



# Russian River Watershed Association

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## RRWA Environmental Column – August 2015 Water Savings without Compromise

Living in the Russian River Watershed is a gardener's dream come true. However, with California in its fourth year of drought, it is increasingly important that community members act collectively to decrease landscape water usage. Planting low water-use plants at our homes and businesses is one way we can reduce our impacts on this vital resource.

The following list provides ten low water-use plants that can be found at local nurseries, which demonstrate that your garden can be lush, colorful and healthy, even during a drought!

- *Tulbaghia violacea* - Society Garlic

Society Garlic is a perennial plant that can be seen blooming from spring through summer with purple, clustered flowers. The foliage is narrow and green-blue in color. Society Garlic can grow up to 2 feet tall and about 1 foot wide. When the foliage or flowers are rubbed they give off a garlicky aroma.

- *Achillea* spp. - Yarrow

Yarrow is a colorful addition to any landscape. It grows between 2 - 4 feet tall and should be planted 1 to 2 feet apart in full sun. This perennial plant usually blooms in summer, with a wide variety of yellow, white and pink flowers.

- *Lavatera bicolor* - Tree Mallow

Tree Mallow is a semi-evergreen that can grow up to 6 feet tall and 12 feet wide. The foliage is a grey-green color and flowers are lavender with vibrant maroon centers. Tree Mallow can be seen blooming in spring, summer, or fall and prefers to be planted in full sun.

- *Nepeta* spp. - Catmint

Catmint, a member of the mint family, is very aromatic and attracts bees and other pollinators. After it is established, Catmint is a low water-use perennial plant with blue-purple flowers and grey foliage. It can be grown in full sun or part shade.

- *Sempervivum tectorum* - Hens & Chicks

Hens & Chicks is a succulent that forms 2 to 4 inch rosettes with offsets that surround the mother-plant. These offsets can continue to spread for up to 2 feet. The rosettes are green with red tips and flowers have long stems that can reach 10 inches tall. This succulent can be grown in full sun or part shade. Hens & Chicks is a nice addition to a rock or container garden.

- *Ceanothus* spp. - California Lilac

California Lilac is an evergreen shrub that blooms in the spring with assemblages of white, blue, or purple flowers. There are over 60 varieties of *Ceanothus* ranging from 1 to 6-foot tall shrubs to 18 to 20-foot tall trees including 'Mountain Lilac,' 'Wild Lilac,' 'Blue Jeans,' and 'Julia Phelps.'



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- *Festuca Californica* - California Fescue

California Fescue is a California native grass that preserves its blue-green foliage throughout all the seasons. It prefers to be located under shade or part shade. California Fescue ranges in height between 1 to 4 feet with a width between 1 to 3 feet.

- *Stachys Byzantina* - Lamb's Ear

Lamb's Ear is categorized as a perennial that can survive on low water. This variety ranges from 6 to 12 inches tall and 3 feet wide. The leaves possess a velvet-like texture with frosty blue-green coloring. Ideally, Lamb's Ear would be grown in part shade.

- *Fremontodendron spp.* - Flannel Bush

This evergreen California native shrub is available in multiple varieties that can range from 4 to 30 feet tall. It survives on rainfall, once mature, and exhibits warm orange and yellow flowers. The Flannel Bush blooms in summer and spring.

- *Rosmarinus Officinalis* - Rosemary

Rosemary is an evergreen shrub that grows 2 to 6 feet tall. Rosemary blooms blue flowers in the winter season and grows well in full sun. This year-round shrub can also be used as an herb for cooking.

Other factors in reducing water-use in the landscape include: the time of day that watering occurs, how much water is used, the type of irrigation system, and soil type. Russian River-Friendly Landscape Guidelines summarize sustainable practices for landscapers specifically within the Russian River watershed. For more great water-saving tips and additional Russian River-Friendly landscaping strategies, please visit: [www.rrwatershed.org](http://www.rrwatershed.org).

For additional resources, see the following links:

- Russian River-Friendly Landscape Guidelines: [www.rrwatershed.org/programs/RRFLG](http://www.rrwatershed.org/programs/RRFLG)
- Sonoma County Master Gardeners: [http://ucanr.edu/sites/scmg/Top\\_Plants\\_for\\_Sonoma\\_County/Sonoma\\_Superstars/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/scmg/Top_Plants_for_Sonoma_County/Sonoma_Superstars/)
- CalFlora: <http://www.calfloranursery.com/our-plants-all-list-view>
- Water Wise Gardening: <http://www.sonoma.watersavingplants.com>



*Sempervivum tectorum*

This article was authored by Katie Schumpelt and Bailee Barr of the City of Santa Rosa Water Department, on behalf of RRWA. RRWA ([www.rrwatershed.org](http://www.rrwatershed.org)) is an association of local public agencies in the Russian River Watershed that have come together to coordinate regional programs for clean water, fisheries restoration, and watershed enhancement.



*Ceanothus spp.*