



# Recommended Plants for Sonoma County for Beneficial Insects

The selection of plants on this list is not intended to be exhaustive. There are many more plants that can be—and are—grown successfully in Sonoma County. The selected plants are likely to be the most successful. Our 30 very favorites, which we call the Sonoma Superstars, are marked with a star in the left margin.

Attracting beneficial insects to your garden will reduce your need for pesticides, whose use should be considered as a last resort. Remember that even the organic pesticide BT is deadly to insect larvae.

See our glossary of plant list descriptors at [http address] for explanations of these descriptors.

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## Trees

<p>Aesculus californica (California buckeye)</p> <p><i>Loses leaves in early summer, but occasional summer water will keep in leaf until fall. Poisonous to honeybees.</i></p>	g	V	S	N	W	B	D	X					
<p>Arbutus unedo (strawberry tree)</p> <p><i>When mature, prune lower branches to expose multiple branches and peeling bark. Can be grown as large shrub or small tree.</i></p>	s	m	L	S	A	P	W	B	E	D	2	3	4
<p>Citrus spp</p> <p><i>Dwarf varieties are suitable for containers or patios</i></p>	s	m	g	M	S	A	P	B	E	D	T		
<p>Cornus nuttallii (Pacific dogwood)</p> <p><i>Dislikes excessive watering, fertilizing and pruning. Susceptible to anthracnose.</i></p>	g		M	A	P	F	N	B		C			
<p>Feijoa [Acca] sellowiana (pineapple guava)</p> <p><i>Will tolerate little or no irrigation. Can be grown as large shrub or small tree.</i></p>	s		M	L	S			B	E	D			
<p>Quercus agrifolia (coast live oak)</p> <p><i>Suitable only for large gardens.</i></p>	g		V	S			N	W	B	E	D		
<p>Quercus douglasii (blue oak)</p> <p><i>Suitable only for large gardens.</i></p>	g		V	S			N	W	B	D			
<p>Quercus kelloggii (black oak)</p>	g		L	S	A	P	N	W	B	D		2	
<p>Quercus lobata (valley oak)</p> <p><i>Suitable only for large gardens.</i></p>	g		L	S			N	W	B	D			
<p>Vitex agnus-castus (chaste tree)</p> <p><i>May be grown as shrub or small tree. Dormant for 6 months of the year. Blooms in mid-summer.</i></p>	s		L	S				B				3	4

## Shrubs

<p>★ Arctostaphylos spp (manzanita)</p> <p><i>Plants vary from creeping groundcovers to treelike shrubs. A. densiflora 'Howard McMinn' is one of the most garden tolerant manzanitas and is native to Sonoma County. Remove dead or twiggy branches.</i></p>	s	m	g	L	S	A	P	N	W	B	E	D	C	1	2	3	4
<p>Buddleia davidii (butterfly bush)</p> <p><i>Prune to 4"-6" from ground in early spring to encourage bloom and control shape. Select named cultivars for size and blossom color. Can be invasive.</i></p>	m	g		M	S	A	P			B		D					

