

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.



www.rosefig.us/Resources/frame3797.html

California Rose (*Rosa californica*)

Want even more information?

Try the California Native Plant Society's website:
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/plantinfo.html

California Grape (*Vitis californica*)