



Summer Planting Guide

Compiled by The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers and Native Plants, Inc.
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The big show is over, the grasses and wildflowers are drying out, the big bloom season is fading, and it's time to kick back and relax. The coyote mints and buckwheats are blooming, and the Epilobiums and golden rods are on their way. It's likely going to be a warm summer, so find a good book (have you read the new Theodore Payne book yet?), a comfortable chair, and a shady spot. Of course, once you get tired of resting, there's still plenty to do in the garden . . .

Seeds

► Fruits will ripen during the summer. If you're interested in collecting seeds from your plants, keep an eye out for brown, dried capsules. Store in paper bags and keep dry. Some capsules, like lupines and poppies, pop open and throw their seeds when they're ready. To capture these seeds, wrap the capsules in cheese cloth before they open. When they're dry and pop, the seeds won't have anywhere to go. This is the perfect time to sow warm season grasses. See the Spring Planting Guide for suggestions concerning Bouteloua species. This also works for Aristida, Muhlenbergia, Pleuraphis, Sporobolis, and a few others.

Plant

► You can plant riparian species and desert species from spring through summer. They will take the extra water you'll need to provide them through the warm season. Desert regions usually get monsoon rains in the summer, so desert species are accustomed to getting water this time of year.

Water

► Be sure to give new plantings from the last year an occasional deep soak. Always check first to make sure the soil is dry, especially in clay soils. Remember: most native bulbs want absolutely dry conditions through October, especially Calochortus.

Prune

► Dead-head Salvia and Penstemon flower stalks as they finish up, unless you're looking to collect the seed. When your sages have finished their bloom, you can cut them back by a third. Trim cool season grasses back to a couple of inches above the crown of the plant. Prune and shape any shrubs that have grown top-heavy with new growth. The incredible rains have produced lots of lush growth, but the shrub's branches may not be strong enough for all that growth. Selective pruning will help.

Plan

► This is the key time to plan your next steps in the yard. Kick back in a hammock or favorite chair, smell the sages and mints, and think through your next steps in the garden. What would you like to change? Where do you need to fill in? What's the next big project or small refinement? This is the time of year to put your plans together. If you need help or inspiration, stop by the Foundation to browse the library and bookstore, wander through the sales yards, or talk with our knowledgeable staff and volunteers.