa
Western Sycamore

Large, deciduous tree

Apr–June

Native to watercourses in canyon bottoms throughout the lower elevations of California and many of the Western States. Stately tree can reach up to 75’ and has beautiful leaning trunks of smooth, mottled, cream-colored bark. Crowns irregularly rounded; may live 200 years. Can be used as a specimen or in parks where summer shade from its big leaves is desirable. Not for tidy gardens; drops leaves and bark once year round. Good for fast shade. Full sun; clay to sandy soil; semi-dry to moist. Likes consistent moisture; slow, deep waterings; drought tolerant once well established. Down from stems and leaves used by hummingbirds to line nests.

Native to: central and southern Sierra Foothills, and beyond.

Polemoniaceae – Phlox Family

Collomia grandiflora
Largeflower Collomia*

Annual

May–July

Native in dry forest openings. Spherical inflorescence holds numerous light orange buds that open into funnel-shaped, lighter apricot flowers that fade almost to white with age; blue pollen. Erect stem, 4–10”, sometimes branched.

Gilia capitata ssp. capitata
Globe Gilia*

Annual

Apr–July

Native in dry, open areas; fire follower. Slender, branched, 6–12” plant topped with 1” spherical head of pale blue flowers. Full sun; sandy to clay soil; dry to semi-dry.

Gilia tricolor ssp. tricolor
Birds-eye Gilia*

Annual

Mar–Apr

Abundant light blue to purple blooms on 4–15” stems. Best for meadowlike plantings. Grows and blooms quickly from seed; frost tender. Full sun; sandy to clay soil; dry to semi-dry.

Ipomopsis aggregata
Scarlet Gilia, Skyrocket*

Biennial

June–Sept

Native to openings in woodlands and shrublands. Slender, trumpet-shaped flowers range from fiery red to red-orange with yellow mottling on stems 12–32” tall. Basal rosette of finely cut, green leaves silver speckled with fine white hairs. Full sun; sandy to rocky, well drained soil. Mass plantings give best effect.

Ranunculaceae – Buttercup Family

Aquilegia formosa
Crimson or Western Columbine*

Herbaceous perennial

May–Aug

Lovely woodland plant. Delicate blue-green foliage and dainty, nodding deep red-orange, tipped with yellow flowers; 3’ stalks. Sun to shade; sandy loam; moist; requires more water in sun.
**Delphinium nudicaule** herbaceous perennial
Red Larkspur June–Sept
Native to moist talus, wooded, rocky slopes. Red-orange flowers on 1–3′ stalks. Shade to part shade; well-drained, semi-dry to dry. Needs dry (no water) dormant period after flowering. Native to: central Sierra, central to northern coastal region, northern-most Sierra, southern Cascade Range; to southern Oregon.

**Delphinium variegatum** herbaceous perennial
Royal Larkspur* Mar–May
Native in open grasslands and occasional in chaparral and woodland openings. One of the showiest of our native delphiniums; 6–36′ tall. Large, deep royal blue to blue-purple flowers; occasionally various paler shades of blue to lavender or white; upper petals of center “bee” are white.

**Ranunculus californicus** herbaceous perennial
California Buttercup* Apr–June
Bright yellow flowers; 12–30″ tall. Part shade; loam to clay soil; semi-moist (dry summer); likes spring moisture. Reseeds readily. Beautiful addition to a mixed border or meadow.

**Clematis ligusticifolia** woody, deciduous vine
Western Clematis or Virgin’s Bower* Apr–Aug
Very similar to *C. lasiantha* (Mar–June). More vigorous grower; to 20′. Requires more moisture; clay tolerant. Foliage turns yellow in fall.

**Delphinium cardinale** herbaceous perennial
Red or Scarlet Larkspur or Delphinium May–June
Native on hot slopes near chaparral. Dozens of beautiful bright red, long-spurred flowers on 2–6′ stalks. Grows from deep woody roots; needs heat during the growing period; goes dormant in late summer. Needs good drainage, partial shade, and regular water while growing. Must be protected from snails. Native to: coastal mountains, Monterey County south.

**Delphinium glaucum** herbaceous perennial
Mountain or Tower Larkspur* (above 6,000′) July–Sept
Lush foliage with highly lobed, divided, and coarsely toothed leaves; to 7′ tall. Flowers a delicious shade of blue-purple. Typically grows in large stands in its native habitat. Full sun and moisture.

