

The *Very* Drought-Tolerant **GARDEN**



Trees



Silver Leafed Texas Mountain Laurel

Sophora secundiflora 'Silver Peso' or 'Sierra Silver'

Size:
15'tall x 15' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:
Evergreen

Water Needs:
Low

Exposure:
Full sun

Hardiness:
10 degrees F.

Bloom Period:
Spring

General: Silver Leafed Texas Mountain Laurel is very similar to the Texas Mountain Laurel, but has much more silvery grey leaves. The flower show lasts for 3 or 4 weeks in early spring with beautiful Wisteria-like purple flowers. The flowers are scented, which some say smells like grape bubble gum. The plant develops undulating seed pods that start out fuzzy and silver and turn tan. Seeds are bright red and are reputed to be poisonous, but are contained in a very strong pod, and are also said to have a very tough seed coat that allows it to pass through without causing illness.

Designer: Its grey foliage is a great contrast for green plants. It can be grown as either a tree or a shrub, and is beautifully adorned with hanging purple flowers.

Maintenance: Low. Prune as desired, leaving low foliage to grow as a shrub, or removing low foliage and branches to grow as a tree. The green variety of this plant gets a caterpillar which can do a lot of damage, but we've not yet seen it on the Sierra Silver or Silver Peso. If caterpillars are seen, they can be controlled through the application of BT, a naturally-occurring bacterium that affects only caterpillars and is readily available through nurseries. If caterpillars are present, applications once every three weeks seem to suffice to control the problem, until no caterpillars or new damage is seen.



Screwbean Mesquite

Prosopis pubescens

Size:

Up to 40' tall x 40' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Deciduous

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full Sun

Hardiness:

10-15 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Late spring/Early summer

General: The screwbean mesquite is native to Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts of the American southwest. It features a broad canopy and small, deep green leaves that can offer filtered shade across a large area. Like many of the mesquites, this tree has thorns that provides wildlife with a safe place to spend time throughout the year. Flowers in the late spring precede the edible seedpods for which the screwbean mesquite is named.

Designer: A great choice for larger yards in need of fast shade. The seedpods provide stay on the tree throughout the summer and fall to provide months of visual interest.

Maintenance: As with any of the mesquites, litter can be an issue. Formative pruning and appropriate watering is important for the long-term health and appearance of the tree. Once established, deep-water only a few times a year.



Mulga

Acacia aneura

Size:

Up to 18' tall x 14' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun

Hardiness:

15 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring

General: This small tree is native to the Great Sandy desert of Australia. It loves lots of hot sun and poor soils, and thrives with little additional irrigation. Distinct gray-green leaves complement the brownish-red bark. The flower show of yellow blossoms is continuous throughout the spring and summer. This thornless tree has a naturally upright form that is uncommon in most desert trees. It is one of the most cold-hardy of all the acacias.

Designer: Excellent choice for small yards and side yards with full sun exposure. This is the cleanest of all the acacias.

Maintenance: As with all trees, it should always be pruned thoughtfully, especially in youth. No pest or disease problems have been noted or observed. It is sensitive to overwatering and prefers well drained soils. If overwatered the leaves become sparse and chlorotic (yellow due to a decreased amount of chlorophyll). To help it drain well in heavy soils, plant the tree slightly above grade (~2-4"). As it matures (1-3 years), slowly remove all irrigation except for that needed by under plantings (plants growing under canopy and nearby).



Little Leaf Ash

Fraxinus greggii

Size:
Up to 18' tall x 15' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:
Semi-Evergreen

Water Needs:
Low to moderate

Exposure:
Full sun, Part shade

Hardiness:
10 degrees F.

Bloom Period:
Spring, Inconspicuous

General: Native to west Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona at elevations ranging from 1,200 to 6,000 feet, this large shrub or small tree can be found growing along arroyos and canyons. Foliage is bright green and fine textured, creating a beautiful contrast with its smooth gray bark. New growth appears in the spring just as the old leaves are shedding, making this deciduous tree virtually evergreen.

Designer: This tree works well as a patio or accent tree, near pools, and grows well in large containers if given adequate irrigation.

Maintenance: Prune to small, multi-trunked tree form, if desired. Requires good drainage. Amount of irrigation will determine growth rate.



