

Great Western Native Plants for the Dry Garden

*and a few non-western, non-natives

Common Name	Scientific Name	Moisture	Plant Type	Flower Color	Bloom Time	Difficulty	Native to:	Comment
Hummingbird Mint, Anise Hyssop	<i>Agastache cana</i> , <i>A. rupestris</i> , <i>A. foeniculum</i>	moderate	herbaceous	Pink, orange, purplish pink	summer	easy	(<i>A. cana</i>)TX, NM. (<i>A. rupestris</i>) NM, AZ	Short lived (3-5 years, sometimes more), fragrant perennials, attractive to hummingbirds. Worth replanting.
Nettleleaf Agastache	<i>Agastache urticifolia</i>	low to moderate	herbaceous	purple	summer	easy in the right site	All western states and British Columbia	Strongly mint scented, tall plant with flowers loved by butterflies and bees. Sagebrush plant prefers lower north facing slopes and swales - moister microsites but not wet.
Serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	low to moderate	tall shrub	white	spring	easy	Most of the West, northern Midwest, Canada	Great for birds! Edible fruit. First white flowering native shrub in NE WA.
Western Columbine	<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>	moderate to dry	herbaceous	red & yellow	early summer	somewhat difficult	Throughout the West, western Canada & AK	Tolerates partial shade.
Sagebrush	<i>Artemisia tridentata</i>	very low	medium shrub	green, inconspicuous	late summer - fall	moderate	Throughout the West	Classic dryland species. Aromatic.

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Kinnickinnik	<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	low to moderate	creeping shrub	pink	early spring	moderate	All western states, northern tier states and all of Canada AND Greenland(!)	Not as drought tolerant as thought to be - a woodland understory species.
Narrowleaf Milkweed	<i>Asclepias fascicularis</i>	low	herbaceous	pink - purple	late spring	easy	WA, OR, ID, CA, NV, UT	Pretty linear accent. Small but numerous flower clusters. Good for butterflies (including Monarch) & bees.
Showy Milkweed	<i>Asclepias speciosa</i>	moderate to moist	herbaceous	pink	summer	easy	Throughout the West, Midwest and southwest Canada	Careful where you plant it. Rhizomatous and can be invasive in a moist spot. Great for butterflies (including Monarch) & bees.
Orange Milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	moderate to dry	herbaceous	orange shades	summer	easy	Throughout the US, except WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, ND, NV	Great for butterflies (including Monarch) & bees. Traditional medicinal (Pleurisy root) Does not run.
Western Aster, Western Mountain Aster	<i>Aster occidentalis</i> (<i>Symphotrichum spathulatum</i> var. <i>spathulatum</i>)	low	herbaceous	blue - purple	late summer	moderate	Throughout the West & into western Canada	Great for bees in late summer. Water when in bud.

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Smooth blue aster, Geyer's aster	<i>Aster laevis</i> (<i>Symphotrichum laeve</i> var. <i>geyeri</i>)	low to moderate	herbaceous	pale blue-purple	Late summer to fall	easy	All western and midwestern states and southern Canada.	Seeds itself but easy to contain. Great for bees in late summer into fall. Water when in bud.
New England Aster	<i>Aster nova-angliae</i> (<i>Symphotrichum novae-angliae</i>)	moderate	herbaceous	purples, pinks	fall	easy	Throughout most of the US and parts of Canada	The last big bloom of the year. Bees love it - needs moisture to produce nectar. Seeds but easy to contain.
Arrowleaf Balsamroot	<i>Balsamorhiza sagittata</i>	low	herbaceous	yellow	spring	somewhat difficult	Throughout the West, western Canada & the Dakotas	3-5 years to flowering; deep taproot - no transplanting
Dwarf Sundrops	<i>Calylophus serrulatus</i>	low	herbaceous	yellow	summer	easy	Throughout the Midwest and central Canada, MT, WY, AZ, NM, NB, CO	Blooms ALL summer!
Camas	<i>Camassia quamash</i>	spring moisture	spring bulb	blue	spring	easy	Western US & SW Canada	Traditional food for Native Americans.
Curl-leaf Mountain Mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus ledifolius</i>	low	Medium-tall evergreen shrub	yellow, tiny	spring	somewhat difficult	All western states	Small olive green leaves. Very drought tolerant. Easy in the right spot. Slow growing.

