



# Shrubs

Shrubs are some of the most California Friendly plants. It is not because they are the most drought tolerant plants—what beats yucca—but because they provide the greatest number of benefits per gallon of water.

The benefits of shrubs include:

1. They use less water and resources than many perennials and most trees.
2. They have long lives and require less overall maintenance.
3. They tolerate urban soil better than smaller plants.
4. They are intimately connected to biological processes because the majority are animal-pollinated or have their seeds distributed by animals. This also means they produce less allergens.
5. And, for the gardener, they forgive and recover gracefully from accidents, mistakes, and mishaps.

Technically, a shrub is a plant not growing to more than 25' with many woody stems originating from its base. This chapter provides general growing tips and then specific recommendations for both the low-growing, ground-hugging shrubs and the larger ones.



California wild rose, lavender, manzanita, toyon and Pacific wax myrtle grace this beautiful landscape. Energy Resource Center, Downey.

# General Growing Tips

Below are general guidelines for growing shrubs and includes information on soils, irrigation, fertilization, pruning and renewal. Following this section are specific recommendations for individual shrubs.

## Soil

The shrubs listed in this chapter grow naturally in biologically rich areas, such as chaparral, streamside, and woodland environments. The soils in these environments are rich, too, teeming with bacterial and fungal life. While these shrubs can grow in almost any type of soil, they favor several key characteristics;

- The soil should contain medium amounts of organic matter and be mulched as well. Amendments should include thick and carbonous organics such as wood chips as well as quick to decompose ones such as compost. Too much carbon is better than too much compost. Desert shrubs are an exception; they prefer soils low in organic material.
- The soil's pH should be neutral to slightly acidic—from 6 to 7 pH. Most urban soils are already in this range. However, desert, scrub and some chaparral shrubs favor slightly alkaline soils.
- Good drainage is essential. Good drainage supports plant health by reducing the chances of toxicity, ensuring the movement of gases, and encouraging healthy microbes.

## Irrigation / Water Requirements

All the shrubs included in this chapter are tough. The soils around most shrubs can dry to 6" or more, some even to 1'. This means that the irrigation needs to run a long time to get the water deep, and then be off for a long time until waiting while the soil dries. As an example, a large shrub in clay soil that dries to 1' will require about 150 gallons of water, but it may take that soil about 3 weeks to dry to 1'. For a more thorough explanation, please refer to the Irrigation chapters.

Many of the plants included in this chapter are summer-dormant and the irrigation recommendations honor that. Stimulating a plant during its dormancy may shorten its life and encourage pest problems.



Coyote brush goes dormant late summer. Reducing irrigation favors this natural cycle and can extend the life of tough summer dormant plants such as these.

## Fertilizing / Fertilization

Most of the shrubs in this chapter come from biologically rich areas with biologically complex soils. Most of these shrubs favor semi-fertile soils with both bacterial and fungal life. Wood chips, mulch, and compost are usually enough. Fertilizers might be needed in coarse and sandy soils; a general-purpose organic fertilizer in spring is sufficient. Activated sludge or animal meals mixed with the woody mulch is an ideal supplement.

Note that desert, scrub and some chaparral plants favor soils much lower in organic matter. Gravel, decomposed granite (dg) and river rock are common mulches for these shrubs. Fertilizers are not recommended, even organic ones. Fertilizers can shorten these plants' lives and encourage pest problems.



Dense and woody mulch is preferred around plants with low nutrient needs. The mulch pictured above protects the soil, conserves water, suppresses weeds, and provides low levels of nutrients to the sagebrush and trailing sage after it has decomposed.

## Pruning

Only topiary shrubs need constant pruning. The shrubs below will benefit from strategic pruning, but not constant. The most frequent pruning tasks are lightly shearing for compactness and containment, and thinning to remove unhealthy stems, improve aesthetic structure, and increase air flow. Any shrub that needs regular pruning, particularly shearing, should be removed and replanted with something more suitable.

Unlike the larger shrubs, low-growing, rooting shrubs can be maintained with a variety of pruning approaches: mowing, pinching, shearing, thinning and weed whacking. But, as with the larger shrubs, pruning should be strategic and limited.

## As a Rule

- Never remove more than one-third of a plant; one-fifth is usually better.
- Avoid pruning out of season because it increases chances of climatic injury and pest infestations.
- Never prune when the soil is wet—soil compaction is inevitable and creates a slew of problems. Work when the soil is dry or only slightly moist.



The island mallow (*Malva assurgentiflora*) pictured has been properly pruned. The interior has been cleaned of crossing and weak stems, the larger branches have been cut back to live nodes, and selective pinching will help keep it compact. Arlington Garden, Pasadena.

## Renewal: When is the Best Time?

An old or unhealthy plant increases risk in a landscape. These vulnerable plants are more prone to breakage; they require more resources and pesticides to sustain; and they may help spread diseases and pests—all of which increases economic costs. A smart gardener will remove a plant before it becomes a liability. The characteristics of a plant that needs replacing include:

- Older leaves and limbs are dead. On trees, 50% or more of the trunk has either dead limbs or no limbs
- The living foliage is only at the very end of the branches, instead of throughout the entire branch.
- During summer the plant drops more leaves than usual.
- When a bud or disease infestation is difficult to control, if possible at all.
- A plant does not recover, or is slow to recover from injury.
- A plant shows signs of decay, such as mushrooms coming up from its base and roots, or shelf fungi along its trunk.



The *Encelia*, buckwheat and sagebrush pictured at left are generally short-lived plants and no amount of pruning will bring them back. These plants should be removed.

# Individual Plant Care

The plants below are listed by their botanic names. They are also cross-referenced by their common names at the end of the chapter.

