



# CITY OF ARCADIA

## RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPING GUIDE



CITY OF  
ARCADIA





## **Purpose**

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The purpose of these guidelines is to provide homeowners with the City's standards, requirements, and expectations for landscaping in the front yard and/or street side areas.

## **Background**

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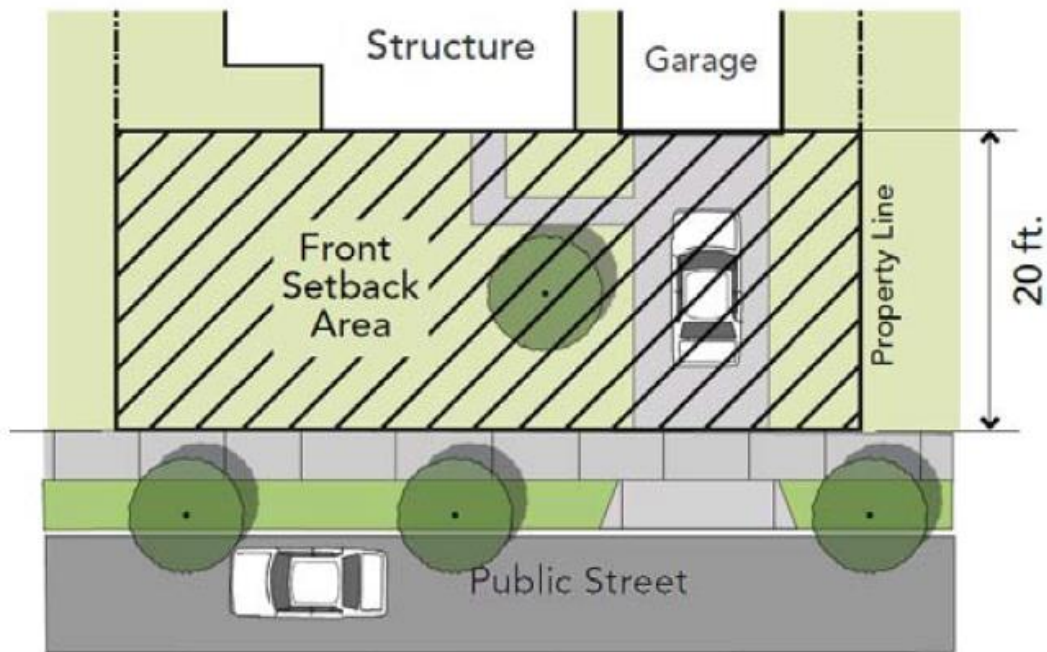
In 2015, the State declared a drought emergency that required mandatory water reductions. Following this, the Arcadia City Council introduced and adopted an Ordinance for local water restrictions, known as the Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (WELO), which went into effect in April 2015. The City has always encouraged green lawns and vibrant landscaping as a hallmark of Arcadia and its beautiful neighborhoods. However, given the 2015 drought, the City's policies on what is allowable landscaping had to be altered and brown lawns were accepted in the City at that time. This is when drought-tolerant landscaping began to be promoted.

The State's drought emergency was lifted in April 2017. Now that the emergency drought is lifted, brown lawns are no longer acceptable. Dead and missing landscaping should be replaced and kept in a vibrant state.

Drought-tolerant landscaping continues to be encouraged for all projects and is a requirement of all newly submitted homes and remodels. A WELO handout, which highlights the requirements for various landscaping projects, is available at the Planning Services counter or the City's website at [www.ArcadiaCA.gov/WELOandLID](http://www.ArcadiaCA.gov/WELOandLID). It is the City's policy to encourage California native vegetation as the key feature of new drought tolerant landscaping. In addition, materials such as mulch, gravel, decomposed granite, and artificial turf products are allowable. These materials should be integrated into a cohesive landscaping plan, whether designed by a professional firm or completed by a homeowner. In other words, the City is encouraging a thoughtful layout of drought tolerant landscaping, including native materials, trees, and other vertical landscaping such as hedges. In the front yard area, straight rock gardens, artificial turf covering the entire the front yard area, desert-like gardens, are not allowed. The City's Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines on impervious coverage and landscape areas, and a planting palette are included with this document to provide more information.

