

# Use of Local Native Plant Species

## Handout 5-A of 7

### Introduction

Native plants are ecologically best suited to the creek environment. Using locally native plants for landscaping and revegetation projects near streams and riparian areas provide improved habitat and protection from bank erosion with the least amount of long-term maintenance. Most cities require that natives be used for new and major redevelopment.

### How to find and select natives in the watershed

When vegetating the creek, choose native species growing nearby. If possible, make sure the plants used were propagated from seeds, cuttings or divisions collected from the same local creek or watershed. Try local home-grown native plants by collecting and planting seeds, or installing divisions and cuttings on the creek bank.

Oaks, buckeye and bay trees are easy to grow from seed planted directly into moist creek bank soil. Cottonwood and willow are easy to grow from cuttings stuck directly into moist sandbars. California rose, California blackberry, snowberry, mugwort, beardless wildrye and others can be propagated readily from vegetative offsets and divisions.

### Guidelines for planting native species

When choosing natives:

- **Ensure that the initial planting density is high**, averaging 6 to 12 feet on center, to create canopy coverage and quick closure. Include a range of species in the plant palette to fill in the understory, mid-story and overstory.
- **Avoid hardscape** such as patios, walkways and decks within these areas to minimize human impacts and maximize habitat value.
- **Maintain and monitor plantings** for a three- to five-year period to ensure healthy establishment. Performance and success criteria include percentage of allowable mortality and goals for an annual percentage of vegetative cover.
- **Slowly eliminate the need for human intervention**, including irrigation, weed control, replanting, pruning, etc. The final goal is to discontinue maintenance activities when habitat is self sustainable.



California Rose (*Rosa californica*)

#### Want even more information?

Try the California Native Plant Society's website:  
[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

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# CreekWise Native Plant Species

Excerpted from: *Guidelines and Standards for Land Use Near Streams*

The following lists the riparian plant species that exist within the boundaries of Santa Clara County. Some species would never be seen together in the wild due to different preferences for microclimates, soil substrates and hydrologic regimes. If you are unfamiliar with local native plant ecology, consult local experts for help selecting the best plant palette for your particular creek or follow nature's example and copy what you see in a wild area located close to your project site.

## Trees:

- Big Leaf Maple  
*Acer macrophyllum*
- California Box Elder  
*Acer negundo var. californicum*
- California Buckeye  
*Aesculus californica*
- White Alder  
*Alnus rhombifolia*
- Western Sycamore  
*Platanus racemosa*
- Fremont Cottonwood  
*Populus fremontii ssp. fremontii*
- Black Cottonwood  
*Populus trichocarpa*
- Coast Live Oak  
*Quercus agrifolia*
- Valley Oak  
*Quercus lobata*
- Narrow-leaved Willow  
*Salix exigua*
- Red Willow  
*Salix laevigata*
- Yellow Willow  
*Salix lucida ssp. lasiandra*
- Arroyo Willow  
*Salix lasiolepis*
- Blue Elderberry  
*Sambucus mexicana*
- California Bay Laurel  
*Umbellularia californica*

## Shrubs and Vines:

- California Sagebrush  
*Artemisia californica*
- Mule Fat  
*Baccharis salicifolia*
- Virgin's Bower  
*Clematis ligusticifolia*
- Toyon  
*Heteromeles arbutifolia*
- Coffeeberry  
*Rhamnus californica*
- California Wild Grape  
*Vitis californica*
- Brown Dogwood  
*Cornus glabrata*
- California Rose  
*Rosa californica*
- California Blackberry  
*Rubus ursinus*
- Snowberry  
*Symphoricarpos albus var. laevigatus*

## Ground Covers and Herbaceous Perennials:

- Mugwort  
*Artemisia douglasiana*
- Western Aster  
*Aster chilensis*
- Douglas' Baccharis  
*Baccharis douglasii*
- Western Goldenrod  
*Euthamia occidentalis*
- Beardless Wildrye  
*Leymus triticoides*
- Sticky Monkey Flower  
*Mimulus aurantiacus*
- California Figwort  
*Scrophularia californica*



www.californianursery.com/plant6.html

California Grape (*Vitis californica*)