---

**Note:** *Irrigation requirements are expressed in the amount of inches a soil should dry before receiving supplemental water. Of course, if a soil never dries to prescribed depth, which is not uncommon, then the plant requires no irrigation.* ■

---

## Low, Rooting and Spreading

### ***Acacia redolens*, A. r. ‘Desert Carpet’** Desert carpet

Dry to 6" year round. Low nutrient needs; nothing more than mulch is needed. However, because this plant is usually planted on slopes, a mild, well-balanced organic supplement should be applied every 2 or 3 years will help improve appearance and increase blooms. Too much moisture and fertilizer will shorten its life. Push stems into soil to root in late winter/early spring. Thrips and mites can be problems.

### ***Acalypha californica*** California copperleaf

Tough Southern California native. After established, dry to 4"–6" in winter/spring, and 9" to 1' in fall. No irrigation in summer. Low nutrient needs; gravel and stone are the best mulches; nothing richer than wood chips is ever needed. Suffers greatly in dense soils. Pinch or lightly shear in winter for compactness. Thin and remove rangy stems, crossing branches, and damaged wood in late fall/winter.

### ***Adenostoma fasciculatum* ‘Prostrate’** Prostrate chamise

Southern California native. Dries to 6" late winter/early spring and to 1' late spring through late summer. No irrigation the rest of the year. Low nutrient needs; nothing more than a light layer of wood chips or mulch is needed. Too much moisture and fertilizers will either shorten its life or cause it to rot. Suffers in full sun inland. Push stems into the soil to root in winter.

### ***Arctostaphylos* spp. ‘Prostrate’** Trailing manzanita

Some Southern California natives. Prefers a moist winter and spring, drying to only 4", and some moisture the rest of the year, drying to 6" summer and fall. Moderate nutrient needs and mulch; compost or humus may be needed yearly. Will suffer in full sun inland. Push stems into ground to root in late in fall/winter.

***Artemisia caucasica*** Silver spreader

Dry to 6" in spring, 9" to 1' summer and fall (depending on distance from coast). No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch will do. It will rot in dense, wet soils. If rangy or too woody, then cut back to succulent wood late winter/early spring. Push stems into soil to root in late fall/winter.

***Artemisia 'Powis Castle'*** Silver sage

Dry to 6" in spring and fall, 4" in summer. No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch will do. Favors good drainage. Pinch or lightly shear to create bushiness. Although it does not require a lot of pruning, remove rangy stems in early spring to improve appearance. Might be short-lived.

***Baccharis pilularis*** Coyote brush

Southern California native. Dry to 6" in spring, 9" to 1' summer and fall (depending on distance from coast). No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch and compost will suffice. Too much moisture and fertilizer will shorten its life. Pinch and shear in early spring to induce bushiness. Push stems into soil to root in late fall/winter.

***Berberis (Mahonia) aquifolium, B. fremontii, B. pinnata, B. repens*** Oregon

grape, Desert mahonia, California holly grape, Creeping mahonia  
Many but not all are California natives. Dry to 4" in spring, 6" in summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Moderate nutrient needs but prefers acidic soils. Mulch, compost and an organic supplement will be needed every 2 to 3 years. Will sunburn if in full sun inland. Shear to contain and remove twiggy growth any time of year. If looking rangy or tired, cut nearly to the ground in late winter/early spring. Spreads by stolons and propagating from root division is easy in spring.

***Carissa macrocarpa 'Green Carpet'*** Prostrate natal plum

Dry to 4" in spring, 6" in summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Moderate nutrient needs; yearly mulch and compost may have to be supplemented occasionally with a well-balanced organic fertilizer. Pinch and lightly shear to induce bushiness in early spring. Push stems into soil to root in late winter/early spring.

**Ceanothus gloriosus, C. griseus horizontalis, C. maritimus** California lilac

Some California natives. Dry to 6" in spring and summer, to 1' in fall. No irrigation in winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; mulch and compost may be needed yearly. Too much moisture and nutrients can shorten an already short life. Suffers in too much sun inland. Pinch or lightly shear in late fall to increase bushiness. Push stems into soil to root in winter.

**Coprosma repens** Creeping mirror plant

Dry to 4" spring and summer, 6" fall and winter. Moderate nutrient needs and mulch, compost and humus are all that is required. Do not irrigate when excessively humid as *Coprosma* is prone to rot. Push stems into soil to root in late winter/early spring.

**Cotoneaster dammeri 'Lowfast'** Bearberry cotoneaster

Dry to 4" in spring, 6" summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; typically mulch and compost are all that is needed. Cotoneaster does not respond well to heavy pruning, so only lightly shear to induce bushiness in early spring. Push stems into the soil to root in winter.

**Hypericum calycinum** Creeping St. Johnswort

Dry to 4" in spring, 6" in summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch are sufficient. If looking rangy or twiggy, mow or shear to 3" in winter. Spreads by rhizomes and easily propagated by root divisions in spring.

**Iva hayesiana** Poverty weed or San Diego marsh-elder

Southern California native that only requires irrigation in the spring, drying to 6". No irrigation the rest of the year. Low nutrient needs; wood chips are sufficient. Suffer in acidic and moist soils. If it gets rangy, mow or shear in late fall. Push stems into soil to root in late fall/winter.

**Juniperus spp.** Creeping / prostrate junipers

Along the coast dry to 9" in spring and summer, to 1' in fall. No irrigation in winter. In the hotter and drier (inland) areas dry to 4" in spring, 6" summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. These plants are easily overwatered in dense, clay soils. Low nutrient needs; mulch and compost will do. Junipers need little pruning, but pinch and shear to induce bushiness in late winter. Wash foliage occasionally to remove dust and mites. Push stems into the soil to root in winter/early spring.