Cat Claw Acacia

Acacia greggii

Size:

Up to 15' tall x 20' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Deciduous

Water Needs:

Low, Drought tolerant

Exposure:

Full sun

Hardiness:

0 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring

General: Catclaw Acacia is a woody perennial, growing slowly to form a gnarled, multi-trunked large shrub or small tree. If left unpruned it develops dense thickets. Its twisted and tangled branches are covered with curved thorns resembling a cat's claw. Foliage is small, gray-green and doubly pinnate. Rod-shaped, fragrant, cream-colored flowers occur in abundance in the spring. Native to much of the Southwest, this tough, drought tolerant plant is native to alkaline rocky hillsides and sandy desert flats less than 5000 feet in elevation.

Designer: *Acacia greggii* is best-suited for use as a small residential tree, revegetation projects, or as a wildlife resource. The fragrant flowers are highly attractive to bees, and the bean-like pods are a favorite of quail. It is most often planted for its interesting form and character. Due to thorny branches, keep this plant away from walkways and foot traffic.

Maintenance: Low. Occasional pruning improves form. Pod cleanup may be necessary.



Scrub Oak

Quercus turbinella

Size:
8' tall x 12' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:
Evergreen

Water Needs:
Low

Exposure:
Full sun

Hardiness:
-10 degrees F.

Bloom Period:
Spring

General: Native from California into west Texas at elevations from 3500 to 6000 feet, this evergreen shrub is dense, with a mounding form wider than tall. Small, slender acorns ripen in the summer, providing food for wildlife. The oval leaves are small, leathery, and gray-blue with sharply toothed margins.

Designer: Scrub Oaks are known for their long life, strength and majestic beauty. Highly branching and thicket forming, the bark is gray, fissured, and scaly. Its name, 'turbinella', means 'like a little top', referring to the narrow oblong shape of the 1-inch acorn.

Maintenance: As with all trees, it should always be pruned thoughtfully. With this species good development of structure and form is especially critical in youth. No pest or disease problems have been noted or observed.



Desert Olive

Forestiera neomexicana

Size:

Up to 18' tall x 12' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Deciduous

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun/Partial shade

Hardiness:

0 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring

General: Fast growing shrub or small tree from southwest U.S. that is very drought-tolerant once established. The female tree produces bluish-black berries that are favored by the birds, making this an excellent selection for a habitat garden.

Designer: The brilliant yellow fall foliage and the lovely white bark of the New Mexico olive provides visual interest throughout the cold months. Grow as a dense shrub or prune into a multi-trunk tree for tighter spaces.

Maintenance: Provide regular water for the first year, then reduce to deep and infrequent soaks. This tree is exceptionally forgiving of poor soils and is resistant to many pests and diseases, so maintenance on the New Mexico olive is typically low.



Other Very Drought-Tolerant Trees

- Mesquites (*Prosopis*)
- Palo Verdes (*Cercidium/Parkinsonia*)
- Sumacs (*Rhus*)
- Acacias (*Acacia*)



Reducing Water on Desert Trees

- Upon planting, these desert plants need to have irrigation, either by hand or automatic
- After they are established, irrigation should be removed or discontinued
- Irrigation can be done through an automatic system or by hand-watering
- If hand-watered, use an impulse sprinkler for a very wide and deep soak- but infrequently!



Shrubs



Creosote Bush

Larrea tridentata

Size:

3-10' tall x 3-10' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Very low

Exposure:

Full sun, reflected heat

Hardiness:

5 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring, sporadically throughout year

General: *Larrea tridentata* is an open, vase-shaped shrub native to our Mojave Desert to 5000 feet. Leaves are distinctive, tiny, usually yellow-green to medium green, and aromatic after rainfall. Small, solitary, yellow blooms appear in spring and sporadically throughout the year, followed by fuzzy, round, pea-sized seed capsules.

Designer: Creosote Bush makes an attractive hedge or border, as well as a specimen plant in the natural or xeriscape garden. Attractiveness may be a matter of personal opinion, as the plant does not display showy foliage or flowers.

Maintenance: None required.



Arizona Rosewood

Vauquelinia californica

Size:

15' tall x 10' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun, partial shade

Hardiness:

-10 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring

General: This slow-growing small tree or large shrub has 4" leaves with toothed margins, dark green on the top and paler gray on the underside. Creamy white flower clusters in the spring give way to woody seed pods that last throughout the year.

Designer: The contrast of the dark green foliage against the silver trunk is a stunning characteristic of this tree. Its dense canopy and evergreen nature, along with its size, makes this tree an excellent choice for screening the edges of a property, especially where there are adjoining two-story buildings. This is a low-litter tree.

