
Annual flowers

Impatiens

walleriana

America's favorite bedding plant prefers morning sun or light shade. Great color range available. Downy mildew has been decimating them since about 2010, so presently not recommended. Resistant strains slated for market in 2020.

Impatiens; Busy Lizzie

Aquatics

Eichornia

crassipes

Floater. Beautiful orchid-like purple flowers in summer. Rapid growth. Good fish cover. Will yellow and starve if water is too clean. Tolerates shade. **Very invasive.** Not recommended.

Water Hyacinth

Pistia

stratiotes

Floater. **Very invasive.** Not recommended.

Water Lettuce

Fruits and Nuts

Corylus

x

filberts

Sold for many years by Sacramento area nurseries, but not tolerant of dry heat and have not produced nuts here. Possibly a chilling hours/portions issue. Not recommended.

Persea

Hass

Avocados, Guatemalan

Guatemalan Tender. Not recommended here. We recommend the Mexican types of avocado instead. Flower type A

Evergreen

stone fruits

Prunus Harcot Apricot

Apricots

Excellent flavor and quality. Large, sweet, juicy, rich flavor. *Brown rot resistant*. Mid-June. Has stopped producing in this area, perhaps because of chilling hours. Not recommended.

deciduous

Prunus Sour or pie cherries

Cherries, Pie

Not recommended. I no longer recommend pie cherries due to the Spotted wing drosophila, a fruit fly that arrived in California a few years ago. Fruit will be full of worms, repeated sprays are necessary and not very effective for homeowners. Sorry.

deciduous

Prunus Sweet cherries

Cherries, sweet

Not recommended. I no longer recommend sweet cherries due to the Spotted wing drosophila, a fruit fly that arrived in California a few years ago. Fruit will be full of worms, repeated sprays are necessary and not very effective for homeowners. Sorry.

deciduous

Grasses

Arundo

donax

Monstrous grass introduced by the Spaniards. Invasive in California. Don't plant this! Not recommended.

Evergreen

Giant reed

Cortaderia

jubata

Dwarfer pampas grass that has colonized much of coastal California by reseeding. Plant is shorter, plumes are pink rather than white. Listed here only to distinguish it from the bigger Pampas grass. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Purple pampas grass

selloana

Fast, big, with dramatic white plumes. Way too big for typical yards. Not recommended. Leaves have razor sharp edges. A related species (*C jubata*) is reseeding all over the coastal areas. This one is less likely to reseed.

Evergreen

Pampas grass

Pennisetum

setaceum

This is the parent species of the red-leaf grasses that have plume flowers. Those are sterile and don't re-seed. This one does and is considered invasive in the Valley. Not recommended.

Deciduous

green Fountain grass

Stipa

tenuissima

Graceful, wispy perennial grass, now considered invasive. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Mexican feather grass

Ground covers, perennial

Potentilla

verna

One of the woody-looking yellow-flowered ground covers used in past years by landscapers (Duchesnea is the other one). Spreads quickly, but prone to various leaf-attacking fungus and tends to die out after a couple of years. Then it resprouts and is hard to get rid of. Not recommended.

Cinquefoil

Evergreen

Lawns

Poa

pratensis

Fine-bladed turf. The old standard turfgrass. Great color, nice and uniform. Very subject to disease here, so not recommended as a major part of your lawn, but it's often ok as a small percentage of seed or sod blends..

Kentucky bluegrass

Evergreen

Shrubs

Buxus

sempervirens

Tends to get anemic here. Plant Japanese or Korean boxwood instead. Not recommended.

Evergreen

English boxwood

Euonymus

japonicus

Very common evergreen shrub. Gets a particular powdery mildew that is difficult to control. Not recommended. Other than that, it is reasonably drought tolerant and can take full sun. But the mildew makes it quite unsightly. Common in commercial landscapes. There are gold and white variegated forms, which also get the mildew.

Evergreen

Japanese euonymus

japonicus 'Aureo-Variegata'

see species notes. Not recommended

Japanese euonymus

Evergreen

japonicus 'Silver King'

see species notes. Not recommended

Japanese euonymus

Evergreen

japonicus 'Silver Queen'

see species notes. Not recommended

Japanese euonymus

Evergreen

Hebe

Veronica

Very pretty bottlebrush-like flowers in shades of pink and purple, on low shrubs. But all Hebes are very prone to a fungus which attacks through the roots and kills them. Consider them temporary additions to the perennial border. Basically not recommended.