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Caryopteris spp (bluebeard) <i>Cut just above ground in early spring.</i>	m	M	S A P	W B	D		
★ Ceanothus spp and cvs (California lilac) <i>The most drought tolerant and deer resistant have small, dark green, crinkly leaves. Those with larger glossy foliage benefit from summer irrigation and shade inland. Remove dead or twiggy branches.</i>	m g	M L	S A P	N W B E	D C		3 4
★ Correa spp (Australian fuschia) <i>May be hedged.</i>	s m	L	S A P	W B E	D		2 3 4
Dendromecon harfordii (island bush poppy) <i>Needs excellent drainage</i>	g	L	S	N	B E D C		
Dendromecon rigida (bush poppy)	m	V	S	N	B E D C		
Encelia californica (coast sunflower) <i>Will drop leaves if no summer irrigation.</i>	s	L	S	N	B E C T		3
Eriogonum giganteum (St. Catherine's lace) <i>Excellent native habitat plant. Best with some summer water.</i>	m g	V	S	N W B E	D C T		
Feijoa [Acca] sellowiana (pineapple guava) <i>Will tolerate little or no irrigation. Can be grown as large shrub or small tree.</i>	g	M L	S		B E D		
Hebe spp (hebe) <i>Many varieties. Good as accent plants or small hedges. Remove woody interior stems.</i>	s m	M	S A P		B E		3
Helianthemum nummularium (sunrose)	s	L	S		B E D C		3 4
★ Heteromeles arbutifolia (toyon, California holly) <i>Excellent fall/winter interest. Usually grown as a shrub but can reach tree size.</i>	m g	L	S A P	N W B E	D C X		2 4
Holodiscus discolor (cream bush, ocean spray)	g	L	S A P	N W B	D		2
Lantana spp <i>Long blooming. Repetitive shearing promotes woody interiors. Thin out in late winter or early spring.</i>	m	L	S		B E D C T X		4
Lavandula spp (lavender) <i>Many varieties of varying sizes. Shear annually to green buds near woody base.</i>	s	L	S		B E D		3 4
Lavatera [Malva] assurgentiflora (tree or island or mission ma) <i>Shear to keep dense.</i>	g	L	S A P	N W B E	D T		
Lavatera maritima (bush mallow)	g	L	S A P	W B E	D T		4
Leonotis leonurus (lion's tail) <i>Cut back rangy stems to new growth in spring. Tends to be short-lived.</i>	m	L	S	W B E	D		4
Lepechinia spp (pitcher sage)	m	L	S A P	N W B E	D		
Lupinus albifrons (silver bush lupine)	m	V	S	N	B E D		4
Mimulus [Diplacus] aurantiacus and hybrids (sticky monkey flo) <i>Woody-based perennial. Thin out twiggy growth; cut back annually to emerging buds on woody base.</i>	s	L V	S A P	N	B E D C		3 4
Philadelphus spp (mock orange) <i>Remove dead interior branches.</i>	m g	M L	S A P		B		
Philadelphus lewisii (wild mock orange, western mock orange) <i>Remove dead interior branches.</i>	g	M	S A P	N	B C		
Pittosporum tobira (mock orange) <i>Dwarf and variegated varieties available.</i>	s m g	L	S A P		B E	X	3 4
Prunus ilicifolia (holly leaf cherry)	g	L	S A P	N W B E	D C X		4
Prunus ilicifolia lyonii (Catalina cherry)	g	L	S A P	N W B E	D X		

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Punica granatum (pomegranate) <i>Dwarf version available for smaller gardens.</i>	s m g	L	S A P	B					3 4
★ Rhamnus [Frangula] californica (coffeeberry)	m g	L	S A P	N W B E	D C				2 4
Rosmarinus officinalis (rosemary) <i>Varies from groundcover to upright or trailing shrubs.</i>	s m	L	S A P	W B E	D C				1 3 4
Salvia greggii & hybrids (autumn sage)	s m	L	S A P	W B	D T				3 4
Sambucus spp (elderberry) <i>Plant more than one variety or species for best fruiting. Raw fruit is poisonous to humans.</i>	g	L	S A P	N W B	D C	X			4
Spiraea spp (spiraea, bridal wreath) <i>Dwarf cultivars are available.</i>	s m g	M	S A P	W B					3
Symphoricarpos albus (snowberry) <i>Named cultivars are less likely to spread.</i>	s m	L	P	N W B	D C	X			2
Syringa vulgaris (lilac) <i>Remove old stems at ground level.</i>	m g	L	S	W B	D				4
Teucrium fruticans (bush germander) <i>Dwarf varieties available.</i>	s m g	L	S		B E D C				4
Vitex agnus-castus (chaste tree) <i>May be grown as shrub or small tree. Dormant for 6 months of the year. Blooms in mid-summer.</i>	g	L	S	B					4

