



Rewild Sowing and Planting Guide

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What to Grow and Plant in Your Garden

OVLC only recommends local native species that are from the Ojai Valley (or the area you are planting). Beyond the innumerable benefits to biodiversity, wildlife, soil, and more from planting natives, our local plants are uniquely adapted to our local weather conditions. Ojai local natives know Ojai summers and rains and are more likely to survive novel and extreme weather conditions. Planting what belongs does justice for the environment and lets you join this part of our community.

How to tell what belongs here:

- [Calscape](#)
 - Meant for gardens, easier user interface
 - Enter your zip code and any other plant specifics
 - Keep in mind plant sizes are based on all of California, and so observe how these plants naturally grow in the area
- [Calflora](#)
 - Meant for scientists, not for gardeners
 - Look at range natural range of plants, and pictures
 - You can search by county, and native status on the right hand side
 - Which natives pop up naturally in your yard!

Common local natives lists:

- [OVLC Plant List](#)
- [Common Local Native Annuals](#)

PLANTING 101

For photos, see [Planting 101 with Photos](#)



1. Buy (or grow from seed) a plant
 - a. Don't buy ones with lots of flowers (putting energy in flowers, not roots)
 - b. You want it to be investing in roots, so it will grow
 - c. Other good signs: New points of growth, Multiple growth points, new leaves at the nodes
 - d. Hardening off your plants
 - i. put in your yard where you will plant and water for 1-2 weeks (allow for pot to $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ dry back between waterings) or buy from OVLC (we harden them off for you!)
2. Wait until the first storm is on the horizon (or be prepared to water)
3. Give your new plant a deep soak (fill the pot to the brim with water and let it drain twice, until the plant feels nice and heavy)
4. Dig a hole two times the size of the plant
 - a. If there is mulch, native leaf litter, or cardboard, make a clearing for soil
5. Soak the hole with water, let drain fully before planting
6. Break up any dirt clods with foot or water
7. Fill in the hole until the plant sits just below the natural soil level
 - a. It's ok if it is below the mulch, we want to create a well for water to collect and soak in around the plant
 - b. Compact it a little with hand or foot
8. Scar (make indents) the sides of the hole with your shovel if your soil is compacted to allow for roots to extend into the soil
9. Take plant out of the pot
 - a. Gently squeeze the pot
 - b. Flip the pot upside down and drop the plant between your fingers so the roots/soil rest in the palm of your hand
 - c. Don't break up the root ball (unless it super root bound → just roots at the bottom and then be incredible gentle)
10. Set the plant in the hole and gently start to fill dirt in around it
 - a. Keep soil loose until the hole is full
 - b. Nursery soil should be covered at top
11. Water a small amount and let it soak in
12. Gently press the soil and plant in
 - a. You want all the roots to make contact with the soil
 - b. The plant should be at the lowest point
13. Water in with about $\frac{3}{4}$ gallons of water
14. Fill in mulch, leaf litter, etc. (if there is any)
 - a. There should only be a very thin layer of mulch around the base of the plant to reduce plant rot
 - b. Oak duff or other native plant litter is best



Sowing Basics

Start from Seed

- Annuals (wildflowers)
 - Seed directly onto the soil surface
 - Mix seeds with sand → dilutes mixture, protect from birds, keeps seeds in the place you want them (wind), can see where you sow, sows evenly across area
 - Sow at first big rain (as close to rain as possible → night or day before)
 - If you sow too early, seeds are prone to herbivory (birds eat them)
 - Put a little mulch, hay, or native plant matter on top to keep seed stationed. Do not cover thickly as this will reduce germination.
- Perennials
 - Seed into trays
 - Grow more slowly and will need to be transplanted as they grow

Preparing for Sowing

- Learn more about Seeds with our Seed Workshop: <https://ovlc.org/native-plant-care>
- Collecting seeds
 - Never collect more than 10%
 - Ask permission if you are collecting on someone else's land
 - Annuals have boom and bust cycles → number may naturally vary year to year
- Viability
 - Native Seed Identification: look at all the seed photos before you go out to see if your seed is viable
 - [CalBG Seed Program Home \(hazmac.biz\)](http://hazmac.biz)
 - Check size, hardness, texture, color
 - Seeds should be fully dried when collected
 - Seed heads that pop → put a mesh bag over to collect
 - Seeds can last decades, but lose viability over time
 - Large seeds and grasses go bad first
 - Small hard seeds last a long time
 - Seeds banks can stay dormant for up to 100 years
- How to prep seeds to sowing
 - Native Seed Cleaning: see how to process a diverse array of native seed
 - [2009S.pdf \(hazmac.biz\)](#)
 - Collect when seeds are dried
 - Store in a paper bag in a cool dry place