**Lantana montevidensis** Purple trailing lantana

Dry to 4" in spring, 6" in summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Requires almost no irrigation in the shade. Low nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch and compost will be enough. Suffers from too much moisture and fertilization. If looking rangy or twiggy, mow or shear to 3" in late winter/early spring. Push stems into the soil to root in winter.

**Myoporum 'Pacifcum', M. parvifolium** Pacific myoporum, Creeping myoporum

Tough plant, especially along the coast, where it can dry to 6" in spring, 9" in summer and fall. In the hotter, drier areas, dry to only 4" in spring and 6" summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. It will rot in dense, wet soils. Low nutrient needs; mulch and compost will suffice. Too much water and nutrients will shorten its life. Pinch or lightly shear in late winter/early spring to induce bushiness. Push stems into the ground to root in winter. *Myoporum* are susceptible to thrips.

**Phlomis italica** Balearic Island sage

Tough plant. Dries to 6" in spring, summer and fall along the coast, but only 4" to 5" inland. No irrigation in winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch and compost will suffice. May rot in dense soils, especially along the coast. Needs shade in the desert. Deadhead in fall. Prune and remove rangy growth in late winter/spring. Easily propagated by root divisions (it spreads by suckers) in fall/winter.

**Rhaphiolepis indica 'Ballerina'** Indian hawthorn

Dries to 6" year round. Low to moderate nutrient needs; mulch, compost and humus are adequate, but an occasional well-balanced organic supplement will improve flowering. Pinch or lightly shear in spring to induce bushiness. Thin to improve structural appearance in late winter/early spring. Push stems into soil to root in winter. Prone to mites in dusty, dry locations; occasionally wash foliage.

**Rosmarinus officinalis** Rosemary, all types

Dry to 4" in spring, 6" to 9' in summer and fall (depending on distance from coast). No irrigation in winter. Moderate nutrient needs; if mulch or compost cannot be given yearly because of its dense nature, then well-balanced organic supplements will be needed every other year. Be careful—too much water and fertilizer will shorten its useful life. Pinch or lightly shear throughout the year to induce bushiness. Never prune more than 1/3 of the plant per year. Push stems into the ground to root in winter. Prone to mealybugs, mites and thrips in dusty and dry locations; washing foliage twice a year helps.

**Symphoricarpos albus, S. mollis** Creeping snowberry

Southern California woodland plants. Dry to 5" in spring, fall and winter. No irrigation in summer. Low to moderate nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch and compost is all that is needed. Suffers in dense soils. Pinch or lightly shear in spring to induce bushiness. Remove rangy, twiggy growth any time of year. Spreads by rhizomes and propagation from root division is easy in late winter/early spring.

## Larger Shrubs

**Abutilon palmeri** Indian mallow

Southern California native. Once established, dry to 6" in spring, 1' in summer. No irrigation in fall and winter. Low nutrient needs; a light layer of wood chips and gravel will suffice. Does not respond well to pruning. Pinch and lightly shear in spring to encourage bushiness. Remove sickly, rangy stems late winter/early spring.

**Acca sellowiana (Feijoa sellowiana)** Pineapple guava

Dry to 9" in spring and summer, 6" in fall when it is setting fruit. No irrigation in winter. Moderate nutrient needs; for best fruit and flower a complete organic fertilizer will be needed yearly. Prune sickly and damaged branches in late fall/early spring.

**Alyogyne huegelii** Blue hibiscus

A cool season plant that prefers only drying to 6" in winter and spring, but 9" in summer and fall. Low nutrient needs, but yearly mulch or compost will increase flowering. Can rot in dense, wet soils. Pinch or lightly shear for bushiness any time of year. Thin and cut back in winter.

**Anisodonte** *xhypomandarum* Cape mallow

Dry to 6" spring through fall. No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; maintaining a light layer of wood chips or mulch works well. Suffers in poor draining soils. Too much water and nutrients will shorten its aesthetic life as it gets woody fast. Pinch or lightly shear to promote bushiness in spring.

**Arctostaphylos** spp. Manzanita

Some Southern California natives from the mountains. Prefers a moist winter and spring, drying to just 4", but to 6" in summer, and to 1' in fall. Moderate nutrient needs; mulch, or compost may be needed yearly. It tolerates typical garden conditions. Will suffer in full sun inland.

**Artemisia** spp. Wormwood and Sagebrush

Many Southern California natives. Dry to 6" in spring, 9" to 1' summer and fall (depending on distance from coast). No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch will do. It will rot in poor draining or wet soils. If rangy or too woody, cut back to succulent wood late winter/early spring. *Artemisia* ages faster in typical garden conditions than in the wild.

**Baccharis** spp. See **Baccharis pilularis** in the Woody, Rooting, Spreading Shrubs section above.

**Buddleja** spp. Butterfly bush

Winter dormant. Dries to 4" or 6" spring/early summer (depending on distance from coast.), 6" to 9" late summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; yearly mulch with an occasional organic supplement will help keep the plant showy. Favors coarse soils and suffers with compaction. Pinch or lightly shear to promote bushiness in spring. Cut older, rangy stems to ground in winter. Do not remove suckers as they will become the new plant.

**Caesalpinia pulcherrima** Mexican poinciana or Red bird of paradise

Dries to 6" spring, and 6" to 9" summer and fall (depending on distance from coast). Low nutrient needs; mulch and compost will do. Favors well-draining soils and suffers without air round its roots. Pinch or lightly shear to promote bushiness in spring. Cut the stems that are dead, dying or damaged to the ground in winter.

