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A California Friendly® garden is filled with native and low-water use plants perfectly suited to our mild winters and warm, dry summers. They are low maintenance, use little to no water, don't need soil preparation or fertilizing and even attract wildlife like birds and butterflies. Here are some favorites to start with. There are thosands more to choose from. Visit bewaterwise.com® for a more complete catalogue of plant possibilities, garden ideas, rebate information and conservation tips.

1 Deer Grass

Muhlenbergia rigens

This native California grass is narrow-leafed and forms a dense clump up to 4 feet high and wide. The bright green leaves are joined by spiky yellow or purple flowers in autumn that stand tall at first, and lean a little later, rising 2 feet above the leaves. The deer grass is drought tolerant and does best with little to moderate water in full sun or light shade. An added bonus: deer grass attracts helpful garden bugs like spiders and ladybugs.

2 Coral Bells or Alum Root

Heuchera

Slender, spiky stems of loose, small bell-shaped flowers grow from clumps of round scalloped leaves. The delicate blossoms come in shades of red, coral, rose pink, greenish and white. Most varieties bloom between early spring and late summer, with some lasting until fall. They work great in cut arrangements and are long-lasting. In warmer areas, they do best with afternoon shade and moderate to regular water. And, hummingbirds like them.

3 Baby Blue-Eyes

Nemophila (Hydrophyllaceae)

With a charming name and abundant blossoms, the "Pennie Black" variety produces blackish purple flowers rimmed in white. Other varieties, more true to their name, are sky-blue blossoms. The plants grow in full sun or partial shade and require moderate water. They grow 6 to 12 inches high and trail to 1 foot wide. The bell-shaped flowers bloom in spring and the ferny leaves give the plants a delicate look.

4 Tree Mallow

Lavatera bicolor

Easy-to-grow, year-round flowering shrub with abundant beautiful lavender/pink blooms highlighted in maroon. This variety grows to 6 feet and others can grow as high as 12 feet tall and wide. An evergreen, the tree mallow requires full sun and little to moderate water. It is a very fast grower, reaching 5 to 10 feet in its first year.

5 Douglas Iris

Iris douglasiana

This easygoing and easy-growing iris is native to the California coast from Santa Barbara to Oregon. A spring bloomer, the Douglas Iris has evergreen leaves and long stems up to 2 feet that are sometimes branched and crowned with purple and blue shaded flowers. They like sun to light shade and moderate to little water in summer with well-drained soil. There are as many as 300 species of irises, with varying water needs, appearances and blooming times.

6 Big Berry Manzanita

Arctostaphylos glauca

This native Californian has blue-gray leaves, which offset clusters of pink to white urn-shaped flowers. The flowers bloom in late winter to early spring and are followed by berrylike red or brown fruits that attract birds. Known for its crooked branches of dark purple/brown bark, this variety is a tall shrub that can spread up to 15 feet tall and 20 feet wide. There are many different varieties of manzanita; all are evergreen, take full sun or light shade and require little to moderate water.