Maintenance: Can be grown as a large shrub, or single or multi-trunked tree. As with all trees, it should always be pruned thoughtfully. No pest or disease problems have been noted or observed.



Desert Milkweed

Asclepias subulata

Size:

Up to 4' tall x 4' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun, reflected heat

Hardiness:

25 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring to Fall

General: Desert Milkweed occurs in dry washes and on rocky slopes below 3,000 feet in the far Southwest. Leafless, gray-green herbaceous stems grow erect from a central cluster up to 4' tall and wide. Pale creamy yellow flowers appear in terminal clusters intermittently from spring until fall. The blooms attract butterflies and hawk moths to the garden. Pairs of ornamental, horn-shaped seed pods follow the bloom season.

Designer: This clean plant is ideal for use around swimming pools, as an accent plant, to attract butterflies, or in revegetation projects.

Maintenance: None. Performs best with good drainage.



Apache Plume

Fallugia paradoxa

Size:

4-5' tall x 4-6' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Semi-Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low, extra in Summer

Exposure:

Full sun to partial shade

Hardiness:

-30 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

April – October

General: This hearty native of the Mojave desert can take both the heat and cold. Blooming from April to October, it has beautiful white flowers, followed by fun feather-like seed heads.

Designer: This is a super plant for streetscapes and hot, exposed locations. The seed heads are very airy and give the plant a very soft textural appearance. They also capture sunlight beautifully and radiate with a soft pinkish hue.

Maintenance: Low. Cut back in winter if needed. Hand prune only, do not shear.



Golden Eye

Viguiera parishii

Size:

Up to 4' tall x 4' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun

Hardiness:

15 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Summer – Fall

General: Native to much of the Southwest and into Mexico, *Viguiera parishii* is a tough evergreen perennial perfect for the water-wise landscape in Las Vegas. Goldeneye grows rapidly to form a dense round mound to about 4 feet in all directions. Foliage is triangular, bright green, slightly glossy, and has a rough texture. The bright green leaves provide an interesting contrast with the grayish-white stems. In the spring yellow daisy-like flowers rise above the foliage.

Designer: Goldeneye is a fragrant butterfly plant suited for dry rock gardens, as an accent plant, in a border, or a raised bed. It has a nice naturalizing effect in any xeriscape garden.

Maintenance: Low. It may be cut back in later winter to maintain a more dense and compact form.



Brittle Bush

Encelia farinosa

Size:

Up to 4' tall x 4' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun, reflected heat

Hardiness:

15 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring

General: *Encelia farinosa* is a fast-growing, rounded, mounding, almost herbaceous shrub native to the sandy and gravelly soils of the southwestern U.S. and Mexico. Leaves are lance or ovate shaped, and sport a gorgeous gray color throughout the year. These large gray leaves create a stunning backdrop for the bright yellow daisy-like flowers appearing primarily in the spring and sporadically throughout the year in response to rainfall.

Designer: Looking for some silver in the garden? Brittlebush makes the perfect choice! Planted primarily for its silvery hue and abundant bloom season, Brittlebush is also useful for revegetation projects, xeriscape gardens, medians and parking lots, streetscapes, perennial beds, and borders.

Maintenance: Cut back in fall to rejuvenate. Remove spent seed heads if desired. Be careful not to overwater, as Brittlebush has a tendency to rot out or become short-lived. The leaves are a favorite of aphids, lacebugs and flea beetles.



Jojoba

Simmondsia chinensis

Size:

Up to 8' tall x 10' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun

Hardiness:

15 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring

General: Best-known for the oil extracted from its fruit, Jojoba is a dense shrub that can survive in extreme heat and cold on very low water requirements. Inconspicuous yellow flowers in the spring precede the nuts which produce the oil and can prove to be a draw to wildlife.

Designer: Use Jojoba to create a tall, dense and extremely drought-tolerant hedge. This shrub will also fit nicely in any wildlife or desert garden.

Maintenance: Jojoba is naturally a slow grower. Regular water for the first couple of years will help it to become established and can speed growth. Once established, reduce frequency of water and prune to shape.