**Calliandra californica, C. eriophylla** Baja fairy duster and Fairy duster  
 Found naturally in the washes and plains of Baja California and Southern California. Dry to only 4" to 6" late winter/spring, 9" to 1' summer and early fall. No irrigation in late fall/early winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and a light layer of gravel are sufficient. Will suffer in dense soils. Pinch or lightly shear to promote bushiness in early spring. Remove rangy, damaged and poorly structured branches in winter.

**Carissa spp.** Natal Plum See **Carissa macrocarpa** in the Woody, Rooting, Spreading Shrubs section above.

**Carpenteria californica** Bush anemone  
 Native to the canyons and crevices of California's foothills. Prefers drying to only 4" late winter through early spring, to 6" to 8" in spring through fall. No irrigation in winter. Moderate nutrient needs; compost, humus and coffee grounds might be needed yearly. *Carpenteria* favors acidic soil. Will suffer in dense wet soils. Pinch or lightly shear in summer to promote bushiness. Does not respond well to aggressive pruning. Will not survive in full sun inland.

**Ceanothus spp.** See **Ceanothus** in the Woody, Rooting, Spreading Shrubs section above.

**Cercocarpus spp.** Mountain mahogany  
 Many native to Southern California's foothills and mountains. Tough plant. Dry to 6" spring, 1' summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch is the only requirement. If along the coast, thin in late spring to increase air circulation and warmth; if inland, light shear in early spring to induce bushiness and root shading.

**Cistus spp.** Rockrose  
 A cool season grower and durable. Inland it dries to 6" in late winter/early spring, 9" in late spring/early summer, and to 1' in late summer/early fall. No irrigation in late fall/early winter. Along the coast dry to 1' winter through early summer. No irrigation the rest of the year. Low nutrient needs; wood chips or mulch every other year is all that is needed. Too much water and nutrients will hasten the demise of an already short-lived plant. Pinch or lightly shear to create compactness in late winter/early spring. Rockrose suffers with pruning and if it needs a lot, then replace the plant.

**Cassia artemisioides** See **Senna**

**Cercidium spp.** Palo Verde

Several species native to Southern California's desert. Monsoon-adapted and dries to 1' in winter, no irrigation in spring, 1' in summer, no irrigation in fall. Do not irrigate in high humidity as *Cercidium* is prone to mildew. Low nutrient needs; a light layer of wood chips is adequate. Can be pinched or lightly sheared any time of year. Prune rangy, crossing and damaged branches and stems late winter/early spring.

**Coprosma spp.** See **Coprosma** in the Woody, Rooting, Spreading Shrubs section above.

**Correa spp.** Australian fuchsia

Dry to about 6" year round along the coast, but only 4" inland. Moderate nutrient needs; in addition to compost, an occasional well-balanced organic fertilizer may be needed to spur blooms. Pinch or lightly shear for compactness. Thin rangy growth late winter/early spring.

**Cotoneaster spp.** Cotoneaster See **Cotoneaster** in the Woody, Rooting, Spreading Shrubs section above.

**Dalea spp.** Indigo bush

A desert native with a few from Southern California. Dry to 1' in spring and summer. No irrigation the rest of the year. Low nutrient needs; only wood chips and gravel are necessary. Too much water and/or nutrients will greatly shorten its life. Will suffer in dense soils and along the coast. Pinch and remove rangy stems late winter. It does not respond well to a hard pruning.

**Dasyliirion spp.** Mexican grass tree or Desert spoon

Tough, but monsoon-adapted and performs better if it only dries to 6" during summer, to 6" to 9" in spring and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch will suffice. Plant late winter/early spring.

**Dendromecon harfordii, D. rigida** Island bush poppy and Bush poppy  
Southern California natives. Cool season growers. Dries to 1' in late fall/spring. No irrigation the rest of the year. Low nutrient needs; maintaining a light layer of wood chips and gravel will suffice. Suffers from summer irrigation if in dense soil. Pinch or lightly shear for compactness winter through early summer. If rangy, twiggy, or lopsided, cut back by half in late fall.

***Dodonaea* spp.** Hopseed

Dry to 5"–7" year round, depending on distance from coast. Low nutrient needs; mulch and compost will suffice. Good drainage ensures a long life. Pinch or lightly shear for compactness in winter/spring. Thin rangy stems and branches late fall/early winter.

***Encelia californica*** Bush sunflower or California encelia

Southern California coastal native and a cool-season grower. Dry to 6" late winter through early spring; to 1' late spring through early fall. No irrigation late fall/early winter. Will suffer in wet soils. Low nutrient needs; a thin layer of wood chips will do. Deadhead in early fall. Lightly shear for containment in spring. If rangy looking, cut by three-quarters in winter. Can be short lived.

***Eriogonum* spp.** Buckwheat

Some California natives. Cool season growers. Dries to 1' winter/spring along the coast. No irrigation summer through fall. Inland dries to 1' year-round. Low nutrient needs; maintaining a light layer of wood chips and gravel will suffice. Will suffer in dense soils and summer irrigation. Deadhead after flowers have set seed if regeneration is desired. Does not respond well to pruning; only pinch or lightly shear for compactness winter through early summer. Often short-lived in urban environments.

***Fallugia paradoxa*** Apache plume

Southern California native to deserts. Monsoon-adapted. Tolerates no irrigation in spring, fall or winter, but dry to only 6" in summer inland. No irrigation along coast. Low nutrient needs; wood chips or mulch or a fine layer of gravel will do. Suffers in dense soils. Start stem cuttings winter. Plant early in late winter/early spring.