**Rhamnus ilicifolia** ssp. *tomentella* evergreen shrub
Hoary or Chaparral Coffeeberry* Apr–June
Inflorescences a dense cluster of 5–60 small, yellow-green flowers with abundant nectar in leaf axils, followed by small fruits (drupes) that change from green to red to black when ripe. Grey, hoary (dense covering of fine hairs) leaves, bark gray or red, twigs velvety; 6–10′. Prefers full sun; tolerates part shade; semi-dry to dry.

**Rhamnaceae – Buckthorn Family**

**Ceanothus** spp.
 evergreen, prostrate to upright shrubs to small trees
Ceanothus, Wild or California Lilac Mar–May
Many species and cultivars. Major component and genus of the shrub and groundcover layers throughout the Sierra mountains and foothills. Showy inflorescences of small blue or white flowers. Part sun to light shade in dryland habitat (drought tolerant). Plants furnish excellent deer browse.

**C. cuneatus** var. *cuneatus* evergreen shrub
Buckbrush, Wedgeleaf Ceanothus* Mar–Apr
Intricately branched, prostrate or erect; small, leathery leaves, dull or shiny green; to 8′ tall. Flowers white, blue, or lavender; mostly white in our area.

**C. lemmonii** evergreen shrub
Lemmion’s or Trinity Ceanothus* Apr–May
Low, moundng, compact; small, thin, dull waxy green leaves; 3′ × 3–6′. Flowers varying shades of blue.

**Rhamnus tomentella** evergreen shrub
Hoary or Chaparral Coffeeberry* Apr–June
Clusters of small, green flowers (without petals) with abundant nectar in leaf axils, followed by bright red drupes in summer. Small, round spiny leaves with good leaf color; tough plant to 15′. Sun to shade; sand to clay soil; dry to semi-dry; drought tolerant. Use as background, screen, or hedge.

**Rosaceae – Rose Family**

**Geum triflorum** herbaceous perennial
Prairie Smoke, Old-Man’s Whiskers* (above 3,900′) Apr–Aug
Attractive nodding reddish pink buds open to creamy, pink-tinged upright flowers on small, compact perennial, 6–20″ tall. Vertical, fuzzy styles remain as seeds form. Very nice for borders. Partial sun; sandy soil; semi-dry to semi-moist.

**Heteromeles arbutifolia** evergreen shrub/small tree
Toyon, Christmas Berry* June–July
Dark, leathery, glossy green leaves. Multi-trunked, 6–15′ tall; tolerates some pruning, but flowers—in broad, showy, creamy white clusters—only on second-year growth. Beautiful red berries in fall and winter. Easy! In fire areas, water a little more to improve fire resistance (but makes it more appealing to the deer). Sun to partial sun; sand, clay, or serpentine soil; dry to semi-dry. Hollywood was named for this plant, which used to cover the hillsides there.

* native to Nevada and Placer County region
**Rosa californica**
*California Wild Rose*
Deciduous shrub/thicket
May–Aug
Clusters of 1–2” fragrant, rosy pink flowers followed by large, red, decorative hips that make wonderful tea. With hooked thorns, makes excellent barrier and cover for wildlife. Hardy, soil stabilizer; to 5’ × 5’. Part shade to shade; clay to sandy soil; semi-dry to moist.

**Spiraea douglasii**
*Douglas’ Spirea*
Deciduous shrub
June–Sept
Dense, 4–6” elongated clusters of tiny, fragrant, magenta-pink flowers with long stamens that give a fuzzy look. Leaves turn yellow to orange in fall. Beautiful, hardy, fast, 3–6’ erect, clump-forming. Full to part sun; sand to clay soil; semi-moist to moist.

**Saxifragaceae – Saxifrage Family**

**Salix spp.**
*Willows*
Deciduous shrubs and trees
Mar–Apr
Willows are especially important because their blossoms offer lots of nectar, attract swarms of insects, and produce, with their seeds, plant down, which the hummingbirds use in their nest construction. Common willows in our area:
- **S. exigua** (Narrowleaf*), **S. gooddingii** (San Joaquin*), **S. laevigata** (Red*), **S. lasiolepis** (Arroyo*), **S. lucida** (Shining*), **S. scouleriana** (Scouler’s*)

**Saxifraga micrantha**
*Heart-leafed or Red Climbing Penstemon, Straggly Keckiella*
Herbaceous perennial
May–July
Native to moist, rocky habitats, especially on cliffs. Tiny white flowers on airy, pink 12–40” stems above mainly basal maplelike leaves. Filtered sun to shade.