**Please Note:** Property owners are responsible for maintaining their landscape, including their adjacent parkways. As part of the City's Phase I Mandatory Water Conservation Prohibitions, no lawn, landscape, or turf areas shall be watered or irrigated between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., every day. There are also seasonal watering days. From May to October, watering is allowed only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays and from November to April, on Tuesday and Saturdays.

## Landscape Requirements Per the Development Code



### **Arcadia Municipal Code Section 9103.09.040 - Landscape Requirements**

A. Applicability. The standards in this Section shall apply to residential and non-residential uses.

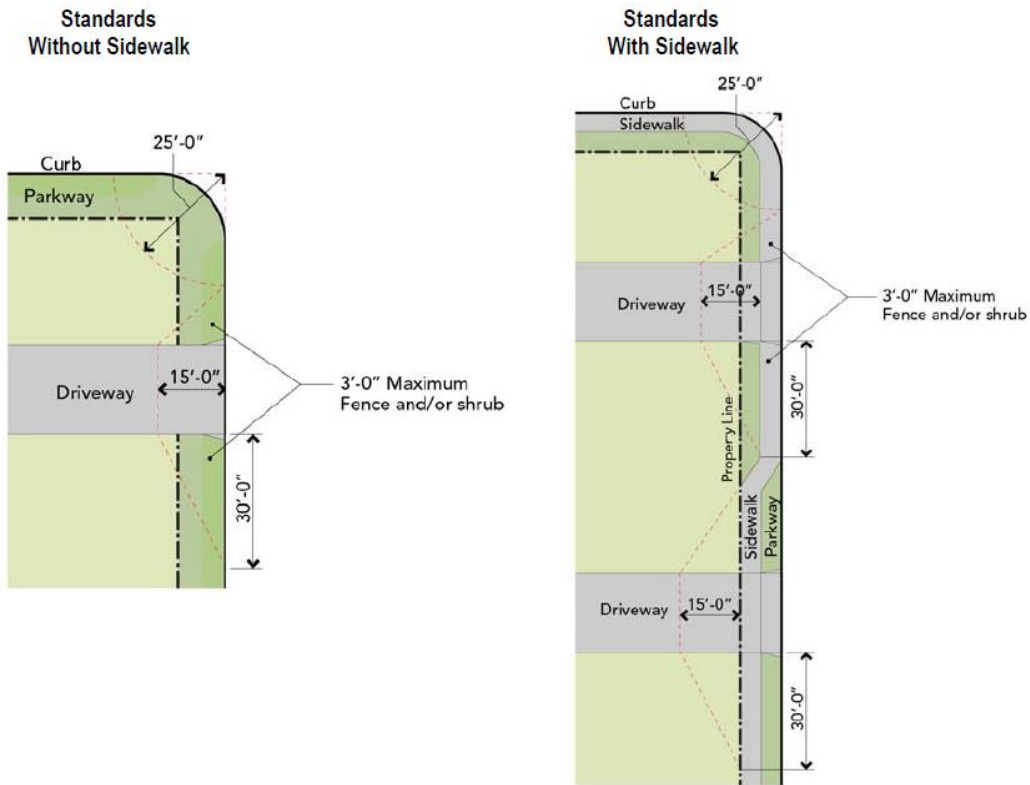
B. Landscape Requirement for Residential Zones. All areas of a site not devoted to structures, driveways, or walkways shall be landscaped with lawn, trees, shrubs, or other plant materials, and shall be permanently maintained in a neat and orderly manner.

#### 1. R-M, R-0 and R-1 Zones

a. Setbacks and setback areas shall be landscaped with lawn, trees, shrubs, or other plant materials, and shall be permanently maintained in a neat and orderly manner.

b. Hardscape materials, inclusive of driveways and pedestrian walkways but not including artificial turf, shall not cover more than 40 percent of the front setback.