***Fremontodendron* spp.** Fremontia or Flannel bush

Southern California natives found along washes. Dry to 1' in late fall and winter. No irrigation the rest of the year. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch are sufficient. Suffer in dense soils and summer irrigation. Pinch and lightly shear for structure winter through early spring. Thin and remove rangy branches late fall/early winter. Caution: always wear eye protection, long-sleeved shirt and gloves to protect against its leaf hairs, an obnoxious irritant.

***Gambelia (Galvezia) speciosa*** Island bush snapdragon

Native to Southern California's islands. Dries to 1' year round. Low nutrient needs; a layer of mulch will suffice. Prefers coarse soils. Pinch or slightly prune for compactness between winter and spring. Thin rangy stems and prune to contain size in late fall/winter.

**Grevillea spp.** Grevillea

Dry to 6" in winter/spring, 9" to 1' in summer/fall, depending on distance from coast and amount of sun. Low nutrient needs; a layer of mulch or compost will do. Note: avoid fertilizers with high amounts of phosphorus; Grevillea is phosphorus-intolerant. Pinch and lightly shear for compactness in spring. Remove rangy stems and cut back unwanted growth in late winter/early spring.

**Hamelia patens** Firebush or Texas firecracker bush

A tough tropical. Dries to 6" year round. Moderate nutrient needs; mulch and compost will be needed and, occasionally, a well-balanced organic fertilizer in late winter. Pinch to induce bushiness in spring. Remove rangy stems and control size in late winter/early spring.

**Heteromeles arbutifolia** Toyon

Southern California native found along the coast, in chaparral communities, and in the Sierra foothills. Dry to 1' year round along the coast, only to 9" inland. Low nutrient needs; wood chips or mulch are adequate. Suffers from a variety of problems in areas of poor air circulation. Pinch or slightly shear winter/spring. Thin rangy stems and prune to improve structure late fall/early winter.

**Hyptis emoryi** Desert lavender

Desert native from the washes of eastern Southern California. Dry to 1' in winter through spring. No irrigation the rest of the year. Low nutrient needs; only a thin layer of wood chips is needed. Too much moisture or fertilizer will shorten its life. Desert lavender suffers greatly in dense soils. Does not respond well to pruning; only pinch or lightly shear in late winter/early spring.

**Isomeris arborea** Bladderpod or California cleome

Dries to 1' in winter/spring. No irrigation the rest of the year. Too much winter moisture will kill it. Low nutrient needs; a layer of wood chips is sufficient. Becomes woody and short-lived with too much water and nutrients. Pinch or lightly shear late winter/early spring to promote bushiness. Bladderpod does not like pruning, but you can clean a twiggy and dead interior at anytime. Do not dead-head until seeds have matured in fall.

**Justicia californica, J. spicigera** Chuparosa and Mexican honeysuckle.

*J. californica*. is native to the interior washes of Southern California. Both dry to 1' year round. No irrigation in summer and fall along the coast. Low nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch and compost will do. Suffers in dense soils. Pinch for compactness and thin for structure in late winter.

**Keckiella spp.** Heart leaved penstemon, Chaparral beardtongue, Climbing penstemon

Some Southern California coastal natives. Dry to 1' year round along the coast, but inland dry to 1' in winter/spring, to 9" in summer/fall. No irrigation in the shade, either along the coast or inland. Low nutrient needs; just a layer of mulch or compost is needed. Pinch or lightly shear for compactness in spring. Thin rangy, weak and structurally poor stems late winter/early spring.

**Lantana spp.** Lantana

Dry to 6" in spring, 6" to 9" in summer and early fall. No irrigation in late fall and winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; besides a layer of compost, a light organic fertilizer higher in phosphorus (such as bone meal) will be needed. Pinch or lightly shear for compactness in spring. Repetitive shearing will lead to a woody, unsightly interior. Thin plant and remove rangy growth in late winter/early spring. Never remove more than one-fifth of the plant at a time.

**Larrea tridentata** Creosote bush

Southern California native found throughout the warm eastern interior. Dry to 6" in late winter/early spring and to 1' in late spring/early winter. It might not need the irrigation, but often looks better with just a little. Low nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch or compost will do. Pinch or lightly shear for bushiness in spring. Remove rangy stems and crossing interior branches in late winter/early spring.

**Lavandula spp.** Lavender

Dry to 4" in spring, 6" in summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Avoid irrigation in periods of high humidity. Low to moderate nutrient needs; typically nothing more than mulch and compost are needed. Plants in coarse soils may need a light organic supplement. Pinch for compactness, but only infrequently, in spring. If looking rangy, prune stems nearly to base in late winter/early spring. Lavender usually loses its aesthetic charm after 3 to 5 years; plan on periodic replacement.

**Leonotis leonurus** Lion's tail

Dry to 4" in spring, 6" to 8" in summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; just a layer of mulch or compost is necessary. Pinch or lightly shear for bushiness in spring. If rangy looking, cut back to lowest live node—more than half the plant—in late winter/early spring. Plan on replacing the plant every 4 to 6 years.

**Leucadendron Cultivars, *L. discolor*, *L. tinctum*** Leucadendron

Dry to 9" along the coast and 6" inland year round. Low to moderate nutrient needs; usually compost and mulch is sufficient. Does not tolerate fertilizers with a lot of phosphorus; like *Grevillea* it is phosphorus-intolerant. Acidic organics, such as coffee grounds, are preferred. Pinch for compactness and thin rangy, crossing stems in spring.