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Fernbush	<i>Chamaebatiaria millefolium</i>	low	medium shrub	white	summer	moderate	OR, ID, CA, NV, UT, AZ	Fragrant year-round. Semi-evergreen,
Western White Clematis	<i>Clematis ligusticifolia</i>	low	vine	white	late summer	easy	Throughout the West, western Midwest & SW Canada	Rampant vine grows up to 20 ft. Great to cover a chain link fence.
Black Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus douglasii</i>	moderate	small tree or tall shrub	white	spring	easy	NW US, most of Canada, Great Lakes states	Great for birds!
Larkspur	<i>Delphinium nuttallianum</i>	low	herbaceous	purple	summer	easy	Entire West including western Canada, SD, NB	Annual - self seeding
Basin Wildrye	<i>Leymus cinerius</i>	low to moderate	Very tall grass	green to gold	Summer	fairly easy	All western states and the western provinces of Canada.	Takes a few years to reach its full potential. Prefers somewhat moister sites than those that host sagebrush: swales where drainage provides a little more moisture.
Narrowleaf Coneflower	<i>Echinacea angustifolia</i>	moderate to low	herbaceous	pink - purple	early summer	fairly easy	Throughout the midwestern US and south-central Canada.	The medicinal echinacea. Flowers great for butterflies and bees, and seed for the birds.

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Moisture	Plant Type	Flower Color	Bloom Time	Difficulty	Native to:	Comment
Eastern Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	moderate to low	herbaceous	pink - purple	summer	fairly easy	Throughout the East, southern, Midwest & CO	Butterflies love it. So do bees.
Gray Rabbitbrush	<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>	very low	low shrub	yellow	late summer - fall	somewhat difficult	Throughout the West, western Midwest & SW Canada	Good late season nectar and pollen source.
Cutleaf Daisy	<i>Erigeron compositus</i>	low	herbaceous	white, blue or pink with yellow center	reblooms all summer	easy	Throughout the West, the Dakotas & Canada	Seeds itself gently.
Desert Yellow Daisy	<i>Erigeron linearis</i>	very low	herbaceous	yellow	spring	moderate	Entire West including western Canada	Cheery yellow daisies. Likes rocky sites.
Showy Daisy, Aspen Fleabane	<i>Erigeron speciosus</i>	moderate to low	herbaceous	blue - purple	early summer	easy	Throughout the West & SW Canada, except CA	Seeds itself gently.
Northern Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum compositum</i>	very low	low shrub	cream to yellow	late spring - early summer	easy	WA, OR, ID, CA	The best solution for a harsh, dry, sunbaked site where nothing else will grow.
Slender Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum microthecum</i>	very low	low shrub	white	late summer - fall	easy	Throughout the West	Heavy seeder. Outstanding pollinator plant for a dry site in late summer.

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Moisture	Plant Type	Flower Color	Bloom Time	Difficulty	Native to:	Comment
Snow Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum niveum</i>	very low	herbaceous	white, occasionally pink	summer	easy	WA, OR, BC	Great for summer pollinators.
Blue Mt. Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum strictum</i>	very low	low shrub	white, cream, yellow	early summer	moderate	WA, OR, ID, MT, CA, NV, BC	Nice rounded clumps - 2 ft. mats.
Thyme-leaf buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum thymoides</i>	very low	miniature shrub	white, pink, red	spring	difficult	Columbia Basin: WA, OR, ID	Very slow growing. Once used in bonsai trade as 'Ming Tree'.
Sulphur Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i>	very low	mat forming shrub	generally yellow	early summer	moderate	Throughout the West and SW Canada	Many varieties & subspecies. Evergreen.
Alpine Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum umbellatum var. majus</i>	low	mat forming shrub	cream to pink	late spring - early summer	easy	WA, ID, MT, UT, CO	Semi evergreen - from open, rocky, upper mountain slopes.
Oregon Sunshine, Woolly Sunflower	<i>Eriophyllum lanatum</i>	very low	herbaceous	yellow	early summer	easy	WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, CA, NV, UT	Self-seeding. Butterfly magnet.
Apache Plume	<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	low	medium shrub	white	summer	moderate	Throughout the SW	Blooms ALL summer! Fluffy seedheads & flowers at the same time.
Indian Blanket Flower	<i>Gaillardia aristata</i>	moderate to low	herbaceous	yellow & red	summer	easy	Throughout the West & Canada & the northern tier states	Self-seeding. Blooms once in a dry site. Reblooms all summer with irrigation