## Vehicular Visibility Standards Per the Development Code



### **Arcadia Municipal Code Section 9103.01.070.B - Vehicular Visibility Standards**

Property owners are responsible for maintaining their adjacent parkways. Within 25 feet of an intersection of a vehicular way with a vehicular and/or pedestrian way; no buildings, structures, fences, walls, shrubs, landscape, architectural features, or dense landscaping shall exceed a height of three feet as measured from the surface of the vehicular ways. The above figure displays standards for lots with and without sidewalks.

Hedges, elevated planters, and other tall plants in the parkway are highly discouraged as they can present issues such as visibility, vehicle access, and sidewalk obstruction. Low coverage plant materials such as turf and ground cover are preferred in these areas.



# Unacceptable Landscapes

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## Brown Lawns

Brown lawns, bare dirt, and weeds within the front yard, visible street side yard, or parkway are not acceptable forms of landscapes and are enforced by the Code Services Division. The following are examples of unacceptable brown lawns.





# Drought Tolerant Landscaping That is Unacceptable

As drought tolerant landscaping is recommended, it is important to refer to the Development Code's restrictions on the amount of hardscape materials that can be used in the front setback area. Use of rock and decomposed granite in a landscape area is allowed, and is counted toward hardscape. These examples display more than 40% hardscape, which is **not** an acceptable landscape.





## **Encouraged Landscapes**

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### **Drought Tolerant Landscaping**

A drought tolerant landscape is an appropriate substitute for natural turf for the purposes of water conservation. When installed correctly, drought tolerant landscapes can provide aesthetic curb appeal and provide an appealing community environment, while minimizing water consumption. The following is an example of an acceptable drought tolerant landscape that has been approved by the Planning Services Division. It is advised that plants and material be spaced in such a way as to create significant coverage; planting should be spaced within five feet of each other. Please refer to the attached Single-Family Design Guidelines outlining impervious coverage and landscape areas, and sample planting palettes.



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

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### **1. Is a landscape plan required for new landscaping?**

A landscaping plan is required for the following:

- New construction projects with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 500 square feet.
- Rehabilitated landscape projects with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet.
- Installation of artificial turf.

Replacing or adding plant materials (i.e., shrubs, trees, turf) with an aggregate area of less than 2,500 square feet does not require a landscape plan. Any questions may be answered by the Planning Services Division at (626) 574-5423 or email at [Planning@ArcadiaCA.gov](mailto:Planning@ArcadiaCA.gov).

### **2. What are acceptable drought tolerant landscaping plants?**

A drought tolerant plant is a plant that can survive with little or no water other than available rainfall. Drought tolerant plants are able to cope with scarcity of water in various ways. Please refer to the attached Sample Planting Palette in the Single-Family Design Guidelines which lists examples of recommended plantings. Any questions may be answered by the Planning Services Division at (626) 574-5423 or email at [Planning@ArcadiaCA.gov](mailto:Planning@ArcadiaCA.gov).

### **3. Are mulch and bark considered part of the landscape calculations?**

Mulch and bark are considered part of the landscape and if utilized, should be accompanied with plants.

### **4. Is decomposed granite allowed?**

Yes, decomposed granite is allowed in combination with plant material. It is counted towards hardscape percentage.

### **5. Are decorative landscaping rocks/gravel allowed?**

Decorative rocks/gravel may be utilized; however, they shall be installed as part of an overall landscaping plan and count toward hardscape percentage. Earth-toned colored rocks are strongly recommended.



## **6. Is turf/lawn allowed?**

Turf/lawn is allowed as long as the water consumption complies with the water calculations (allowance for the site), and it cannot exceed 25% of the total landscape area. See the Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance standards for more information.

## **7. Is artificial turf allowed?**

Artificial turf is permitted in any zone within any back yard and/or interior side setback areas. In any zone, a maximum of 15 percent of the yard area within the front or street side yards may be installed with artificial turf. Artificial turf shall not be installed within 10 feet of a sidewalk or within 20 feet from the curb if there is no sidewalk. Artificial turf is not permitted within any parkway areas.

Please refer to the Development Code, Section 9103.09.040.D for further information regarding minimum standards for materials, installation, and maintenance.

**Note:** For all relevant development standards related to landscaping, please visit [www.ArcadiaCA.gov/ResidentialLandscapingGuide](http://www.ArcadiaCA.gov/ResidentialLandscapingGuide).

