

When you walk into your garden and can stimulate your five senses you somehow feel complete. As a child you may have loved chewing lemon grass and picking flowers, now as adults in our native gardens we can nibble on sweet grapes, watch seed heads blow in the wind and breathe in the soothing aroma of a white sage. We can find ourselves wrapped completely in the natural world, enjoying fully what California has to offer!

Bright and cheerful or deep and rich, native gardens cover the full spectrum. The list is long but here are just a few.

Ceanothus sp. California's lilacs in bloom will either knock your socks off with amazing shades of purple/blue or they will dazzle you with puffs of white that seem to emit their own light.

Encelia sp. Bright sunflowers waving in the air on long stalks can't help but make a garden cheerful.

Epilobium sp. Vibrant reds are what the fuchsias are best known for, they are a hummingbird favorite.

Heuchera sp. Coral Bells have a delicate, tall flower stalk and a rich broad green leaf. Heucheras are a perfect shade accent.

Iris sp. Irises seem to appear out of nowhere with flowers that are breathtaking. Intricate patterns on intricate flowers in combinations of white, yellow, pink and purple.

Lyonothamnus floribundus ssp. *asplenifolius*. Catalina ironwood has the full package. Cream sprays of flowers, red peeling bark and scented ornate leaves that are eye catching and smell good too!

Muhlenbergia rigens. Deergress can hypnotize you with its waving wand-like seed-stalks.

Wildflowers. California's wildflowers come in vibrant purples, rich shades of golden yellow, cheerful pinks and calming blues. Single species swaths are striking while seed mixes give the full range of colors and have a natural beauty.

Sight



Hearing

From birds singing to leaves rustling, California natives offer soothing sounds.



Elymus condensatus. Giant wild rye rustles as you brush by it or when the wind picks up, making the garden come alive.

Heteromeles arbutifolia. Toyon is a great source of berries for songbirds that will sing sweetly.

Juncus textilis. Basket Rush makes a great strumming sound as you run your hands along them.

Peritoma arborea. Bladderpod is a bloom that will bring bees to buzz and hummingbirds to whirl their wings. To top it off the seed pods, when shaken, are mini maracas!

Populus fremontii. Cottonwood leaves will rustle in the breeze giving you a sense of the wide open.

Touch

Soft, bumpy, smooth, sticky; there are so many fun things to feel in the native garden.

Achillea sp. Yarrow offers a fern like leaf you'll have to touch, in addition to a cheerful bloom!

Grindelia sp. Gumplant has a great flower bud, sticky and alien like!

Abutilon palmeri. Palmer's Mallow may be the fuzziest leaf you'll ever touch.

Artemisia 'Montara'. This groundcover sagebrush has leaves that are soft, fluffy and scented.



Taste

Something sweet, a tart burst or an aromatic and soothing tea, the native garden will offer something year round to sip or nibble. There are great books available that will help you figure out how to brew and toast to your heart's content. Follow the preparation instructions and you'll end up with a tasty native feast!



Allium sp. The Wild onions are unmistakable when you brush by them. Use them as you would culinary onions.

Fragaria sp. The native strawberries are smaller than commercially grown berries but no less sweet. If you don't get to them the birds will come to snack!



Opuntia sp. The prickly pear fruits can be used to make delicious jams and syrups. The pads can be cooked and eaten as well.

Ribes sp. The currants and gooseberries can be eaten off the bush or prepared in a spread. The birds love them though so you'll have to be quick.

Rhus integrifolia. Lemonadeberries can either be sucked on for a tart burst or used to make lemonade.

Rubus ursinus. California blackberry bushes offer sweet berries that can be eaten raw or used to make jams and pies.

Salvia sp. Many of the sages can be used in place of the traditional culinary sage, giving a pleasant flavor to many dishes.

Trichostema lanatum. Woolly Blue Curles leaves smell like grape and make a great flavored water.

Vitis sp. Wild California grapes are as sweet as any. They are also a favorite of the birds so pick them as soon as they ripen.



California has an amazing amount of fragrant plants, most that are heavenly and a few that are on the stranger side! Many of them you'll smell when you brush by them or intentionally go to smell them but some will fill the air after a rain or on a warm afternoon.

Clinopodium sp., *Lepechinia* sp., *Monardella* sp. and *Pycnanthemum californicum*. The natives in the mint family are refreshing and delightful. Plant one of these and you won't be disappointed. These minty smelling plants are most noticeable when picked or brushed by.



Condea emoryi. Desert Lavender is one plant that you'll be purposely picking leaves so you can smell it's intoxicating fragrance.

Cupressus sp. When you brush by California cypresses, like all conifers, they bring images of outdoor adventures and open spaces.

Salvia sp. The sages have aromas that make you want to put a leaf in your pocket so you can relieve stress at work. white, purple, cleveland; they all small great!

Umbellularia californica. California bay laurel have a unique and refreshing smell.



Smell