

## **DROUGHT-PROOF LANDSCAPE: BAY AREA STORMWATER AGENCIES URGE RESIDENTS TO GARDEN WITH NATIVE PLANTS**

Natives require less water, can attract beneficial bugs

Plant the right plants in the right place! That's the key to a successful and attractive garden and using native plants can get you there. The Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association (BASMAA) is encouraging the region's residents to consider native plants in lieu of lawns and other plants. The impact can be dramatic: natives require less watering, and many attract beneficial bugs, reducing the need for pesticides and chemical treatments.

"It makes sense at an intuitive level," said Geoff Brosseau, executive director of BASMAA. "Plants that are native to the region were meant to be here, and thrived here. They require less maintenance, water, and other resources than non-natives we may choose to plant based on aesthetics alone."

Native plants are especially important right now because of California's drought. Although a green lawn is no longer an option, natives are a great alternative. "Most natives use much less water than non-natives once they are established," explained Brosseau. "That alone is an excellent reason for anyone to make changes to their garden."

There are more benefits, too: Native plants can provide year-round color in a garden and can also attract butterflies, birds, bees and other beneficial insects, allowing for less-toxic gardening. That's something BASMAA always encourages because of stormwater pollution from yard and garden chemicals. When used on lawns, in gardens, or even just around the perimeter of a home, pesticides can cause water pollution. Once pesticides and fertilizers wash off lawns from rain and watering, they flow into storm drains, polluting local creeks and the Bay and harming fish and wildlife.

Some Bay Area native plants include California buckeye, yarrow, white alder, Western azalea, and briar rose. A full list can be found on the California Native Plant Society [website](#). Residents should look for plant recommendations for the part of the Bay Area they live in because the region's microclimates vary and, consequently, so do the plants that thrive in different parts of the region.

Resources for getting started with or learning more about native plants and less-toxic gardening:

- Bringing Back the Natives: <http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net>
- CalFlora: <http://www.calflora.org>
- BASMAA <http://baywise.org>
- Our Water, Our World <http://ourwaterourworld.org>