Evergreen

Hibiscus

rosa-sinensis

The familiar hibiscus of Southern California, Hawai'i, and other subtropical and tropical regions. Not hardy here. Not recommended, except as a container plant that you will bring inside in winter (check for aphids first).

Chinese or tropical hibiscus

Leptospermum

laevigatum

Not quite hardy here. Prone to root and crown rot and iron chlorosis here. Not recommended.

Australian tea tree

Evergreen

scoparium many varieties available

Barely cold-hardy here. Prone to root and crown rot and iron chlorosis here. These just never seem to succeed in this area. Not recommended.

New Zealand tea tree

Evergreen

Leucadendron

species

Protea relatives that we really wish we could grow here. Grown for the beautiful fuzzy foliage and fascinating flowers. Most are too tender in winter and need perfect soil drainage. The Safari series is proving more tolerant and cold hardy. Other varieties need to be tested, but presently not recommended.

Conebush

Leucospermum

species

Protea relatives that we really wish we could grow here. Often confused with Leucadendron. Both are grown for the beautiful fuzzy foliage and fascinating flowers. Most are too tender in winter and need perfect soil drainage. New introductions need to be tested, but presently not recommended.

Pincushion

Myrica

californica

Needs good drainage, infrequent watering. I have not seen this do well in Davis. Dies out from root or crown rot. Not recommended.

Pacific Wax myrtle

Evergreen

Pittosporum

crassifolium

Fuzzy grey-green leaves. 'Nana' is a miniature shrub to 3'. Subject to dieback in heavy wet soils. I have not seen this do well in Davis. Not recommended.

Evergreen

eugenioides

Subject to dieback in heavy wet soils. Gets a leaf-spot disease that makes it unattractive. Not recommended.

Willow-leaf pittosporum

Evergreen

tenuifolium

Can get scale, spider mites in this area. Leaf-spot disease can be a problem. Dwarf varieties available, but dieback is a problem. I have not seen this species do well consistently in Davis. Not recommended.

Black-stem pittosporum

Evergreen

Pittosporum

eugenioides

This species has light green leaves with wavy edges. Branch dieback can be a problem. Not recommended.

Prunus

***caroliniana* 'Compacta'**

Leaf diseases, branch dieback are common problems on this dwarf version of the species. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Carolina laurel cherry

Tibouchina

urvilleana

Frost-tender. Popular for the fuzzy leaves and the vivid purple flowers in summer. Does great in the Bay Area, but will usually die in winter here, so not recommended. Also called Pleroma.

Evergreen

Princess Flower

Trees

Acacia

baileyana

Yellow blooms in Jan.-Feb. Common in Bay Area. Brittle wood, so tends to break apart in high winds. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Purpleleaf acacia

Acer

saccharinum

Very fast-growing, huge tree. Aggressive roots, brittle branches, and tendency to get aphids in summer (leads to sticky drip all over everything) make it unsuitable for most residential situations. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Silver maple

Acer

negundo

Native maple that doesn't look like a maple due to divided leaves. Riparian tree that can become drought tolerant with age. There is a variegated variety that has been planted at times (interesting specimen in El Macero). Subject to boxelder bug, which is a nuisance pest, so not recommended.

Deciduous

Boxelder

Agonis

flexuosa

Lovely, graceful little tree with peppermint-scented leaves. Not quite hardy enough for us to grow here; killed back at 27F and to the ground at 25F. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Albizia

julibrissin

Grows 3' - 4' per year, with fern-like, finely divided leaves. Graceful, spreading growth habit. Very tough, drought-tolerant. Pink fluffy flowers are showy, then litter all over everything. Reseeds profusely. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Silk tree

Alnus

rhombifolia

Coastal CA native tree that grows very rapidly in riparian areas. Widely planted in the Valley in the 1960s and 70s, then killed by borers. Not recommended.