## **Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines**

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The following document is the City's Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines on impervious coverage and landscape areas as well as a sample planting palette. The sample planting palette provides an idea of planting types appropriate to the City.



## LANDSCAPE & HARDSCAPE

Landscaping is an important component of the overall design of a project. Even the most thoughtfully designed house will appear incomplete without adequate landscaping. For new residences and rebuilds, a conceptual landscape plan must be submitted during the design review process. A detailed landscape plan will be required during plan check. The following are guidelines for single-family residential landscape and hardscape:

1. Large planting sizes (24-inch box or greater) are recommended for trees to make a new dwelling look established and soften the visual impact of a building's mass.
2. For a new residence, there should generally be at least two trees in the front yard, one of which should be drought tolerant.
3. Existing trees in good condition should be preserved whenever possible.
4. Landscaping should be layered, with low planting used in the foreground, proceeding back to the tallest in the background.
5. The use of decorative hardscape materials is encouraged in order to enhance the pedestrian and vehicular experience. Decorative hardscape materials include brick, flagstone, interlocking pavers, tile, stamped or colored concrete, and decomposed granite.
6. In order to promote "walkable" neighborhoods, a pedestrian path should be provided to the front door, separate from the driveway.



*Here a driveway and pedestrian path originate at the street in a complementary way.*

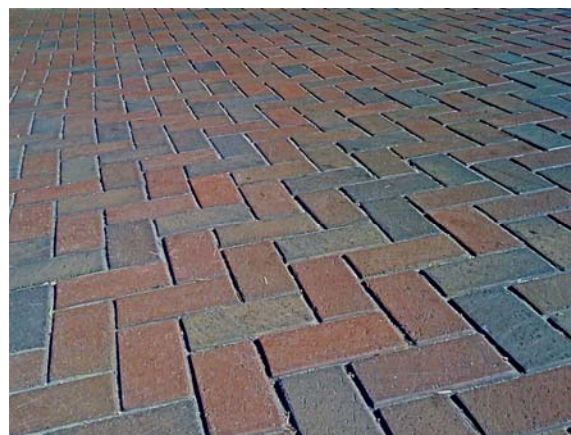
**Landscape & Hardscape continued...**

7. Landscape planters lining driveways, walkways, and property lines are encouraged.
8. For aesthetic and environmental reasons, the use of impervious paved surfaces should be minimized when not necessary for vehicular or pedestrian access or recreational purposes. Permeable hardscape materials are encouraged.
9. Drought-tolerant and native plant species are encouraged; however, consideration should be given to the gradual transition of existing neighborhood landscaping. For example, rather than woody ground coverings and desert landscaping, more lush and finely scaled species are encouraged.



**Water Conservation Tips**

1. Use “smart irrigation controllers”, a device that automatically adjusts watering times in response to weather changes. Smart irrigation controllers use sensors and weather information to manage watering times and frequency.
2. Install an irrigation system that reduces wasted water from evaporation, overspray and water run-off by watering turf from the surface in a bottom-up model rather than the typical sprinkler/top-down model.
3. Use Low-Flow Drip, Bubblers, or Low-flow Sprinklers.