**Leucophyllum spp.** Texas ranger

Monsoon-adapted. Prefers drying to 6" in spring, 9" in summer. No irrigation the rest of the year. Low nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch and compost will do. Suffers in dense and/or acidic soils. Pinch or lightly shear in spring to promote bushiness. The plant's branches, stems and leaves shade its roots and it dislikes heavy pruning (pruning exposes the soil to the sun), but, if it is needed, prune in late winter/early spring only.

**Malva (*Lavatera*) *assurgentiflora*, *M. maritima*** Island mallow and Tree mallow

Southern California coastal native. Dry to 1' in spring through fall along the coast, 6" to 9" inland. No irrigation in winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; a 2" layer of mulch or compost will do. If in sandy or coarse soils, it will perform better when given a diluted well-balanced organic fertilizer in spring. Pinch and lightly shear to contain in spring. Remove crossing, damaged and rangy stems late winter/early spring.

**Mimulus *aurantiacus*** Sticky monkey flower

Southern California native found in the coastal-influenced areas and a cool season grower. Dry to 9" in fall and winter, and 1' spring and summer. Low nutrient needs; only wood chips, mulch or compost is needed. Too much water, fertilizer or pruning will shorten an already short life. Pinch regularly to encourage dense branching. Deadhead in late spring to encourage another bloom cycle. Thin twiggy growth to active nodes in late fall. Plan on frequent replacement.

**Morella (*Myrica*) *californica*** Pacific wax myrtle

Coastal California native and a cool season grower. Can dry to 1' along the coast year round, but only 6" where it is hot and dry. Low to moderate nutrient needs; as well as with mulch and compost, an organic well-balanced fertilizer may be needed every other year. Responds well to pinching and shearing in every season but summer. Remove rangy and rubbing stems in late fall/early winter.

**Myoporum spp.** Myoporum See **Myoporum** in the Woody, Rooting, Spreading Shrubs section above.

**Parkinsonia spp.** Palo Verde See **Cercidium spp.** above.

**Perovskia spp.** Russian sage

Dry to 6" in spring, 9" summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch will do. Suffers in dense soils. Deadhead in late summer. Cut to lowest active node, nearly to ground, in late winter/early spring. Can be propagated by cuttings in winter through spring

**Phlomis fruticosa** Jerusalem sage

Dry to 6" in spring, summer and fall along the coast, but only 4" to 5" inland. No irrigation in winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch and compost will suffice. May rot in dense soils, more so along the coast. Prefers a little shade inland. Deadhead in fall. If looking rangy or tired, cut stems to lowest active node in late winter/ early spring.

**Plumbago auriculata** Cape plumbago

Dry to 6" in spring through early fall inland; along the coast, dry to 6" in spring and to 1' in summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; a light layer of wood chips or mulch will do. Pinch or shear anytime to contain and shape. If looking rangy, twiggy or unsightly, prune down by two-thirds in late winter/early spring.

**Prosopis spp.** Mesquite

Desert native with an extensive root system. Dries to 9" or 1' throughout the year. Its size is related to amount of moisture it receives. May not need any irrigation along the coast. Low nutrient needs; a light layer of wood chips and gravel is sufficient. Pinch or shear to contain in spring. Remove dead, damaged or rangy branches and stems in late winter/early spring.

**Prunus ilicifolia, P. i. lyonii** Hollyleaf cherry, Catalina cherry

Southern California coastal and island natives. Dry to 6" winter through early spring, between 6" and 9" in late spring through summer (depending on distance from coast). No irrigation in winter. Low to moderate nutrient needs; wood chips and mulch is usually enough, but organic supplements are needed as well in coarse soils. *P. lyonii* is much more tolerant of clay soils and moisture. Pinch or shear for compactness and containment in winter through spring. Remove crossing interior and rangy growth in late fall/early winter.

**Quercus spp.** scrub oaks

Many Southern California natives. Dry to 6" in spring and to 1' the rest of the year. No irrigation may be needed along the coast. Low nutrient needs; wood chips and gravel will do. Pinch or shear whenever needed. Prune August through September after all growth has stopped.

**Rhamnus (Frangula) californica, R. crocea** Coffeeberry, Redberry

Southern California native found in canyons and coastal slopes. Dry to 6" in late winter/early spring, to 1' late spring/summer. No irrigation in fall. The greater the shade, the less irrigation needed. Low nutrient needs; a layer of mulch or compost is adequate. Pinch or lightly shear for compactness in spring. Coffeeberry's canopy shades its roots and the plant does not respond well to pruning; only remove the rangy and damaged growth in late winter.

**Rhus spp.** Lemonade berry, Pink flowering sumac, Sugar bush

Southern California natives. Dry to just 6" in winter, 9" in spring and, if along the coast, give no irrigation the rest of the year; if inland, dry to 1' summer and fall. Low nutrient needs; nothing more than wood chips or mulch is necessary. Pinch or shear for compactness and containment. Prune to improve structure and air flow in late fall/early winter.

**Ribes spp.** Gooseberry and Currant

Many Southern California natives. If in shade, dry to 9" winter and spring, and give no irrigation the rest of the year. If in full sun, dry to 6" winter and spring, and 9" summer and fall. Low to moderate nutrient needs; while mulch and compost are usually enough, a well-balanced organic supplement every other year will improve the plant's appearance, especially in quick draining soils. Pinch or shear to induce bushiness anytime. If looking rangy or tired, cut all stems back to lowest active node in late fall/early winter.

**Rosa californica** California wild rose

Southern California native found in and along canyons and creeks. Dry to 6" spring and summer, and to 1' fall and winter. Moderate nutrient needs; along with a layer of mulch or compost, an organic well-balanced supplement will be needed occasionally. Deadhead throughout the year for repeat blooms. Thin, cut back and remove rangy growth in late fall/early winter. Like most roses, *R. californica* is prone to aphids, mildew, mites and thrips.

