



Fall Planting Guide

Compiled by The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers and Native Plants, Inc.
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Did you enjoy your summer vacation? Almost faster than you know it, fall has come and it's time to get back to work in the yard. Unlike other parts of the country, our garden work begins now, as the weather starts to cool. Some folks use summer to plan their next attack, while others go as dormant as their chaparral. Whatever your strategy, get out a pencil and paper, and start planning.

Plant

► Fall is traditionally the best time of year to plant most natives, especially such water sensitive plants as woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), wild lilac (*Ceanothus* species), and flannel bush (*Fremontodendron* species). Make sure you dig a good hole, fill it with water, let it drain, place the plant with care for the roots and for the best orientation, backfill, and water again.

► Look for native bulbs. You'll find *Calochortus*, *Dichelostemma*, *Triteleia*, and *Allium* this time of year. Select species appropriate to various spots in your yard. *Calochortus splendens* and *Dichelostemma volubile*, for example, are great to plant amid low shrubs as they send their blooms up above the foliage. *Triteleia laxa* and *Calochortus venustus* are great for grassy areas. Try *Allium unifolium*, *A. validum*, and *Triteleia peduncularis* for areas that receive water throughout the year.

Wildflowers

► Fall is a great time to sow your wildflower seeds. Select a special mix or create your own. Make sure the area is free of weeds and unwanted grasses. Rough up the soil surface, sow your seeds, and water. You don't need to add any cover soil; the seeds will do just fine.

► Soak *Lupinus* species over night before sowing. Their hard cases are designed to let them wait for ideal winter rains before sprouting. If there are no rains once you've soaked and planted them, make sure the seed bed remains moist and give the sprouts a chance to become established.

Watering

► If it hasn't rained, you can start watering some summer deciduous plants now. Deep soak gooseberries and currants (*Ribes* species) once a week to bring them out of dormancy. You can also start watering spots that were kept bone dry for native bulbs like *Calochortus* or *Dichelostema*.

Divide

► Dig up and divide cool season grasses such as *Festuca*, *Nassella*, *Leymus*, *Calamagrostis*, and *Melica*. This is also a good time to divide *Carex tumulicola*. Make sure each clump has a good root ball. Water well.

► Divide *Heuchera*, *Potentilla*, *Horkelia*, and other clumping perennials. Attend the Propagation Class at Fall Festival for tips on how to make more plants.

► In late November and early December, divide native iris. You can dig up the entire bunch and divide into smaller clumps that have good roots, or simply cut out sections from around the edges. Make sure they are well watered until new growth appears. This is the best time to divide iris as cooler weather and new root growth, combined with supplemental watering, allows the divisions to establish before next spring.

Prune and Cut Back

► Complete your clean-up of summer blooming perennials and shrubs such as *Salvia*, *Eriogonum*, and *Monardella* species. They'll start their winter growth soon and it's best to do this work when they are dormant.

► In late fall, cut *Romneya* down to an inch or two from the base.

► DON'T cut back your manzanita or *Ceanothus*. Manzanitas set their flower buds in late spring. If you prune them now, you'll be cutting out blooms that will appear in just a month or two.