*Above: Layered landscaping using native plants*

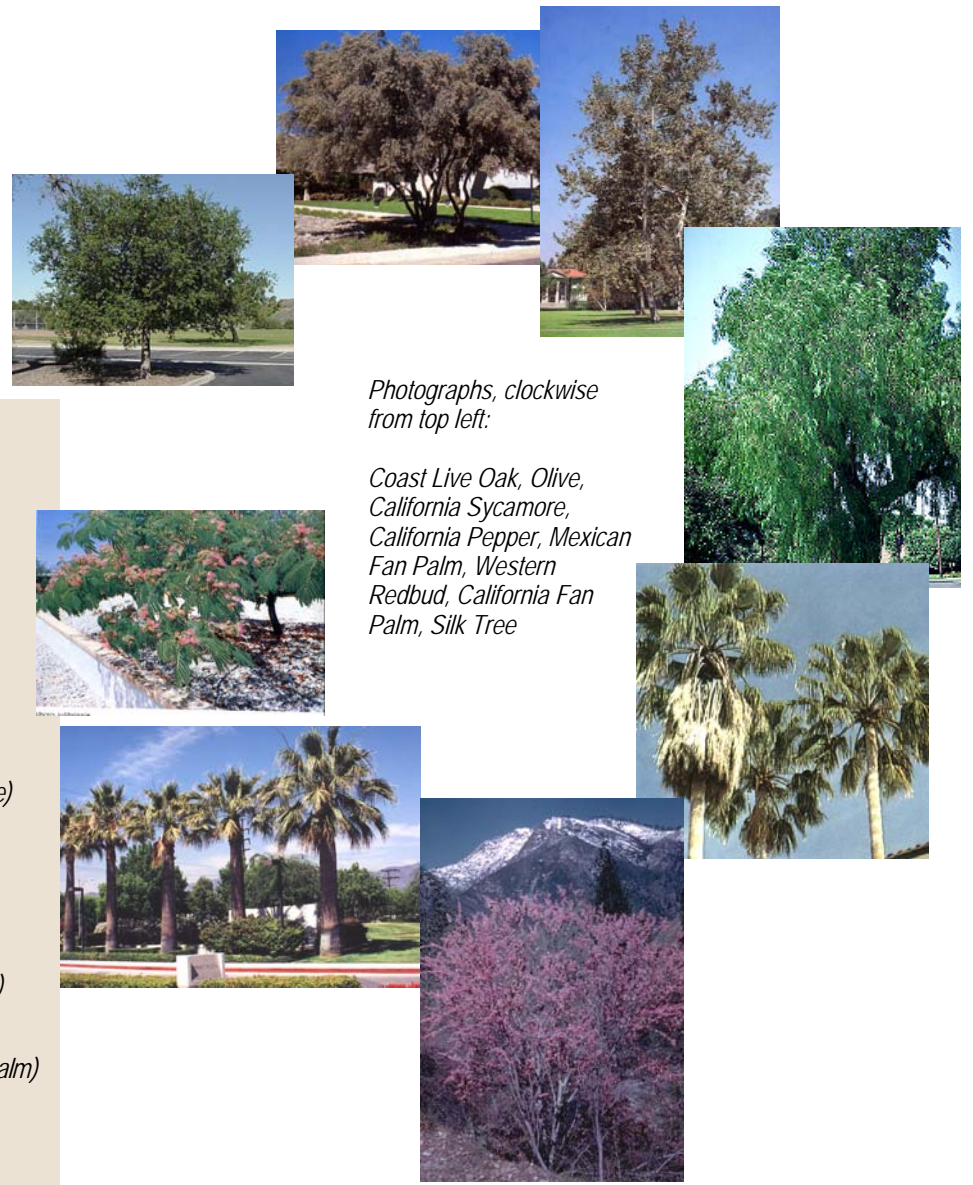
*Left: Decorative hardscape materials such as brick pavers are encouraged*



**Landscape & Hardscape continued...**

Residential landscape design should complement the architecture of the house. The design should also fit in with the neighborhood and the surrounding environment.

Conserving existing, established plant materials is almost always the best approach. Borrowing from the existing plant theme and the environment makes the new design fit in. The new design should also group plants with similar water, nutrient, and sun needs so as to avoid any growth problems.



Photographs, clockwise from top left:

Coast Live Oak, Olive, California Sycamore, California Pepper, Mexican Fan Palm, Western Redbud, California Fan Palm, Silk Tree

**SAMPLE PLANTING PALETTE**

Recommended plants include the following, but additional selections are encouraged for variety: (\* denotes trees that need a large area for root growth)

**Canopy trees:**

- Cinnamomum camphora* (Camphor Tree)\*
- Pistachia chinensis* (Chinese Pistache)
- Platanus acerifolia* (London Plane Tree)
- Platanus racemosa* (California Sycamore)
- Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak)
- Quercus engelmanni* (Engelmann Oak)
- Tipuana tipu* (Tipu Tree)
- Ulmus parvifolia* (Chinese Evergreen Elm)

