



# Plants for Heavy Soil

Compiled by The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wildflowers and Native Plants, Inc.  
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"Heavy" soils are distinguished from "light" soils by the size of their component particles. Heavy soils like clay or silt retain more moisture than those with larger particles, such as sand and decomposed granite. Because they are so dense, heavy soils have fewer air spaces for roots to 'breathe.' Most native plants prefer good drainage, which means that they will not tolerate constantly, moist, dense soil. Luckily, many native plants are more sensitive to the amount of water in the soil than they are to the type of soil in which they are planted. The best regime for native plants in heavy soil is therefore to water deeply but infrequently, soaking the soil completely and then allowing it to dry out. (Keep in mind that flat areas drain more slowly than hilly areas and that the top of a slope dries out more quickly than the bottom.) To prevent the proliferation of destructive microorganisms that cause root rot, never allow water to stand around the base of a plant.

KEYS TO FLOWER COLOR:	<b>B</b>	blue	<b>R</b>	red
	<b>G</b>	green	<b>V</b>	violet/purple
	<b>O</b>	orange	<b>W</b>	white
	<b>P</b>	pink	<b>Y</b>	yellow

## GROUNDCOVERS:

- *Achillea millefolium*, Yarrow P/R/W
- *Adenostoma fasciculatum*, prostrate form Chamise W
- *Arctostaphylos edmundsii* and cultivars, Manzanita W/P
- *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* W/P
- *Baccharis pilularis* Twin Peaks' or 'Pigeon Point', Prostrate Coyote Brush W
- *Ceanothus griseus horizontalis*, Carmel Creeper B/V
- *Ceanothus griseus horizontalis* 'Yankee Point' B/V
- *Ceanothus maritimus*, Maritime Ceanothus B/V

## GRASSES:

- *Bouteloua* spp., *Elymus* spp., *Festuca* spp., *Muhlenbergia* spp., *Sporobolus airoides*, *Stipa* spp., etc.

## RUSHES:

- *Juncus* spp.

## SEDGES:

- *Carex* spp.

## PERENNIALS & ANNUALS:

- *Eschscholzia californica*, California Poppy 0
- *Heuchera* spp. and hybrids, Alum-Root/Coral Bells P/R/W
- *Iris* spp. and hybrids B/V/W/Y
- *Iva hayesiana*, Hayes' Iva (flowers insignificant)
- *Mentha arvensis*, Field Mint W/V
- *Monardella* spp., Coyote Mint V/W
- *Oenothera hookeri*, Hooker's Evening Primrose Y
- *Ribes viburnifolium*, Catalina Currant R
- *Satureja* spp., Savory 0/W

## SHRUBS :

- *Arctostaphylos densiflora* 'Howard McMinn' and *Arctostaphylos densiflora* 'Harmony' P/W
- *Artemisia californica*, Coastal Sagebrush
- *Atriplex* spp., Saltbush
- *Baccharis* spp.. Coyote Brush W
- *Berberis aquifolium*, Oregon Grape Y; *B. Nevinii*, Nevin's Barberry Y; *Berberis repens*, Creeping Barberry Y
- *Ceanothus griseus*, Carmel Ceanothus and *Ceanothus* cultivars 'Concha', 'Frosty Blue', and 'Julia Phelps' B/V
- *Cercocarpus betuloides*, Mountain-Mahogany W
- *Cercocarpus ledifolius*,. Desert Mountain-Mahogany W
- *Encelia californica*, California Bush Sunflower Y
- *Eriogonum crocatum*, Conejo Buckwheat Y
- *Eriogonum fasciculatum*, Buckwheat W
- *Eriogonum giganteum*, St. Catherine's Lace W
- *Galvezia juncea*, Baja Bush Snapdragon R and *G. speciosa*. Island Bush Snapdragon R
- *Haplopappus squarrosus*, Coast Goldenbush Y
- *Lavatera assurgentiflora*, Tree Mallow P/V and *Lavatera 'Purissima'*, Hybrid Bush Mallow P/V
- *Lonicera involucrata*, Twinberry R/Y and *L. subspicata*, Chaparral Honeysuckle W
- *Malosma laurina*, Laurel Sumac
- *Myrica californica*, California Wax Myrtle
- *Rhus integrifolia*, Lemonade Berry; *Rhus ovata*, Sugar Bush P
- *Ribes aureum*, Golden Currant Y
- *Rosa californica*, California Wild Rose P
- *Salvia* spp.. Sages B/P/R/V/W

## TREES:

- *Acer macrophyllum*, Bigleaf Maple
- *Alnus rhombifolia*, White Alder
- *Cercis occidentalis*, Western Redbud P
- *Calocedrus decurrens*, Incense Cedar
- *Chilopsis linearis*, Desert Willow P/W
- *Cupressus forbesii*, Tecate Cypress and *C. sargentii*, Sargent's Cypress
- *Fraxinus dipetala*, Flowering Ash and *F. velutina*, Arizona Ash
- *Juglans californica*, S. California Black Walnut and *J. hindsii*, N. California Black Walnut
- *Pinus attenuata*, Knobcone Pine; *P. coulteri*, Coulter Pine; *P. sabiniana*, Gray Pine; *P. torreyana*, Torrey Pine
- *Platanus racemosa*, Western Sycamore
- *Populus fremontii*, Fremont Cottonwood
- *Prunus lyonii*, California Cherry W
- *Quercus agrifolia*, Coast Live Oak; *Q. chrysolepis*, Canyon Live Oak; *Q. engelmannii*, Engelmann Oak
- *Sambucus mexicana*, Elderberry W/Y

**Plants that may prove difficult in heavy soils:** *Arctostaphylos* spp. (Manzanita) other than those listed above, especially sand dune species. *Astragalus* spp. (Locoweed), *Coreopsis gigantea* (Giant Coreopsis), *Dendromecon* spp. (Bush Poppy), *Eriophyllum* spp. (Golden Yarrow), *Fremontodendron* spp. (Flannel Bush), *Lupinus* spp. (Lupine), *Penstemon* spp. (Penstemon), *Trichostema lanatum*, Woolly Blue-Curls; and various alpine plants and/or those that dwell on rocky slopes