Evergreen

California white alder

Catalpa

bignonioides

Fast growing with tropical looking leaves, showy flowers. Subject to limb-breakage in windy areas. Very drought tolerant. Not common in the nursery trade. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Catalpa

Celtis

sinensis

Grows 5 - 7' a year, both up and out. Once one of the best very fast-growing shade trees for our area. Asian woolly hackberry aphids cause sticky mess under the trees. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Chinese hackberry

Ceratonia

siliqua

Pro: Very drought tolerant, with dark green shiny foliage and a very dense crown. Con: male trees smell odd; female trees produce copious amounts of pods. Somewhat surface-rooting. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Carob

Cercidium

x 'Desert Museum'

Incredibly tough tree from the southwestern U.S. with thin leaves, lots of yellow flowers in spring. This variety is thornless and is widely planted in Southern California. Very drought tolerant. Not sure how it tolerates wet, cold soil. The jury is still out on this one. Presently not recommended.

Palo verde

Crataegus

laevigatum

'Paul's Scarlet' has very showy rose pink flowers, very little fruit. 'Crimson Cloud' has bright red flowers, showy red fruit. These are very pretty trees, but unfortunately are very prone to fireblight. Not recommended.

Deciduous

English hawthorn

Cupressocyparis

leylandii

Grows fast for 7 - 10 years, gets bacterial canker disease and dies, pretty much always. 'Castlewellan' is a golden-foliaged variety that does the same thing. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Leylandi cypress

Cupressus

macrocarpa

Coastal CA conifer from the Monterey area. Classic, picturesque tree in that region. Gets coryneum canker disease in the Valley, nearly always dies here. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Monterey cypress

macrocarpa 'Goldcrest'

Curious, very dwarf variety of the Monterey cypress that has strong citronella content; golden colored needles smell like lemon. Seedling that originated in the UK. 'Wilma' is similar, more dwarf. 'Citriodora' is another name for the same plant. Usually grown as a container novelty. Hard to say how long it would last in the landscape here, given the disease issue with the parent plant. Ok as a novelty, otherwise not recommended.

Evergreen

Lemon cypress

Elaeagnus

angustifolia

Invasive in many Western states. Resembles a willow or olive, but more kind of scruffy. Not widely planted here, but considered likely to be invasive in some settings so not recommended. Powerfully fragrant flowers over several weeks in spring. Unbelievably tough, tolerant of drought, heat, wind, bad soil.

Russian olive

Eriobotrya

deflexa

Very prone to fireblight. Not recommended. Fruiting loquat (*E. japonica*) is sometimes planted; also gets fireblight, but people may consider the fruit worth it. This variety doesn't fruit..

Evergreen

Bronze loquat

Fraxinus

species

Most Ash species and varieties have problems. 'Raywood' gets borers, 'Modesto' and 'Moraine' get anthracnose blight, and all get mistletoe. Mostly not recommended.

Deciduous

Ash trees

Geijera

parvifolia

Very graceful small evergreen tree with a willow-like habit. Grows 3 - 4' a year. Deep-rooted. Killed by freezing weather in 1990 and 1998, so not recommended. Included here because people ask for it.

Evergreen

Australian willow

Gleditsia

triacanthos inermis

Gall midge defoliates these trees from May through August, and then it drops its leaves in late September, so it's not very ornamental. Not recommended

Deciduous

Honey locust

Jacaranda

mimosifolia

Fern-like foliage, vivid purple flowers make this a favorite in mild parts of California. Not quite hardy here. Young trees will be badly damaged each winter. Eventually they can get big and woody enough to survive, so there are a few trees locally. Not recommended.

Jacaranda

Koelreuteria

paniculata

Grows 3' - 4' per year, with divided leaves. Very tough, drought-tolerant. Yellow flowers are showy, followed by orange-red pods, then zillions of little seedling trees all over your yard! Box-elder bugs love them and soon you have zillions of them, too! Not recommended. See *K. bipinnata* and *K. elegans*.

Deciduous

Goldenrain tree

Ligustrum

japonicum

Common allergy plant. Reseeds prolifically. Ungainly growth habit. There really is no reason to plant this. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Japanese privet

lucidum

Common allergy plant. Heavy fruit crop. Reseeds prolifically. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Japanese privet

Liquidambar

styraciflua

Were very subject to iron chlorosis and salt burn on our old water supply. May do better now that we are on a better-quality water supply. Great fall color. Aggressive surface roots and spiky seed balls are major drawbacks. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Sweet gum

Lyonothamnus

floribundus asplenifolius

Beautiful shiny divided green foliage, mahogany bark. There is a nice group in the UCD Arboretum. Moderately fast, upright grower. Very susceptible to crown and root rot. Not recommended, though with careful water management they could be considered.

