



Recommended Plants for Sonoma County for Erosion Control

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.

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

★ = Sonoma Superstars	H = high water	S = full sun	N = CA native	D = deer resistant	1 = for ground covers
s = small	M = moderate water	A = afternoon shade	W = wildlife habitat	C = erosion control	2 = for dry shade
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Trees

★ <i>Cercis occidentalis</i> (western redbud)	s		V	S	A	P		N	W		D	C			2	3	4	
<i>Can be grown as a large shrub or small tree. Remove dead or twiggy branches. Clean up seed pods as they drop.</i>																		
<i>Cornus nuttallii</i> (Pacific dogwood)	g	M					A	P	F	N		B		C				
<i>Dislikes excessive watering, fertilizing and pruning. Susceptible to anthracnose.</i>																		

Shrubs

★ <i>Arctostaphylos</i> spp (manzanita)	s	m	g		L		S	A	P		N	W	B	E	D	C		1	2	3	4			
<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>																								
<i>Artemisia</i> spp (sagebrush)	s	m			L	V	S							E	D	C					3	4		
<i>Woody perennials vary from prostrate to mounding. Prune to maintain shape and rejuvenate. Avoid planting 'Valerie Finiss' and 'Silver King' which may spread too vigorously.</i>																								
<i>Artemisia californica</i> (California sagebrush)	m				L		S				N	W		E	D	C								
<i>'Canyon Gray' and 'Montara' are superior selections.</i>																								
★ <i>Berberis thunbergii</i> and cvs (barberry)	s	m	g		M		S	A	P			W			D	C	X					3		
<i>Some species are deciduous. Many cultivars have attractive foliage colors such as lime green and burgundy. Dwarf varieties available. Remove dead or twiggy branches.</i>																								
★ <i>Ceanothus</i> spp and cvs (California lilac)	m	g			M	L		S	A	P		N	W	B	E	D	C					3	4	
<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>																								
<i>Dendromecon harfordii</i> (island bush poppy)	g				L		S				N		B	E	D	C								
<i>Needs excellent drainage</i>																								
<i>Dendromecon rigida</i> (bush poppy)	m				V		S				N		B	E	D	C								
<i>Will drop leaves if no summer irrigation.</i>																								
<i>Encelia californica</i> (coast sunflower)	s				L		S				N		B	E	C	T							3	
<i>Will drop leaves if no summer irrigation.</i>																								
<i>Eriogonum giganteum</i> (St. Catherine's lace)	m	g			V		S				N	W	B	E	D	C	T							
<i>Excellent native habitat plant. Best with some summer water.</i>																								
<i>Grevillea</i> spp (grevillea)	s	m	g		L		S	A	P			W		E	D	C							3	4
<i>Huge variation in size and form. Needle-leaved species are deer-proof. Avoid phosphorus fertilizers. Remove rangy growth.</i>																								

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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
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
Lonicera nitida (box honeysuckle) <i>Drought tolerant once established. Can be sheared into hedge. Can be invasive.</i>	m	L	S A P		E C					2	4
Mimulus [Diplacus] aurantiacus and hybrids (sticky monkey flower) <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 lewisii (wild mock orange, western mock orange) <i>Remove dead interior branches.</i>	g	M	S A P	N	B C						
Prunus caroliniana (Carolina laurel cherry) <i>Tolerates shearing.</i>	g	L	S A P		E C X						4
Prunus ilicifolia (holly leaf cherry)	g	L	S A P	N W B E D C	X						4
★ Rhamnus [Frangula] californica (coffeeberry)	m g	L	S A P	N W B E D C						2	4
Rhamnus alaternus (Italian buckthorn) <i>Plant named cultivars only. For large gardens only.</i>	g	L	S		E D C						4
Rhus integrifolia (lemonade berry) <i>Can be frost-tender inland.</i>	g	L	S A P	N W E D C							4
Rhus ovata (sugar bush)	g	L	S A P	N W E D C							4
★ Ribes spp (currant or gooseberry) <i>Thornless species are called currants; thorned species are called gooseberries.</i>	m g	M L V	S A P F	N W	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
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
Sollya heterophylla (Australian bluebell creeper) <i>Can also grow as a vine.</i>	m	L	S A P		E D C T						4
Symphoricarpos albus (snowberry) <i>Named cultivars are less likely to spread.</i>	s m	L	P	N W B	D C X					2	
Teucrium fruticans (bush germander) <i>Dwarf varieties available.</i>	s m g	L	S		B E D C						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 coyote 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

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★ 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
Cotoneaster dammeri cvs <i>Superior groundcover forms include 'Lowfast' and 'Coral Beauty'.</i>	m g	L	S	W	E D C	X 1	4
Euonymus fortunei (winter creeper) <i>Many cultivars available.</i>	m g	M	S A P		E C	X 1	3
Lupinus albifrons collinus (prostrate lupine)	s	V	S	N	B E D C	1	3 4
Mahonia repens [Berberis aquifolium var repens] (Oregon grape) <i>Needs part shade in hottest locations.</i>	s m	L	S A P	N W	E D C	1 2 3	4
Myoporum parvifolium (prostrate myoporum)	m g	L	S		E D C T	1	4
Ophiopogon japonicus nanus (dwarf mondo grass) <i>Full sun only in coastal regions.</i>	s	M	A P F		E D C	1	3
Ribes viburnifolium (evergreen currant, Catalina perfume)	m	L	P F	N W	D C	2 3	4
Rosmarinus officinalis -Prostratusø (prostrate rosemary)	g	L	S	W B E	D C	1	4
Rubus calycinoides (trailing thimbleberry) <i>Requires little water in shade.</i>	m	M	S A P	W	E D C	1 2	3
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

Vines

Lonicera hispidula (western or California honeysuckle) <i>Can be grown as a ground cover,</i>	m	L	S A P F	N W B	C	1 2 3	4
Trachelospermum jasminoides (star jasmine) <i>Can be used as a ground cover.</i>	g	M	S A P		E C	1	

Perennials

Achillea millefolium, native CA cvs (yarrow) <i>A very important plant for native bees and beneficial insects.</i>	s	L	S A P	N B	D C	X	3 4
Aster chilensis [Symphyotrichum chilense] (California aster) <i>Spreads vigorously if over-watered.</i>	m	M	S A P	N W B	C		3
Eriogonum spp (wild buckwheats) <i>Many native species, all great habitat plants. E. grande rubescens is especially showy</i>	s m	L V	S	N W B E	D C		3 4
★ 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
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

Agave spp (agave) <i>Many smaller species available, suitable for small gardens. Some are frost tender. Avoid A. americana which grows large and is difficult to remove.</i>	s m g	L V	S		E D C T		3 4
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Grasses and Grass-like Plants

★ 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 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
Juncus patens (California grey rush) <i>Thrives in moist soil or shallow water. Good for rain gardens. Shear back old clumps to renew.</i>	s m	L	S A P	N E D C	2 3 4
Muhlenbergia spp (muhly grass) <i>M. dubia, M. dumosa, M. capillaris are recommended. Cut to ground every two years.</i>	m g	L	S	W E D C	3 4
Muhlenbergia rigens (deer grass) <i>Cut to ground every two years.</i>	g	L	S A P	N W E C	2
Pennisetum orientale (fountain grass)	m	M	S A P	D C	3

Ferns

Polystichum munitum (western sword fern)	m g	M	F N	E D C	3
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