**Specimen trees:**

- Agonis fluxuosa* (Peppermint Tree)
- Eucalyptus* ssp.
- Ginkgo biloba* (Maidenhair Tree)
- Olea europaea* (Olive Tree)
- Pinus eldarica* (Afghan Pine)
- Pinus pinea* (Italian Stone Pine)\*

**Flowering trees:**

- Albizia julibrissin* 'Rosa' (Silk Tree)
- Cassia leptophylla* (Gold Medallion Tree)
- Cercis occidentalis* (Western Redbud)
- Jacaranda mimosifolia* (Jacaranda)
- Koelreuteria bipinnata* (Chinese Flame Tree)
- Koelreuteria paniculata* (Goldenrain Tree)
- Lagerstroemia indica* (Crape Myrtle-multi)
- Malus* 'Prairiefire' (Prairiefire Crabapple)
- Pyrus kawakamii* (Evergreen Pear)
- Prunus* ssp.
- Tabebuia impetiginosa* (Pink Trumpet Tree)

**Palm trees:**

- Archontophoenix cumminghamiana* (King Palm)
- Phoenix* spp. (Date Palm)
- Washingtonia filifera* (California Fan Palm)
- Washingtonia robusta* (Mexican Fan Palm)
- Brahae edulis* (Guadalupe Palm)
- Syagrus romanzoffiana* (Queen Palm)

Planting palette continues on next page...



**Landscape & Hardscape continued...**

**Shrubs:** (\* denotes value as screening plant)

- Azalea spp. (Azalea)
- Arbutus unedo (Strawberry Tree)
- Alyogyne heugelii & cvs (Blue Hibiscus)
- \* Bamboo spp.
- Buddleia davidii (Butterfly Bush)
- \* Camellia spp. (Camellia)
- Cassia splendida (Golden Wonder Senna)
- Ceanothus var. (Wild Lilac)
- Cistus purpureus (Orchid Rockrose)
- \* Cocculus laurifolius (Laurel Leaf)
- \* Cotoneaster spp.
- Echium fastuosum (Pride of Madeira)
- \* Escallonia spp.
- Euphorbia characias 'Wulfenii' (Mediterranean Spurge)
- Euphorbia rigida (Silver Spurge)
- Gardenia spp.
- \* Grevillia spp.
- \* Hibiscus rosa-sinensis (Chinese Hibiscus)
- \* Myrtus communis (True Myrtle)
- \* Osmanthus spp.
- Penstemon spectabilis (Showy Penstemon)
- \* Podocarpus spp.
- \* Prunus caroliniana (Carolina Laurel Cherry)
- \* Pyracantha spp. (Firethorn)
- \* Rosa spp. (Rose)

**Groundcovers:**

- Arctostaphylos hookeri (Monterey Manzanita)
- Ceanothus griseus horizontalis (Carmel Creeper)
- Cistus spp. (Rockrose)
- Cotoneaster dammeri (Lowfast Bearberry)
- Lantana spp.
- Lavandula spp. (Lavender)
- Liriope muscari (Big Blue Lily Turf)
- Mahonia repens (Creeping Mahonia)
- Pelargonium spp. (Pelatum)
- Rosmarinus officinalis (Rosemary)
- Salvia spp. (Sage)
- Santolina chamaecyparissus (Lavender Cotton)
- Trachelospermum jasminoides (Star Jasmine)
- Verbena spp.



Wild Lilac

Orchid Rockrose



Salvia

**Vines:**

- Bougainvillea spp.
- Distictis buccinatoria (Blood-Red Trumpet Vine)
- Distictis laxiflora (Vanilla Trumpet Vine)
- Distictis 'Rivers' (Royal Trumpet Vine)
- Jasminum polyanthum (Jasmine)
- Pyrostegia venusta (Flame Vine)
- Rosa cultivars (Rose)
- Thunbergia alata (Black-eyed Susan Vine)

**Low accent plants:**

- Aloe spp.
- Hemerocallis hybrids (Daylily)
- Iris spp.
- Kniphofia uvaria (Red-hot Poker)
- Agapanthus (Lily of the Nile)
- Flax spp.



Lavender



Cotoneaster dammeri



Rockrose



Royal Trumpet Vine



Aloe



Bougainvillea



Rose



Lantana