**Scrophulariaceae – Figwort Family**

**Castilleja spp.**
*Paintbrush*
Herbaceous perennials
May–Aug (varies by species)
Important hummingbird plants in the western US. Many are native in dry, open, chaparral habitats; some are native to moister habitats. Come up in the spring after the rains. Heights range from 1” to 3’. Partially parasitic; require the shrubs and plants that each grows with natively. Many species have striking red flowers (actually the flower bracts).
- **C. affinis** (Common*), **C. applegatei** (Applegate’s*), **C. miniata** (Giant*), **C. pruinosa** (Frosty*)

**Castilleja exserta**
*Yellow Owl’s Clover*
Annual
Mar–May
Dense spikes of bright maroon tufts, 4–16” tall. Comes up in the spring after the rains. Partially parasitic; does best with grasses or other wildflowers. Sun; well drained soil; regular moisture in growth.

**Collinsia heterophylla**
*Chinese Houses*
Annual
Mar–July
Common name derives from dense, pagoda-like slanted whorls of typically two-tone flowers. Color varies from lilac to rose-purple to all white. Plants 6–20” tall. Shade; sand to clay soil, semi-moist.

**Keckiella breviflora**
*Gaping Pensemon*
Woody perennial
May–June
Native to rocky slopes, forest, chaparral. Tubular, hairy, white flowers open from orangy-pink buds. Does well under oaks with little summer water. Mounding to fountain-shaped shrub; 2–4’ × 3–6’. Native to: Southern California desert region; to Arizona, Mexico.

**Keckiella cordifolia**
*Heart-leafed or Red Climbing Penstemon, Straggly Keckiella*
Woody perennial
June–Aug
Planted near a fence, it can climb much like a climbing rose. Red-orange flowers at branch tips; leaves turn a nice red before dropping in fall. Works well in dry shady areas; great under oaks; 3’ × 6’. Cut back in fall for a compact plant the next year. Sun or shade; sand to clay soil; semi-dry; drought tolerant and drought deciduous. Native to: coastal region, Monterey south to Baja.

* native to Nevada and Placer County region
Keckiella lemmonii  woody perennial
Lemmon's Keckiella, Shrubby Penstemon*  Apr–June
Native to rocky slopes, coniferous and mixed forests, and chaparral. Complex flower color of pale yellow tinged and lined with plum. Drought deciduous; 2–5′.

Mimulus (Diplacus) aurantiacus  evergreen, woody perennial
"aurantiacus"  Profusion of apricot orange flowers. Leaves narrow, glossy green, and sticky; 2–4′ × same. Prune spent flower stalks to encourage more blooms; cut back in late winter for a compact, bushy plant next season. Full sun to part shade; semi-dry to dry. Can survive complete drought; looks more lush and blooms longer with a little irrigation.

Mimulus (Diplacus) bifidus  evergreen, woody perennial
Sierra Bush Monkeyflower*  May–July
Abundant large flowers an exquisite, pale apricot color; can completely obscure the foliage. Leaves narrow and glossy green. Considered by many to be our loveliest shrubby monkeyflower; somewhat lower growing than other species; 2–4′ × same. Full to filtered sun; must have good drainage; drought tolerant.

Mimulus cardinalis  herbaceous perennial
Scarlet Monkeyflower*  Apr–Oct
Stunning orange-red flowered plant native along rivers and streams and in seep areas. Can be very vigorous under favorable conditions. Multiple stems, 1–3′; tends to sprawl. May die back to the roots in winter; rebounds in the spring. Full sun to part shade; clay tolerant; moist to wet; tolerates heavy, wet soils.

Mimulus guttatus  herbaceous perennial/annual
Seepspring Monkeyflower*  Mar–Sept
Mostly winter dormant, stalks rise quickly and are soon topped with many large, cheerful, bright yellow flowers as weather warms. Common in most types of wet habitats. Highly variable plant; 2–36″ tall. Full sun to part shade; clay tolerant; wet. Great for containers or a wet garden area, such as under a dripping, bird-attracting water feature.

Mimulus lewisii  herbaceous perennial
Lewis' Monkeyflower* (above 4,000′)  June–Sept
Native along stream banks and seeps. Lovely, large pink flowers. Multiple stems, 1–3′ tall. Full sun to part shade; moist; tolerates heavy wet soil, cold, and wind; does not like moist heat.

Penstemon azureus  low, woody perennial
Aztlan Penstemon*  May–July
Profuse bloomer with blue-purple flowers on 8–20″ stems with bluish green leaves. Refined, neat, and tidy; perfect for small borders along paths or near rock walls. Good on dry slopes as a small scale groundcover reaching only a few inches high or mixed with other natives. Full sun to part shade; sandy to rocky soil; good drainage; semi-dry to moist; drought and garden tolerant, if not overwatered.