**Rosmarinus officinalis:** See **Rosmarinus** in the Woody, Rooting, Spreading Shrubs section above.

**Russelia equisetiformis** Coral fountain

Dry to only 6" along the coast every season but winter, only to 4" inland. No irrigation in winter for either location. Moderate nutrient needs; along with mulch or compost, a well-balanced organic supplement will be needed, particularly in coarse soils. Cut rangy stems back to base anytime. If looking tired or unsightly, cut entire plant back to its base in late winter/early spring.

**Salvia**, also see **Salvia** in the chapter Perennials.

**Salvia ‘Allen Chickering’, S. apiana, S. Bee’s Bliss, S. brandegei, S. canariensis, S. clevelandii, S. ‘Dara’s Choice’, S. greggii, S. leucophylla, S. mellifera, S. microphylla** Allen Chickering sage, White sage, Bee’s bliss, Santa Rosa Island sage, Canary Island sage, Cleveland Sage, Autumn sage, Purple sage, Black sage, Cherry sage, Mrs. Beard sage

These are the most drought-tolerant sages of this large genus and most are native to the coastal-influenced areas of Southern California. Dry to 6" winter and spring and to 1' summer and fall. Low nutrient needs; wood chips or mulch will suffice. Too much water and nutrients will shorten an already short life. If looking rangy or tired, cut back to lowest active node in late fall/early winter. Suffers with too much pruning and never cut into older wood. For regeneration, do not deadhead until after the plant has set seed.

**Santolina chamaecyparissus** Lavender cotton

Along the coast dry to 6" in late winter and spring, and to 1' the rest of the year. Inland, dry to 6" in late winter/early spring, and 6" to 9" the rest of the year (depending on amount of sun). Low nutrient needs; a layer of mulch or compost is sufficient. Deadhead in summer. Pinch or shear anytime to induce bushiness. If looking rangy, prune to base in late winter.

**Senna artemisioides, C. phyllodinea** Feathery cassia, Silvery cassia

Dry to 9" year round. Low nutrient needs; mulch and compost will suffice. In climates with cool summers, thin plants in spring to increase air circulation and warm the soil; in hotter areas, pinch or shear plants in spring to induce bushiness and increase root shading. Feathery cassia produces lots of seeds; to reduce the mess and nuisance, shear plants again after bloom in late summer.

**Tecoma stans** Yellow bells or Yellow trumpet

Dry to 6" to 9" year round, depending on distance from coast and amount of shade. Moderate nutrient needs; a layer of mulch or compost along with a well-balanced organic supplement will be needed yearly. Deadheading in summer may encourage another bloom. Pinch or shear to contain and induce bushiness in winter. Remove damaged, crossing and rangy stems in late winter/early spring.

**Trichostema lanatum** Woolly blue curls

Southern California native from the chaparral plant community. Dry to 9" to 1' in winter and spring. No irrigation in summer and fall. Suffers from summer moisture. Low nutrient needs; nothing more than wood chips is needed. Good drainage is essential. Deadheading in late spring may spur another bloom in summer. Remove rangy and damaged stems in late fall/early winter. Often short-lived in urban areas.

**Umbellularia californica** California bay

Southern California native found in forests, along streams, and in canyons. Dry to 6" winter and spring, and to 1' summer and fall. Moderate nutrient needs; if not given a regular layer of mulch or compost, then organic fertilizers will be needed. Pinch or shear for compaction and containment anytime. Thin and remove rangy growth in late fall/ early winter. Prone to sooty mold, brought on by aphids and scale, which are encouraged by poor air circulation, overwatering and too much fertilizing.

**Westringia fruticosa** Coast rosemary

Dry to 6" in spring, to 1' in summer and fall. No irrigation in winter. Low nutrient needs; wood chips, mulch or compost will suffice. Responds well to shearing and the plant can be hedged anytime. Remove rangy growth in winter through spring.

## Plant Names

### Low, Rooting and Spreading: Common Names to Botanical

Acacia, desert or carpet *Acacia redolens*, A. r. 'Desert Carpet'

Balearic Island sage *Phlomis italica*

California copperleaf *Acalypha californica*

California lilac, prostrate *Ceanothus gloriosus*, *C. griseus horizontalis*,

*C. maritimus*

Chamise, prostrate *Adenostoma fasciculatum* 'Prostrate'

Cotoneaster, bearberry *Cotoneaster dammeri* 'Lowfast'

Coyote brush *Baccharis pilularis*

Creeping snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*, *S. mollis*  
 Creeping St. Johnswort *Hypericum calycinum*  
 Indian hawthorn *Raphiolepis indica* 'Ballerina'  
 Junipers, prostrate *Juniperus* spp.  
 Lantana, purple trailing *Lantana montevidensis*  
 Mahonia: Oregon grape, desert mahonia, California holly grape,  
     creeping mahonia *Berberis* (*Mahonia*) *aquifolium*, *B. fremontii*,  
     *B. pinnata*, *B. repens*  
 Manzanita, trailing *Arctostaphylos* spp. 'Prostrate'  
 Mirror plant, creeping *Coprosma repens*  
 Myoporum, Pacific; creeping myoporum *Myoporum* 'Pacificum', *M.*  
     *parvifolium*  
 Natal plum, prostrate *Carissa macrocarpa* 'Green Carpet'  
 Poverty weed or San Diego marsh-elder *Iva hayesiana*  
 Rosemary *Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Prostratus'  
 Silver sage *Artemisia* 'Powis Castle'  
 Silver spreader *Artemisia caucasica*