## Ground Covers

★ Arctostaphylos uva-ursi and cvs (kinnikinnick) <i>Prostrate, spreading and rooting as it grows. Slow to establish. Recommended varieties are 'Radiant' and 'Point Reyes'. 'Point Reyes' is more tolerant of heat and drought. Remove dead or twiggy interior branches.</i>	s m g	L	S A P	N W B E	D C				1 2 4
Artemisia pycnocephala 'David's Choice' (sandhill sage) <i>A particularly fine cultivar of this Sonoma County native. Short-lived; replace every 2 or 3 years.</i>	s	V	S	N W B E	D C				3
Baccharis pilularis cvs (dwarf covote brush) <i>'Pigeon Point' and 'Twin Peaks' are recommended varieties. Shear in early spring before new growth appears. Cut out old arching branches.</i>	s m	L	S A P	N W B E	D C				1 2 4
★ Ceanothus spp and cvs (California lilac) <i>The most drought tolerant and deer resistant have small, dark green, crinkly leaves. C. griseus 'Yankee Point' is a superior form; 'Diamond Heights' is lime green and variegated. Neither of these is deer resistant. Remove dead or twiggy branches.</i>	m g	M L	S A P	N W B E	D C				1 4
Grindelia stricta [G. arenicola] (Pacific grindelia, gumplant)	s	L	S A P	N	B E D T				1 3 4
Lupinus albifrons collinus (prostrate lupine)	s	V	S	N	B E D C				1 3 4
Rosmarinus officinalis -Prostratusø (prostrate rosemary)	g	L	S	W B E	D C				1 4
Salvia -Bee's Blissø (bee's bliss sage)	m	L	S	N W B E	D C				1 4
Salvia spathacea (hummingbird sage)	m	L	A P	N W B	D C				1 2 4
Satureja [Clinopodium] douglasii (yerba buena)	s	L	P F	N W B E	D C				1 2 3 4
Teucrium cossonii majoricum (Majorcan germander)	s	V	S		B E D				1 3 4
★ Thymus praecox (creeping thyme) <i>Excellent as a walkable groundcover.</i>	s	L	S A P		B E D				1 4
★ Verbena spp (verbena)	s	M L	S		B E D				1 3 4

## Vines

Clematis lasiantha (pipestem clematis)	m g	L	S A P	N	B	D	X		2 3 4
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Lonicera hispidula (western or California honeysuckle)    m    L    S A P F    N W B    C    1 2 3 4  
*Can be grown as a ground cover.*

**Perennials**

★ Achillea spp & hybrids (yarrow)    s m    M L    S A P    B    D    3  
*Flowers in a wide range of colors. Named varieties vary in height, color, and vigor.*

Achillea filipendulina 'Coronation Gold' (fernleaf yarrow)    m    L    S    B    D    3 4

Achillea millefolium, native CA cvs (yarrow)    s    L    S A P    N    B    D C    X    3 4  
*A very important plant for native bees and beneficial insects.*

Agastache spp (hyssop)    m    M L    S A P    W B    D    3  
*Dependable, summer blooming plants with fragrant foliage. Plants rebloom if deadheaded.*

Agastache rupestris (licorice mint)    m    L    S A P    W B    D    3 4  
*Narrow fragrant grey green leaves with spikes of orange flowers. Outstanding garden performance.*

Aquilegia spp (columbines)    s m    L    S A P    W B    D    X    2 3 4  
*Suited to woodland gardens. Most are not long lived and need to be replaced every 3 or 4 years.*

Aquilegia formosa (western columbine)    m    L    S A P    N W B    D    X    2 3

Arabis blepharophylla (California rockcress)    s    L    S A P    N    B E    D    3  
*Native to Sonoma coast. Good in rock gardens or containers.*

Armeria maritima ssp californica (sea thrift)    s    M    S A P    N    B E    D    3  
*Excellent for rock gardens. May need light shade in hottest locations.*

Asclepias spp, CA native (milkweed)    m    L    S    N    B    D    X    3 4  
*Important source of food for Monarch butterfly larvae. A. speciosa and A. fascicularis are native to western USA.*

Aster chilensis [Symphyotrichum chilense] (California aster)    m    M    S A P    N W B    C    3  
*Spreads vigorously if over-watered.*

Centaurea cineraria (dusty miller)    s    L    S A P    W B E    D    3  
*Flowers in summer; velvety white foliage attractive year-round.*

Coreopsis spp (coreopsis)    s    M L    S    B    3 4

Dianthus plumarius (cottage pinks)    s m    M    S A P    B    3

Echinacea purpurea (purple coneflower)    m    M    S A    W B    D    3

Erigeron glaucus (beach aster, seaside daisy)    s    L    S A P    N    B E    D    T    2 3 4  
*Needs some shade in hot areas.*

Erigeron karvinskianus 'Spindrift' (Santa Barbara or Mexican dai) *Other cultivars can be invasive.*    m    L    S A P    B E    D    3 4