Penstemon centranthifolius  woody perennial
Scarlet Bugler  Apr–July
Native in chaparral and oak woodlands. Bright red flowers on 2–4′ spikes with gray foliage. The native Indian name for this plant means “hummingbird’s kiss.” Full sun to part shade; will flower more in the sun. Clean, bare soil with low fertility; little summer water. Tolerates hot summers and cold winters. Native to: North Coast Ranges and Great Valley margins south to Mexico.

Penstemon eatonii  woody perennial
Firecracker Penstemon  Apr–June
Attractive addition to perennial border with bold, 2′ spikes of bright scarlet flowers. Spreads to form a low, evergreen patch. Fairly clay, water, and shade tolerant; takes drought quite well. Native to: desert slopes of Southern California.

Penstemon grinnellii  woody perennial
Grinnell's Beardtongue, Southern Woodland Penstemon  Apr–Aug
Very showy rock garden plant with blue-green leaves and pink-violet flowers on a 2′ stalk. Needs perfect drainage; will survive in clay if planted on a slope and not watered in the summer; drought tolerant. Native to: southern Sierra Nevada and southern coastal region.

Penstemon heterophyllus  woody perennial
Foothill Penstemon*  May–June
Native to grassland, chaparral, and forest opening habitats. Very showy and profuse flowers in a gorgeous color range from intense blue to violet with shades of magenta, all from yellow buds on 1–5′ stalks. Full sun; clay tolerant if well-drained; semi-dry to dry; quite heat and drought tolerant; with care, water tolerant. A good subject for borders or edging in front of large shrubs. Dubbed ‘Blue Bedder’ by the nursery trade.

Penstemon laetus  woody perennial
Gay Penstemon*  May–July
Variable species with blue-violet to blue or pale lavender flowers on 12–30″ stalks. Full sun; good drainage; drought tolerant, but looks better with a little summer water. Garden tolerant if kept on the dry side.

Penstemon heterophyllus, Foothill Penstemon
Illustration by and courtesy of Dyanne Johnson
**Penstemon newberryi** mat-forming, woody perennial
*Mountain Pride* (above 4,000′) June–Aug
Stunning in bloom with vivid, deep rose-pink flowers. Native in nearly straight granitic scree and rock, with summers rarely above 85°F, moist ground until end of flowering season, and blanket of insulating winter snow. Good for true rock gardens or beautiful container specimen; 5–12″ tall; must have very good drainage, water just to keep from drying out completely, and plenty of sun. Somewhat finicky species when planted in the ground; does poorly in heavy soils, summer heat, and winter rain and cold.

**Penstemon rydbergii** low, mat-forming perennial
*Meadow Penstemon* (above 4,000′) May–Aug
Native in moist meadows. Bright lavender-blue flowers in whorls on a 4–6″ spire. Full sun to part shade; regular water. Easy to grow in garden conditions.

**Scrophularia californica** herbaceous perennial
*California Figwort* June–Aug
Interesting, small two-toned flowers of brownish maroon and pale yellowish green. Widely branching with handsome, toothed foliage; 2–4′ tall. Fast spreading rootstock; can become invasive with summer water. Part sun to shade; sandy to rocky soil; semi-dry to moist; best in well-drained, open heavy clay soils. Nice woodland feel.

**Penstemon speciosus** woody perennial
*Showy Penstemon* (above 4,000′) June–Aug
Showy border plant with 2′ spikes of sky blue flowers. Full sun; good drainage; little water; drought and heat tolerant.

**Solanaceae – Nightshade Family**

**Solanum xanti** herbaceous perennial
*Purple Nightshade* Mar–Sept
Native in chaparral and coastal scrub, twining through larger shrubs and adorning them with its broad, lavender-blue flowers. Planted on its own, makes showy mound of gray-green stems and foliage to about 3′ tall. Cut back a couple times a year to control its rambling growth habit, if desired. Sun to part sun. sandy to rocky soil; semi-dry; very drought tolerant. *This plant is poisonous and should not be used for human consumption in any form.*

**Verbenaceae – Vervain Family**

**Verbena hastata** biennial/perennial
*Verbena, Blue Vervain* June–Sept
Violet flowers in dense, 3–6″ spikes; to 5′ × 3′. Sun to part shade; semi-moist to moist. Native to wet places, ditches, marshes. Good for pond edge or wet garden area, such as under a dripping, bird-attracting water feature.

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Information Sources