Evergreen

Catalina ironwood

Magnolia

grandiflora

Many varieties ranging from 15' - 60'. Needs plenty of moisture. Serious surface roots in lawns. Fragrant flowers in great profusion in summer. Not recommended in most situations.

Evergreen

Southern Magnolia

Morus

alba

Very fast, providing deep shade in just a few years. Aggressive roots, dense shade make it very difficult to grow anything underneath them. Often stubbed ("pollarded"), which ruins the shape. Can be very attractive when pruned correctly. Too big and overbearing for most yards; best on rural properties. Not recommended in most situations.

Deciduous

Fruitless mulberry

Parkinsonia

aculeata

Incredibly tough tree from the southwestern U.S. with thin leaves, lots of yellow flowers in spring. Very drought tolerant. Not sure how it tolerates wet, cold soil. The jury is still out on this one. Presently not recommended.

Mexican palo verde

Paulownia

tomentosa

Often touted online for its fast growth and pretty purple flowers, but has very weak wood and falls apart with age. Not recommended.

Empress tree

Phoenix

canariensis

Grow 2 - 3' a year to 30 - 40'+. One of the huge palms planted in the Valley around farm houses. Very heat, sun, wind, and drought tolerant (grows faster with regular watering and feeding). Spreading fronds, rather massive. Reseeds prolifically. Not recommended in average-sized yards.

Evergreen

Canary Island date palm

Picea

abies several varieties

Don't like heavy soil, hard water, extreme dry heat. Not recommended.

Norway spruce

Evergreen

Pinus

halepensis

Fast-growing with soft needles, upright habit, brushy appearance. Tolerates heat, drought, wind. Unirrigated examples can be seen North of the Veterinary Hospital at U.C. Davis. Too big for most residential areas. Good windbreak for rural properties, but otherwise not recommended.

Evergreen

Aleppo pine

pinea

Grows 3' - 4' per year, with unusual spreading habit. Eventually very broad, flat-topped. Tolerates heat, wind, drought. Way too big for most residential areas, and needs careful training to make sure limbs don't collapse. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Italian Stone pine

radiata

Grows very fast, eventually very large. Subject to diseases and pests in our area, and tends to fall over. Not long-lived and becomes a major risk in residential landscapes. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Monterey pine

Populus

fremontii

Huge, fast-growing native cottonwood. Roots spread far and wide. Branches break and fall. Suitable for rural properties as a great perch for raptors. Otherwise not recommended.

Fremont cottonwood

nigra 'Italica'

Very fast-growing tree with narrow, upright habit. Popular for windbreaks on farms. Roots spread far and wide. Borers kill branches.. Suitable for rural properties as a barrier and great perches for raptors. Otherwise not recommended.

Lombardy poplar

species

Very fast-growing trees that have roots that spread far beyond the canopy and sucker profusely. Subject to borers. May be suitable for farms or rural properties. Not recommended.

Cottonwoods and poplars

tremuloides

The lovely tree in the mountains that looks kind of like a birch and has pretty yellow fall color. Probably not long-lived in our hot, dry climate. Roots spread aggressively; all the trees you see in a grove may be suckers of one plant. Not recommended.

Quaking aspen

Pyrus

calleryana

Callery pears get fireblight and have poor branch structure. They are invasive in the eastern U.S. and have the potential to be so here. Bradford pear was the original one; other named varieties include Aristocrat, Autumn Blaze, Capital, Chanticleer, Cleveland Select, and more. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Callery pears

kawakami

Grows 2' - 3' a year, with equal spread to height. White flowers in late winter; one of the first trees to bloom in Northern California. Very prone to fireblight and leaf-spot fungus! *Not recommended.* Nearly evergreen here.

Deciduous

Evergreen pear

Robinia

***pseudoacacia* Frisia golden locust**

Clusters of white flowers like Wisteria in April. This variety has bright gold, nearly orange new growth, summer leaves are yellow, thorns and young wood are red. Bad branch structure; prone to splitting. Best for rural properties, otherwise not recommended.

Deciduous

***pseudoacacia* 'Purple Robe'**

Beautiful clusters of purple flowers like Wisteria in April. Branches split in windy areas. Sends up suckers, often many feet from the main plant. Good in rural areas, not close to the house. Not recommended for most yards.