Sow the Seeds

- Native Seed Germinating: look up any treatments to germinate seed
 - "Seed Propagation of Native California Plants" by Dara E. Emery



- Annuals
 - can be anywhere, annuals like disturbance
- Perennials
 - Sophie's Germination mix: peat moss, perlite or coconut choir
 - Plant in a sterile medium
 - Be wary of excess moisture. It can cause fungus and disease
 - Plant depth of the seed
 - When the first true leaves show, transplant!
 - No fertilizer
 - Cover trays to prevent herbivory
- Soil
 - Soil dictates how often you water
 - Clay: holds more water, needs less frequent watering
 - Sand: water more → supplement during dry years or between rains
 - Determining soil type
 - [Soil test](#)
 - [Drainage test](#)
- How far apart to seed/plant
 - How big do the plants get?
 - Space plants so when they are full size, their leaves will touch (closed canopy)
 - Observe natural plants around you for size, last resort use [Calscape](#) (sizes are from all of California and varies)
 - For annuals, how many seeds to sow?
 - Number of plants you want in an area x 4 = how much to seed (for low density)
 - Clarkia vs red maid: Clarkia grows tall and narrow, so it doesn't take up much space. This means you can plant a lot. Red maids grow wide and low, so they will take up a lot of space.
- Plant communities
 - Common Plant Communities
 - Example from workshop: Purple sage, buckwheat, California sagebrush
 - Observe in nature!
 - Plant alliance search: <https://vegetation.cnps.org/>
 - This will give you more information about different plant communities that each species occurs in. Search a native plant and see what kind of plants it likes to live with!

Sowing Alternatives

- Staking: Some species are better to stake in (ex: mule fat, elderberry)
- Tubers: Some species do better when tubers are dug up and transplanted (ex: hummingbird sage, Matilija poppy, Chaparral mallow, mugwort, creeping rye)



Pruning

- [Pruning workshop](#)
- Annuals die at the end of the year, but they should come back the next one
 - Should I cut back my annuals?
 - Pros of cutting: cleaner look, reduce potential criticism from neighbors or fire department
 - Pros of leaving them: provide habitat and nutrients to support biodiversity, provide natural mulch

Weed and Pest Control

- How to tell if a plant is a weed or a native seedling
 - Make a test plot to see what is what
 - Native seeds won't come up if there are invasives
- Weed control methods
 - Pulling
 - Microweeding
 - Solarization
 - Plant allelopathic plants (ex: sages and sagebrush)
- Gophers
 - They are attracted to water
 - No poisons
 - Gopher resistant plants
 - Datura
 - Sages
 - Sagebrush
 - Gopher cages
 - Pros: can protect young roots from gophers
 - Cons: can stunt or inhibit plant growth, especially for larger shrubs and trees, can't remove it later
 - You can cut small holes to let roots out

Watering (workshop upcoming this spring)

- The environment you create is the environment they rely on
- Mulch can help regulate moisture and temps
- Water until established
 - Don't water during a heat wave
 - Planting: water in
 - Cold and wet year: may not need to water at all
 - Warm and dry: gentle trickle 10-20 minutes, check soil moisture → should be wet a few inches deep



- Top soil wet? No need to water
- Plants should received water either from rain or you every 1-2 times per months during winter and spring
- No water during summer
- Over watering → frequency not quantity → sufficient dry back time

Common Local Native Annual Species

- Early season annuals
 - California poppy: *Eschscholzia californica*
 - Globe gilia: *Gilia capitata*
 - Clarkia: *Clarkia unguiculata*, *Clarkia purpurea*
 - Lupine: *Lupinus succulentus*, and other species
 - Chinese houses: *Collinsia heterophylla*
- Late season annuals
 - Vinegar Weed: *Trichostema lanceolatum*
 - Tarweed: *Holocarpha heermannii*, *Deinandra fasciculata*
 - Bird's foot trefoil: *Acmispon americanus*

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5. Soak the hole



6. Break up any dirt clods with foot or water
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