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Prairie Smoke	<i>Geum triflorum</i>	low	ground cover	pink	early summer	easy	Entire West including western Canada, northern Midwest and most of the NE US.	Seedheads at least as showy as flowers.
Scarlet Gilia	<i>Gilia aggregata</i>	very low	herbaceous	scarlet	summer	moderate - easy	Most of the West & BC. Not in OR.	Biennial. Must plant 2 years running to establish population for reseeding.
Roundleaf Alumroot	<i>Heuchera cylindrica</i>	low	herbaceous	white	early summer	easy	WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, CA, NV, BC	Widely adapted: sun, shade, wet, dry. First to green up in spring.
(Rocky Mt. Iris)	<i>Iris missouriensis</i>	spring moisture	herbaceous	blue - purple	spring - early summer	easy from rhizome	Throughout the West, Midwest and southwest Canada	Can tolerate summer drying, like most Iris.
Jovibarba	<i>Jovibarba heuphili</i>	low	succulent	yellow	early summer	easy	introduced	Large hens & chicks relative that doesn't die when it blooms.
Western Juniper	<i>Juniperus occidentalis</i>	low	tree	green, inconspicuous	?	moderate	WA, OR, ID, CA, NV	Blue berries flavor gin. Deer won't touch it. Drought adapted substitute for Arbor vitae.
Lavender	<i>Lavendula sp.</i>	low	low shrub	purple, sometimes pink or white	summer	easy	introduced	A classic for a dry site.

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Lewisia	<i>Lewisia cotyledon</i>	moderate to dry	succulent	many colors	late spring	moderate	OR, CA	Dry garden or container. Partial shade tolerant.
Bitterroot	<i>Lewisia rediviva</i>	very low	herbaceous	pink, sometimes white	spring	moderate	Entire West including western Canada	dormant most of the year
Columbia desert parsley	<i>Lomatium columbianum</i>	low	herbaceous	antique pink - light maroon	early spring	VERY difficult	WA, OR	Regional endemic. Takes 3-5 years from seed to flower. Summer dormant. Attracts Anise Swallowtails. Gorgeous color combination & texture, with blue foliage & antique pink flowers.
Gray's Lomatium	<i>Lomatium grayi</i>	very low	herbaceous	yellow	spring	moderate	WA, OR, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, NM, BC	Annual or biennial?? Seeds a bit. Great texture. Very strong celery scent. Summer dormant.
Orange Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>	moderate	vine	orange	early summer	easy	Throuhout the West, Canada & Alaska	Fast growing. Susceptible to aphids if too moist. Hummingbirds like the flowers.

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Moisture	Plant Type	Flower Color	Bloom Time	Difficulty	Native to:	Comment
Dwarf Lupine, Desert lupine	<i>Lupinus lepidus</i> <i>var. aridus(?)</i>	low	herbaceous	purple or blue & white bicolor	early summer	moderate	WA, OR, ID, MT, CA, NV, UT, AZ	Not sure of the species, as the ones I have are perennial. Very particular about spacing - need about 15 - 18 inches between plants.
Silky Lupine	<i>Lupinus sericeus</i>	low	herbaceous	purple	early summer	somewhat difficult	Most Western states and western Canada	Silvery green leaves and purple flowers in early summer.
Tall or Shining Oregon-grape, Hollyleaved Barberry	<i>Mahonia</i> <i>aquifolium</i>	low to moderate	tall shrub	yellow	spring	easy	ID, WA, OR, CA, MT, Western Canada, some eastern states and provinces	Excellent evergreen hedge and prickly barrier. Somewhat slow to establish but will get quite large in 10 - 15 years.
Creeping Oregon- grape	<i>Mahonia repens</i>	low	low shrub	yellow	spring	easy	All western and most midwestern states & western Canada	Ground cover for dry shade. Common in open pine woods. Fruit edible but sour. Birds like the fruit.
Blazingstar	<i>Mentzelia</i> <i>laevicaulis</i>	very low	herbaceous	yellow	summer	easy	Throughout the West (except AZ & NM) & BC	May be annual. Bees love it.