Deciduous

Golden Black locust

Black locust

Salix

matsudana

Huge, fast-growing tree. Twisted branches and leaves on a weeping tree. Very striking silhouette. Many drawbacks, but very graceful in its place. Branches break readily in wind, prone to borers. Strictly for rural areas, otherwise not recommended.

Deciduous

species

Huge, fast-growing trees with moderately to strongly weeping habits. Very striking silhouette. Many drawbacks, but very graceful. Branches brittle; prone to borers, roots are aggressive. *S. babylonica* is most weeping. *S. alba tristis* has golden branches. *S. blanda* is blue-green, resists borers. Strictly for rural properties; otherwise not recommended.

Deciduous

Curly willow

Weeping willows

Sapium

sebiferum

Aggressive surface roots when planted in lawns. Many good examples in Village Homes in West Davis. Tends to reseed. Invasive in riparian areas and rainier climates. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Chinese tallow tree

Sequoia

***sempervirens* 'Santa Cruz'**

Bright green, ferny foliage; dense growth; burns in dry winds, so this variety is not recommended in the interior. Use 'Soquel' or 'Aptos Blue' instead.

Coast redwoods grow fast and upright; 3x height to spread, eventually very large. Can be pruned. Never drought-tolerant; like lawn watering but eventually shade out the lawn.

Evergreen

Santa Cruz coast redwood

Sequoiadendron

giganteum

Grows fairly slowly with very upright habit. Botryosphaeria canker infects them in the valley, and there is no control for the disease which usually kills them within 7 - 10 years of planting. Not recommended.

Evergreen

Giant Sequoia

Tamarix

species

Three species that are very similar. People ask about them when they see them in bloom along county roads. One of the most invasive trees in the Western states. Not recommended.

Deciduous

Saltcedar

Trees or Large Shrubs

Erythrina

s\

species

Showy red flowers attract hummingbirds. Widely planted in mild-winter parts of California. Most are tender. *E. crista-galli* or *E. x bidwillii* may grow here as multi-trunk shrubs or even develop trunks, but not reliably. Not recommended as trees. Ok to try as perennials.

Coral Trees

Myoporum

laetum

Common in coastal areas and occasionally planted here, but they *froze in 1990 and 1998*, and are often damaged in moderately cold winters in the Valley. Not recommended.

Myoporum

Evergreen

Vines

Campsis

Rampant, growing to 30' or more. Suckers sprout from root system, often many feet from the main plant.

radicans

Rampant vine with orange flowers, very attractive to hummingbirds. Sends up root suckers all over the yard -- so not recommended unless roots are confined. Twines.

Deciduous

Trumpet creeper

Distictis

x 'Rivers'

Like *D. buccinatoria* except flowers are purple and plant is tender here, so not recommended.

Evergreen

Trumpet Vine

Ficus

pumila (repens)

Tiny leaves for 10 - 15 years, then matures and leaves become large. Rampant; roots into supporting structure, tears apart fences, roots are invasive -- so not recommended in most situations. 'Variegata' makes a cute house plant.

Evergreen

Creeping Fig

Hardenbergia

comptoniana

This species is tender and usually gets cold damage, often losing the bloom and frequently killed to the ground, so not recommended. Purple flowers in winter and early spring. Twines. *H. violacea* 'Happy Wanderer' (lilac vine) is hardy.

Evergreen

Hedera

canariensis

Large, shiny leaves. Becomes rampant and invasive, roots into structures -- so not recommended for those reasons. Variegated form available.

Evergreen

Algerian ivy

helix

Small to medium, shiny leaves. Becomes rampant and invasive; roots into structures -- so not recommended for those reasons. Smaller-leaf types come in hundreds of varieties; great as fillers in containers, or for a ground cover in confined situation. Good houseplants; shower them off periodically to control spider mites when grown indoors.

Evergreen

English ivy

Ipomoea

acuminata

Beautiful sky blue flowers. Perennial vine: dies to the ground or to the stems each winter, regrowing very rapidly in early April. Invasive in coastal parts of California. Twines. Doesn't make seed, but spreads by runners that go rapidly across the ground and root. A monster. Not recommended unless it is confined.

Deciduous

Blue dawn sky flower

Mandevilla

species and hybrids

Formerly classed as Dipladenia. Showy red, pink, or white flowers. Most are not hardy here, so not recommended. *M. laxa* is a hardy relative with white flowers.

Mandevilla

Subtropical