Globe Mallow

Sphaeralcea ambigua

Size:

Up to 3' tall x 3' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full Sun

Hardiness:

-10 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring/occasionally fall

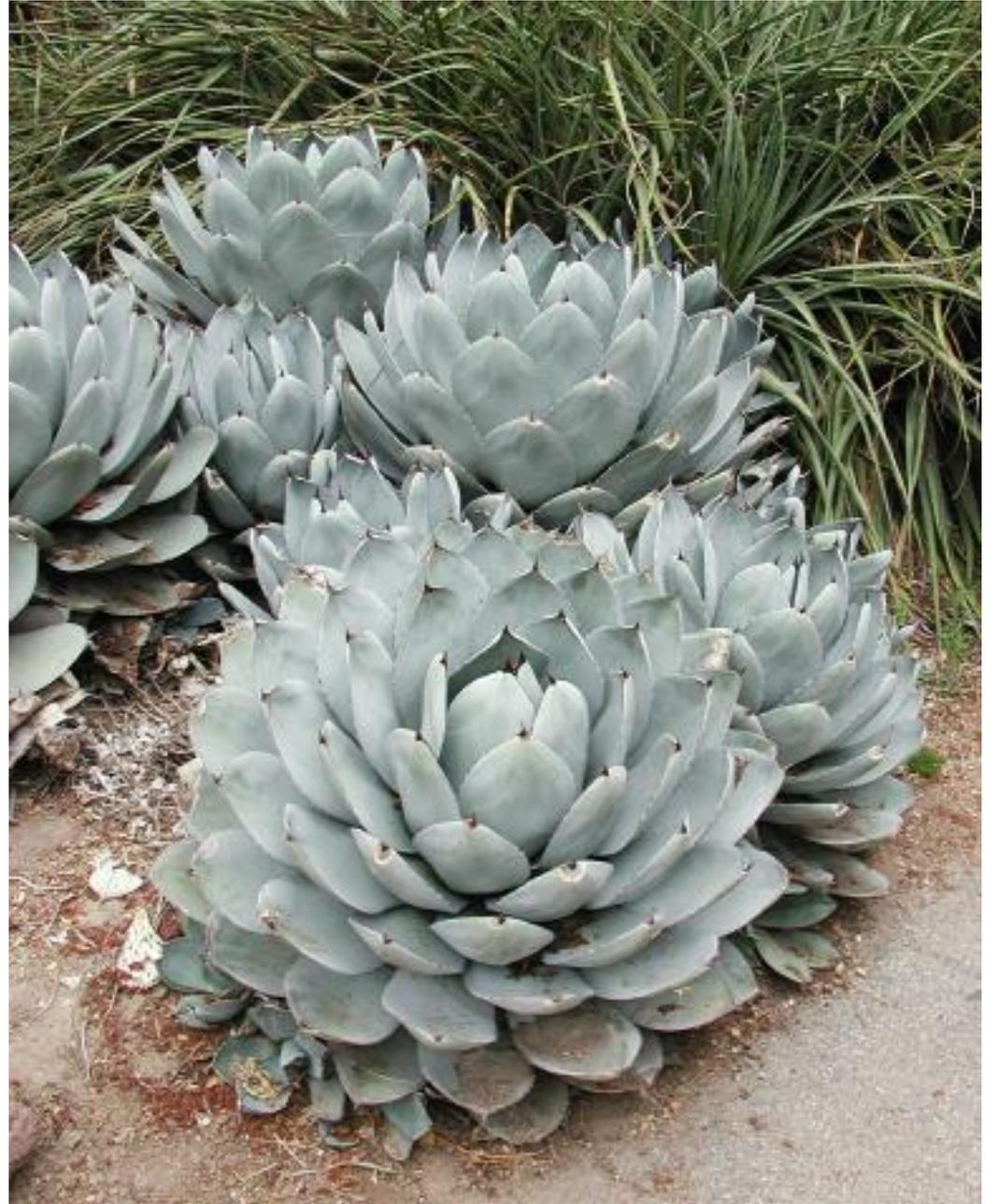
General: This tough Mojave desert native plant is very common in wilderness and even reseeds itself readily in disturbed soils. Flowers are usually orange but varieties exist with more reddish colors. Heavy blooming occurs in spring and sometimes a second flower show occurs in fall. Foliage is gray-green, soft and fuzzy. Globe Mallow has a rather relaxed sprawling form.

Designer: Gray foliage adds softness, while the flowers radiate beautifully in sunlight.

Maintenance: Low. After blooming, flower stalks remain and look woody and rangy. The plant may then be cut back to about 6-12". Very drought tolerant once established.