Eriogonum spp (wild buckwheats)    s m    L V    S    N W B E    D C    3 4  
*Many native species, all great habitat plants. E. grande rubescens is especially showy*

Erysimum 'Bowles Mauve' (wallflower)    m    L    S A P    B E    D    3 4

Eschscholzia californica (California poppy)    s    V    S    N    B    D    3  
*Native has orange or yellow flowers. Cultivars available with red, pink, white, cream, salmon flowers.*

Lessingia [Corethrogyne] filaginifolia (California aster, silver car) *Does best on dry, rocky slopes. 'Silver Carpet' is best variety.*    s    L    S A P    N    B    D    3 4

Lupinus bicolor (blue and white lupine, miniature lupine)    s    V    S    N    B E    D    3 4  
*Short-lived native perennial.*

Monardella villosa (coyote mint)    s    V    S A P    N    B    D    2 3 4

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★ Nepeta spp (catmint or catnip)	s m	L	S A P	B	D	3 4
Origanum spp (oregano)	s m	M	S A P	B	D	3
Penstemon spp (penstemon, beard tongue)	m	M	S A P	B		3
Penstemon heterophyllus (blue foothill penstemon, California penstemon)	s	L	S A P	N	B	3 4
Perovskia atriplicifolia (Russian sage) <i>Dwarf cultivars available. Cut to emerging low buds after last frost.</i>	s m g	L	S	B	D	3
Ranunculus californicus (California buttercup)	s	V	S	N	B	3
Rudbeckia spp (gloriosa daisy, black eyed susan)	m	M	S A P	W B	D	3
★ Salvia spp, CA native (sages) <i>Recommended species are S. apiana, S. leucophylla, and cv 'Poza Blue'</i>	s m	L V	S A P	N W B E	D C	4
★ Salvia spp, non-native (sages) <i>Many varieties available. Recommended species are S. leucantha, S. chamaedryoides, S. officinalis</i>	s m g	M L	S A P	W B	D T	3 4
Scabiosa spp (pincushion flower)	s m	M	S	B		3
Tanacetum parthenium 'Aureum' (feverfew) <i>Chartreuse foliage. Excellent for beneficial insects. Reseeds.</i>	m	L	S A P F	B		3
★ Teucrium chamaedrys (germander)	s	L	S	B E	D	3 4
Thymus spp (thyme) <i>Genus includes ground-covers and upright or mounding perennials.</i>	s	L	S A P	B E	D	1 2 3
Tulbaghia violacea (society garlic) <i>Attracts bees.</i>	s	L	S	B E	D X	3 4
Verbena lilacina 'De La Mina' (Cedros Island verbena)	m	L	S A P	N	B E T	3
Zauschneria [Epilobium] spp (California fuchsia) <i>Attractive to pollinators. Cut back after bloom to renew. May spread to form colonies.</i>	s m	L	S	N W B	D C	3 4

## Succulents

Sedum spp (stonecrop) <i>Large genus with much variation. Some are frost tender.</i>	s m	L	S A P	B	T	2 3 4
Sedum spathulifolium (common stonecrop) <i>Purpureum has deep purple foliage.</i>	s	L	S A P	N W B		2 3
Sempervivum spp (houseleek) <i>Tolerates both wet and cold conditions.</i>	s	L	S A P	B	D	2 3 4

## Grasses and Grass-like Plants

Bouteloua gracilis (blue grama grass) <i>Retains its attractive shape even when dormant. Attractive reddish flower heads in summer.</i>	m	L	S A P	N W B	D	3 4
★ Calamagrostis foliosa (Cape Mendocino reed grass)	s m	M	S A P	N	B E D	3
★ Carex spp (sedge) <i>Brown, green, or variegated varieties provide contrast in color and texture.</i>	s m	M	S A P F	W B E	D C	3
Carex texensis (catlin sedge)	s	L	A P F	B E	D C	2 3 4
Carex tumulicola (foothill sedge)	m	L	A P F N	B E	D C	2 3 4
★ Festuca idahoensis (Idaho blue fescue) <i>Small, low clumps need replacing every few years.</i>	s	V	S A P	N	B E D	2 3 4
Festuca rubra (red fescue) <i>Great lawn replacement in shade. Does not require mowing.</i>	s	L	S A P	N	B E D C	2 3 4