### Low, Rooting and Spreading: Botanical Names to Common

*Acacia redolens*, *A. r.* 'Desert Carpet' Desert carpet  
*Acalypha californica* California copperleaf  
*Adenostoma fasciculatum* 'Prostrate' Prostrate chamise  
*Arctostaphylos* spp. 'Prostrate' Trailing manzanita  
*Artemisia caucasica* Silver spreader  
*Artemisia* 'Powis Castle' Silver sage  
*Baccharis pilularis* Coyote brush  
*Berberis* (*Mahonia*) *aquifolium*, *B. fremontii*, *B. pinnata*, *B. repens* Oregon  
     grape, desert mahonia, California holly grape, creeping mahonia  
*Carissa macrocarpa* 'Green Carpet' Prostrate natal plum  
*Ceanothus gloriosus*, *C. griseus horizontalis*, *C. maritimus* California lilac  
*Coprosma repens* Creeping mirror plant  
*Cotoneaster dammeri* 'Lowfast' Bearberry cotoneaster  
*Hypericum calycinum* Creeping St. Johnswort  
*Iva hayesiana* Poverty weed or San Diego marsh-elder  
*Juniperus* spp. A variety of creeping / prostrate junipers  
*Lantana montevidensis* Purple trailing lantana  
*Myoporum* 'Pacificum', *M. parvifolium* Pacific myoporum and creeping  
     myoporum  
*Phlomis italica* Balearic Island sage  
*Raphiolepis indica* 'Ballerina' Indian hawthorn  
*Rosmarinus officinalis* 'Prostratus' Rosemary  
*Symphoricarpos albus*, *S. mollis* Creeping snowberry

## Larger Shrub: Botanical Names to Common

- Abutilon palmeri* Indian mallow  
*Acca sellowiana* (*Feijoa sellowiana*) Pineapple guava  
*Alyogyne huegelii* Blue hibiscus  
*Anisodonteia xhypomandarum* Cape mallow  
*Arctostaphylos* spp. Manzanita  
*Artemisia* spp. Wormwood and sagebrush  
*Buddleja* spp. Butterfly bush  
*Caesalpinia pulcherrima* Mexican poinciana or red bird of paradise  
*Calliandra californica*, *C. eriophylla* Baja fairy duster and fairy duster  
*Carpenteria californica* Bush anemone  
*Cercidium* spp. Palo Verde  
*Cercocarpus* spp. Mountain mahogany  
*Cistus* spp. Rockrose  
*Correa* spp. Australian fuchsia  
*Dalea* spp. Indigo bush  
*Dasyliirion* spp. Mexican grass tree or desert spoon  
*Dendromecon harfordii*, *D. rigida* Island bush poppy and bush poppy  
*Dodonaea* spp. Hopseed  
*Encelia californica* Bush sunflower and California encelia  
*Eriogonum* spp. Buckwheat  
*Fallugia paradoxa* Apache plume  
*Fremontodendron* spp. Fremontia or flannel bush  
*Gambelia* (*Galvezia*) *speciosa* Island bush snapdragon  
*Grevillea* spp. Grevillea  
*Hamelia patens* Firebush or Texas firecracker bush  
*Heteromeles arbutifolia* Toyon  
*Hyptis emoryi* Desert lavender  
*Isomeris arborea* Bladderpod or California cleome  
*Justicia californica* and *J. spicigera* Chuparosa and Mexican honeysuckle.  
*Keckiella* spp. Heart leaved penstemon, chaparral beardtongue, climbing penstemon  
*Lantana* spp. Lantana  
*Larrea tridentata* Creosote bush  
*Lavandula* spp. Lavender  
*Leonotis leonurus* Lion's tail.  
*Leucadendron* Cultivars, *L. discolor*, *L. tinctum* Leucadendron  
*Leucophyllum* spp. Texas ranger  
*Malva* (*Lavatera*) *assurgentiflora*, *M. maritime* Island mallow and tree mallow  
*Mimulus aurantiacus* Sticky monkey flower  
*Morella* (*Myrica*) *californica* Pacific wax myrtle

*Perovskia* spp. Russian sage  
*Phlomis fruticosa* Jerusalem sage  
*Plumbago auriculata* Cape plumbago  
*Prosopis* spp. Mesquite  
*Prunus ilicifolia*, *P. i. lyonii* Hollyleaf cherry and Catalina cherry  
*Quercus* spp. Scrub oaks  
*Rhamnus* (*Frangula*) *californica*, *R. crocea* Coffeeberry, redberry  
*Rhus* spp. (Western natives only) Lemonade berry, pink flowering sumac, sugar bush  
*Ribes* spp. Gooseberry and currant  
*Rosa californica* California wild rose  
*Russelia equisetiformis* Coral fountain  
*Salvia* ‘Allen Chickering’, *S. apiana*, *S. Bee’s Bliss*, *S. brandegei*, *S. canariensis*, *S. clevelandii*, *S. ‘Dara’s Choice’*, *S. greggii*, *S. leucophylla*, *S. mellifera*, *S. microphylla* Allen Chickering sage, white sage, bee’s bliss, Santa Rosa Island sage, Canary Island sage, Cleveland Sage, autumn sage, purple sage, black sage, cherry sage, Mrs. Beard sage  
*Santolina chamaecyparissus* Lavender cotton  
*Senna artemisioides*, *C. phyllodinea* Feathery cassia and silvery cassia  
*Tecoma stans* Yellow bells or yellow trumpet  
*Trichostema lanatum* Woolly blue curls  
*Umbellularia californica* California bay  
*Westringia fruticosa* Coast rosemary