Cacti & Succulents



Blue Yucca

Yucca rigida

Size:

Up to 12' tall x 5' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full Sun

Hardiness:

-10 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring

General: A native of northern Mexico and the American southwest, the blue yucca is a striking addition to any garden. It's forgiving of poor soils and can tolerate a wide range of temperatures, but does prefer good drainage and deep, infrequent soaks of water. Large, cream-colored flower stalks make this plant a show-stopper in the spring.

Designer: This plant offers a unique silhouette, especially once mature. Use it to create a focal point or to provide a structural element in the landscape.

Maintenance: Plant high in well-drained soil. The yuccas need little maintenance as a general rule, but they will look their best with an occasional watering during the hottest months of the year.



Parry's Agave

Agave parryi v. parryi

Size:

Up to 2' tall x 2' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun to partial shade

Hardiness:

-20 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Once at end of lifespan

General: Parry's Agave is a small agave native to central Arizona into New Mexico and Mexico. In contrast to other subspecies of *Agave parryi*, *Agave parryi v. parryi* produces larger leaves and rosettes. The compact, nearly round rosettes consist of gray-green lanceolate leaves 7 to 20 inches in length. Leaf margins are covered with dark brown teeth, as well as a stout, yet sharp, spine on the tip. A single specimen eventually forms colonies of many offsets. As with most agaves, the mother plant will die after flowering but her offsets (pups) will live on.

Designer: Makes a nice accent to any xeriscape with its stunning gray leaves and form.

Maintenance: Low. Treat once or twice per year for the agave borer weevil with Bayer Tree and Shrub Insecticide, Merit Insecticide, or equivalent (active ingredient: Imidacloprid). Treatment should occur in mid-April to mid-May. If a 2nd treatment is desired, it should occur in September. One treatment is believed to provide adequate protection, but the 2nd may be applied for added security. Agave borer weevil larvae can eat the root system of this plant and by the time the damage is noticeable, it is too late. The symptoms show as the outer leaves laying close to the ground while the center rosette of leaves stays upright, leaving a gap in between.



Brakelights Red Yucca

Hesperaloe parviflora 'Brakelights'

Size:

Foliage to 2' tall x 2' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun to partial shade,
reflected heat

Hardiness:

-20 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring – Summer

General: Brakelights Red Yucca is one of the most carefree and tough desert plants, and is essentially a more compact Red Yucca. It produces long-lasting flower spikes with vibrant, brakelight-red blossoms throughout the summer. Leaves are medium sage-green, long, thin and reminiscent of blades of grass, but more fleshy. This plant is a new addition from Mountain States Wholesale Nursery.

Designer: Brakelights Red Yucca's flowers are a hummingbird magnet: they seem to love 'em! It is a great plant to use just outside a window with a view, so you can watch as hummingbirds come to take nourishment. Flowers last quite a long time, but late in the season can get to looking scraggly. If allowed to do so, flowers are followed by large seedpods filled with viable black seeds. It is tough enough to also be a great container plant and is a clean choice for pool areas.

Maintenance: Remove old flower stalks. Leaves slowly die off and when they do so can be removed easily by grasping, tugging and wiggling the foliage in question. If it is ready to come off it will do so easily.



Weber's Agave

Agave weberi

Size:

Up to 7' tall x 6-10' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun, part shade

Hardiness:

10 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Flowers at maturity

General: As there do not appear to be any specimens left in the wild, this medium to large agave is often only seen in cultivation. Long, fleshy leaves are grey-green with fine teeth along the margins, and a sharp black terminal spine. Yellow flowers appear on a 15 foot branched flower spike when the plant reaches maturity.

Designer: Though similar in size and appearance, Weber's Agave offers a more upright form than the popular *Agave americana*, or Century Plant. Weber's Agave makes a superb accent plant in any xeriscape garden. A variegated variety called Arizona Star is sometimes available.

Maintenance: Low. Yellowing of the foliage may indicate heat stress and a need for more water. Treat once or twice per year for the agave borer weevil with Bayer Tree and Shrub Insecticide, Merit Insecticide, or equivalent (active ingredient: Imidacloprid). Treatment should occur in mid-April to mid-May. If a 2nd treatment is desired, it should occur in September. One treatment is believed to provide adequate protection, but the 2nd may be applied for added security. Agave borer weevil larvae can eat the root system of this plant and by the time the damage is noticeable, it is too late. The symptoms show as the outer leaves laying close to the ground while the center rosette of leaves stays upright, leaving a gap in between.