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Common Name	Scientific Name	Moisture	Plant Type	Flower Color	Bloom Time	Difficulty	Native to:	Comment
Wild Bergamot, Oswego Tea, Wild Oregano	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	low to moderate	herbaceous	purple/pink	summer	easy	Throughout the US & Canada, except CA	Edible, hummingbird favorite. Traditional tea plant and seasoning.
Mountain Monardella, Coyote mint	<i>Monardella odoratissima</i>	moderate to low	herbaceous	purple	early summer	somewhat difficult	WA, OR, CA, NV, ID, BC	Traditional tea plant for Native Americans. VERY fragrant.
Tufted Evening-primrose	<i>Oenothera caespitosa</i>	low	herbaceous	white	summer	moderate	Throughout the West, south central Canada, TX, ND, SD, NB	Great plant for an evening garden - flowers almost glow in the dark. Blooms last all day when it's cool, fade at noon when it's hot.
Plains Pricklypear	<i>Opuntia polyacantha</i>	very low	succulent	yellow shades	early summer	easy	Throughout the West, Midwest and SW Canada	Edible fruit.
Scarlet Bugler	<i>Penstemon barbatus</i>	low	herbaceous	red	mid summer?	moderate	UT, CO, AZ, NM, TX	Hummingbird plant. Hardy here.
Barrett's Penstemon	<i>Penstemon barrettiae</i>	low	low evergreen shrub	purple	spring	easy	Only OR & WA	Rare in the wild but easily propagated. Beautiful flowers in spring. Evergreen ground cover.
Hot Rock Penstemon, Scabland Penstemon	<i>Penstemon deustus</i>	very low	semi-shrubby	white	early summer	moderate	WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, CA, NV, UT	Somewhat fragrant and very tough.

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Firecracker Penstemon	<i>Penstemon eatonii</i>	moderate	herbaceous	red	early summer	moderate	ID, WY, CA, NV, UT, NV, AZ, NM	Prefers a lightly watered spot. Hummingbird plant.
Shrubby penstemon	<i>Penstemon fruticosus</i>	low	Low evergreen shrub	purple There are pink and white cultivars	late spring/early summer	easy	OR, WA, ID, MT, WY and Western Canada	Makes a low groundcover, about one foot tall. Numerous purple flowers in spring. Bumblebees and honeybees love it. Local, hardy, tough and drought adapted so little watering is needed.
Pineleaf Penstemon	<i>Penstemon pinifolius</i>	moderate to dry	herbaceous	scarlet	early summer	easy	NM, AZ	Hummingbird plant.
Desert Penstemon	<i>Penstemon pseudospectabilis</i>	very low	herbaceous	hot pink	early summer	somewhat difficult	CA, NM, AZ, UT	Gorgeous flowers. Difficult to germinate. Lasts about 5 years.
Cutleaf Penstemon	<i>Penstemon richardsonii</i>	very low	semi-shrubby	hot pink, sometimes other colors	summer	easy	WA, OR, BC	Long blooming. One of few summer blooming local natives.
Cascades Penstemon	<i>Penstemon serrulatus</i>	moderate to dry	herbaceous	purple	early summer	easy	WA, OR, AK, BC	Tolerates partial shade and more water than most Penstemon species.

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Beautiful Penstemon, Blue Mt. Penstemon	<i>Penstemon venustus</i>	low to moderate	woody base	purple	early summer	easy	WA, OR, ID, CA, UT	Blooms with Mockorange. Quite showy. Don't cut back until spring, above live buds.
Mockorange	<i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	moderate	tall shrub	white	early summer	easy	WA, OR, ID, CA, BC	Fragrant! State flower of Idaho. Swallowtail butterflies and bees love it.
Tufted Phlox	<i>Phlox caespitosa</i>	low	low shrub/ small groundcover	white, occasionally pink or lavender	spring	moderate	Throughout the West, & BC	Seed is very difficult to collect, so not common in the nursery trade.
Longleaf phlox	<i>Phlox longifolia</i>	low	herbaceous	pink	spring	somewhat difficult	Entire West including western Canada	Seed is very difficult to collect, so not common in the nursery trade.
Mallow Ninebark	<i>Physocarpus malvaceus</i>	moderate to dry	medium shrub	white	spring	easy	Northwest US & SW Canada, NV, WY, UT	Adorable small bouquets of flowers. Peeling bark provides year-round interest.
Ponderosa pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	moderate to dry	Large tree	yellow?	late spring	easy	Entire West including western Canada	The major native forest tree of Spokane. Evergreen & long-lived.
Jacob's Ladder	<i>Polemonium pulcherrimum</i>	moderate	herbaceous	blue	spring	easy	Throughout the West & western Canada	Six weeks of bloom with spring bulbs.

