



Fire Resistant Native Plants with High Wildlife Value

Compiled by The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers and Native Plants, Inc.
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Important Note: All plants will eventually burn. There is no such thing as a fireproof plant. There are some plants that can retain moisture, even in dry areas, and are called fire resistant. This list is designed to identify some Californian native plants that are fire resistant and have wildlife value. These plants with few exceptions are listed as acceptable to plant in Fuel Modification Zones by Los Angeles County Fire. The purpose of this list is to help place fire resistant and wildlife important plants in areas where brush clearance can leave an area barren.

LA County approved plant list for Fuel Modification: http://www.lacofd.org/forestry_folder/pdf/fmpg.pdf

GROUNDCOVERS

- *Atriplex barclayana*. **Beach Carpet Saltbush**. A low growing form of saltbush (6" high, spreading). This saltbush provides good ground cover for soil erosion and provides seeds, salt and cover for wildlife.
- *Atriplex canescens*. **Four-wing Saltbush**. A low growing form of saltbush (1-2' high, 3' wide) that happily grows in the desert. It provides seeds, salt and cover for wildlife.
- *Baccharis pilularis* "Pigeon Point". **Dwarf Coyote Bush**. While not a "showy" plant, it does produce some flowers and has a deep root system, that provides good erosion control. It grows 12" to 18" in height. It adds cover and seeds for a variety of birds. (LA County Fire approved)
- *Monardella linoides viminea*. **Willow Coyote Mint**. This federally protected coyote mint grows up to 18" tall and prefers North facing (somewhat shaded) or riparian areas. It has a long blooming cycle, flowering through the summer and fall and is an attractant to hummingbirds and butterflies. Songbirds also eat the seeds.

SHRUBS

- *Atriplex lentiformis breweri*. **Quail Bush**. A larger saltbush (4' high, 6-8' wide) that provides critical habitat for the California quail and other birds.
- *Galvezia speciosa*. **Island Bush Snapdragon**. This CNPS "rare" plant is from the Channel Islands and stays evergreen year round producing trumpet shape red flowers favored by hummingbirds. It grows in 18" to 24" in height and 3' to 5' in width. It also adds excellent cover for wildlife.
- *Isomeris arborea*. **Bladderpod**. A very drought tolerant shrub that forms yellow flowers and seedpods. (LA County Fire approved)
- *Mahonia nevinii* (aka *Berberis nevinii*). **Nevin's Barberry**. A federally endangered species, once common in the Verdugo Mountains, grows berries that are favored by many songbirds. The spiny leaves also add a protective cover. The shrub can grow up to 4' in height and 6' in width and is evergreen. (LA County Fire approved)
- *Mahonia*, *Aquifolium* and all subspecies. **Mahonia/ Barberry**. It's purple berries and yellow flowers are favored by many songbirds. The spiny leaves also add a protective cover. (LA County Fire approved)
- *Rhus laurina* (aka *Malosma laurina*). **Laurel Sumac**. While laurel sumac does have a high oil content, it has been found to have a much higher incineration point than most other plants. It has been found to be one of the last plants to burn in fires. It provides important cover, food and nesting resource for many types of wildlife. A laurel sumac that has the lower third of it's branches pruned is considered fire-safe. It is a favorite shrub amongst warbler.
- *Mimulus* sp. "Big Tujunga" or "La Tuna". **Monkeyflower (local varieties)**. These two local varieties of Monkeyflower do well in the summer heat and provide pale to deep orange flowers. It grows 18" to 36" in height and 3' to 5' in width. The flowers and seeds provide wildlife value
- *Ribes aureum*. **Golden Currant**. This currant grows upright to 6' and is lacy in structure. In summers, it can go semi-drought deciduous, though with some water in will remain evergreen. It's berries offer a high wildlife value. (LA County Fire approved)
- *Rhus integrifolia*. **Lemonade Berry**. A very drought-resistant shrub that provides cover and food to wildlife. California Thrasher uses it's fruit and leaf material for nesting. It also is an excellent erosion control plant.
- *Symphoricarpos albus*. **Common Snowberry**. While not the favorite berry choice of most wildlife, it still gets eaten. Its root system is vigorous and deep enough to hold most banks. Snowberry has been seen on North-facing slopes in the full sun, though shaded areas such as under oaks is best.

TREES

- *Heteromeles arbutifolia*. **Toyon**. This small tree is found readily in La Tuna Canyon. It is very drought tolerant and provides red berry for months that are a favorite amongst many birds found in the area.
- *Quercus agrifolia*. **Coastal Live Oak**. Oak trees are important wildlife resources and have actually been found to suppress fire.