Desert Spoon

Dasylyrion wheeleri

Size:

Up to 5' tall x 6' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun

Hardiness:

0 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Summer

General: A slow-growing native of the deserts of the United States and Mexico, the Desert Spoon is one of the most durable accent plants for low-water gardens. Most often it has a single trunk of blue-green leaves with spikes along the edges, though occasionally a specimen will develop multiple trunks.

Designer: The Desert Spoon can serve as a space filler, a deterrent or a structural element in the garden.

Maintenance: Little maintenance required. Deep, infrequent water and good drainage are preferred. The 15' flower stalk that appears in the summer months can be cut before or after it opens without harm to the plant.



Groundcover



Golden Dyssodia

Thymophylla pentachaeta

Size:

6" to 1' tall x 1' to 2' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Semi-Deciduous

Water Needs:

Very low

Exposure:

Full sun

Hardiness:

0 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring –Fall, sometimes Winter

General: This little perennial blooms spring to fall with masses of tiny, golden, daisy-like flowers. Although individual plants are relatively short-lived (just 2-4 years), it reseeds itself quite easily, but can be easily removed and thus never becomes a weed problem. Its finely divided foliage is a bright green, and smells wonderful when touched.

Designer: It is an excellent plant for butterfly gardens, as it attracts adult butterflies and provides food and nectar for larvae. Its ability to reseed allows it to appear in unexpected locations, including areas without irrigation. Looks great as a secondary under-planting against larger, bold plants such as Agaves. Plants that don't receive irrigation sometimes bloom all winter.

Maintenance: It gets a bit ragged looking in winter, but can be sheared or cut back in early spring.



Blackfoot Daisy

Melampodium leucanthum

Size:

12" tall x 15-18" wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Deciduous

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun, reflected heat, part shade

Hardiness:

-20 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring – Fall

General: Blackfoot Daisy is a low, bushy, mounded perennial. The small (1 inch) white daisy flowers have yellow centers, and cover the small mound of foliage during the bloom season. These honey-scented flower heads arise just slightly above the foliage giving a nice tight form. The plant itself has narrow medium green to grey-green leaves. The stems are quite brittle, so it is not suited to high traffic areas.

Designer: Blackfoot Daisy has a natural place in meadow, woodland, rock, and xeriscape gardens alike. The flowers attract butterflies, and leave behind a star-like seed pod.

Maintenance: Plant Blackfoot Daisy in full sun, well-drained soil, and be careful not to over water. It is reported to be deer resistant.



Angelita Daisy

Tetranneuris acaulis

Size:

Up to 12" tall x 15-18" wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Evergreen

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun

Hardiness:

-20 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Off and on throughout the year,
with heaviest show in spring

General: A native of the dry, rocky slopes of the southwest, the Angelita daisy is a reliable source of color during most of the year. The evergreen foliage appears as a tuft of grass when not in bloom, with cheery yellow flowers on 6"-12" stalks throughout the seasons.

Designer: Use groupings of Angelita daisies in informal landscapes for a soft, natural feel.

Maintenance: Expect these little plants to reseed fairly readily. Remove unwanted plants and deadhead old blooms for a neater appearance.



Spreading Fleabane

Erigeron divergens

Size:

Up to 1' tall x 2' wide

Evergreen/Deciduous:

Perennial

Water Needs:

Low

Exposure:

Full sun

Hardiness:

-10 degrees F.

Bloom Period:

Spring/Summer

General: A native of the Mojave desert, spreading fleabane is a fast-growing, short-lived perennial that reseeds readily and is at its best in hot, dry climates. A carpet of white flowers with hints of pink and lavender appear in the late spring and early summer, serving as an attractant to the Buckeye butterfly.

Designer: This compact plant is ideal for any garden where space and water are limited, but sunlight is not. Since they tend to reseed, this makes a great groundcover for more natural gardens and landscapes.

Maintenance: Spreading fleabane is very low-maintenance. Deadhead spent blooms to encourage new flowers and cut back in winter if the plant becomes rangy.



The Value of Reduction Pruning

- **Reduction pruning reduces the stress load from wind on larger, older trees that may be subject to breakage**
- **The species that seem most subject to this kind of damage from wind failure are olives, palo verdes and mesquites**
- **It is pruning to reduce the mass of foliage out towards the ends of the branches and outer canopy**
- **As with all pruning on trees, this type of pruning should only be done with good cuts appropriately placed. It does not mean you should lop off the ends of the branches!**
- **Inner (sometimes temporary) foliage on large branches increases their girth and strengthens them, making them less prone to failure**