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Chokecherry	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	low to moderate	small tree or tall shrub	white	spring	easy	Throughout North America except FL, MI, AL, & SC	Great for birds! Edible, but bitter fruit. Needs room. Spreads from roots.
Pasqueflower	<i>Pulsatilla patens</i>	moderate to low	herbaceous	purple	spring	moderate	WA, ID, Western Canada & the Midwest	Beautiful flowers and fuzzy seedheads.
Antelope Bitterbrush	<i>Purshia tridentata</i>	low	medium shrub	yellow	spring	difficult	Western US & BC	Fragrant!
Three-leaf Sumac	<i>Rhus trilobata</i>	dry	medium shrub	yellow, tiny	spring	easy	Throughout the West & Midwest, Alberta & Saskatchewan	Deer proof and drought adapted. Great bee plant. Outstanding fall color.
Golden Currant	<i>Ribes aureum</i>	low to moderate	tall shrub	yellow	spring	easy	Most of the US, except the SE & far NE.	Great for birds! Edible fruit. Flowers fragrant. Wants to be a thicket. Spreads 6-8 feet.
Wax Currant	<i>Ribes cereum</i>	low	medium shrub	white	early spring	somewhat difficult	Throughout the West, western Midwest & SW Canada	In the wild - partial shade of open woods, forest edge, & in the sagebrush.
Red-Flowering Currant	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>	moderate	tall shrub	hot pink	very early spring	moderate	WA, OR, ID, CA, BC	Easy to establish with sufficient water. Look for east side seed or plant source.

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Woods Rose	<i>Rosa woodsii</i>	low to moderate	medium shrub	pink	early summer	easy	Throughout the West, Midwest and Canada.	Great for birds! Edible fruit.
Azure Blue Sage	<i>Salvia azurea</i>	moderate to low	herbaceous	sky blue	late summer - fall	easy	Southern Midwest & eastern US	The most beautiful blue! Blooms with the asters. About 2 1/2 ft. tall in a dry site. Up to 7 ft. tall in a moist site! Good upright accent.
Purple Sage	<i>Salvia dorrii</i>	very low	low shrub	purple	early summer	moderate - easy	WA, OR, ID, CA, NV, UT, AZ	Fragrant! Traditional medicinal
Mojave Sage, Blue sage	<i>Salvia pachyphylla</i>	very low	low - medium shrub	purple	summer	moderate	CA, NV, AZ	At the farthest extent in Spokane. Should be great in SE WA. Blooms ALL summer.
Blue Elderberry	<i>Sambucus caerulea</i>	low to moderate	tall shrub	white	early summer	easy	Throughout the West and BC.	Great for birds! Edible fruit.
Sedum kamschaticum	<i>Sedum kamschaticum</i>	low	succulent	yellow	early summer	easy	Ural Mts. of Russia	Despite the name, not from Alaska.
Sedums	<i>Sedum sp.</i>	moderate to dry	succulent	varies by species & cultivar	summer to fall	easy	Most European, few North American	Many forms & cultivars: creeping or tall.
Hens & Chicks	<i>Sempervivum sp.</i>	low	succulent	varies by species & cultivar	early summer	easy	introduced	Rosette that blooms dies.

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Goldenrod	<i>Solidago sp.</i>	moderate to dry	herbaceous	yellow	late summer - fall	easy	North America	Many species native to the West. GREAT for pollinators. <i>S. missouriensis</i> and <i>S. canadensis</i> native to WA. <i>S. missouriensis</i> rhizomateous but not aggressive. <i>S. canadensis</i> aggressive spreader except for cultivar 'Garden Baby'.
Orange or Munro's Globemallow	<i>Sphaeralcea munroana</i>	low	herbaceous	orange	summer	easy	Throughout the West (except AZ & NM) & BC	Blooms twice a summer, whether or not you deadhead.
Birchleaf Spiraea	<i>Spiraea betulifolia</i> - now <i>Spiraea lucida</i>	moderate to low	low shrub	white	late spring - early summer	moderate	WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, ND, SD, MN, & SW Canada	Forest shrub. Shade to full sun.
Common Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	low to moderate	low to medium shrub	pink	summer	easy	Most of the US & Canada, except the US southern states	White fruit eaten by birds. Rhizomateous shrub good for erosion control.
Spiny fameflower	<i>Talinum spinescens</i>	very low	succulent	hot pink	summer	somewhat difficult	WA, OR	Long blooming. Flowers open around 2 PM.
Creeping thyme	<i>Thymus sp.</i>	dry	ground cover	varies by cultivar	early summer	easy	introduced	Can use as a lawn substitute in lightly trafficked areas.

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Creeping wooly thyme	<i>Thymus sp.</i>	low	ground cover	purple	early summer	easy	introduced	Lawn substitute for low traffic areas. Flowers sparse & uncommon. Beautiful texture and color.
Yucca, Adam's Needle	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	low	herbaceous	white	early summer	easy	Eastern US, TX, NB, KS	Although an easterner, quite well adapted in our region.
Hummingbird trumpet, Garrett's Firechalice	<i>Zauschneria garrettii</i>	low	ground cover	scarlet	mid-summer to fall	easy	ID, WY, UT, AZ	Long blooming hummingbird plant.