

XERISCAPE

NATURE'S CHOICE OF LANDSCAPE



Salvia Sage

With over 750 species, salvia offers a great variety of forms, foliage, and seasonal colors. Sages are known for their fragrant and long-lasting, spectacular blooms. The flowers emerge above the rounded shrubs either distinctly spaced on tall skewers or in long, densely clustered spikes. Although mostly noted for their cool blue, purple or lavender blooms, some salvias produce vibrant reds, scarlet, orange, and even yellow or white blossoms. Many varieties are native to dry climates, making beautiful additions to Xeriscape gardens. Salvias create excellent natural wildlife gardens that attract hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. Some have pungent aromas that discourage browsers such as rabbits. All are non-toxic, and some are used medicinally, as herbs, or in teas.

Sages tolerate poor soils, but do not perform well in clay soils. They require good drainage and supplemental water in the dry summer months, and are generally adaptable to the heat and cold of the low desert. The featured varieties thrive in full sun or light shade. Pruning using natural or selective pruning techniques (do not shear) after the blooming season between winter and spring keeps sages neat and compact and encourages new growth.

Depending on the size of the species, salvia makes a great border or background for desert wildflowers. Planted in mass, they create a spectacular blanket of color.

Salvia clevelandii

Chaparral Sage

Chaparral sage is native to the coastal sage shrub community of California. This mounding shrub reaches 4 to 5 feet high and up to 6 feet wide, with blue-violet flowers stacked on tall vertical stems like shish-kebobs. The fragrant foliage is soft, gray-green, and wrinkled. It contrasts well with groundcovers such as evening primrose and softens accent plants such as aloes and agaves. The flower stems are long lasting in dry arrangements.

Salvia greggii

Autumn Sage

This small, erect shrub reaches about 2 feet high and wide, and makes a nice perennial border. Commonly seen with magenta flowers, coral, red, pink and other selections are also widely available. The fine, dark green leaves are fragrant. Autumn sage has a long flowering season throughout the year. This plant needs filtered shade or partial shade for best results. Good drainage and supplemental water are essential.

Salvia leucantha

Mexican Bush Sage

This graceful, perennial shrub with arching purple flowers spikes has gray-green leaves with wooly white undersides on new stems. The densely clustered flower spikes are made up of a velvety purple calyx surrounding each purple or white flower. Mexican bush sage reaches about 3 feet tall and wide, and is an excellent choice for the mini-oasis area of the Xeriscape garden. It may be evergreen in the warmest winters, but looks best if old flowering stems are cut back to the ground so new ones can emerge. Excess shade creates an undesirable, sprawling growth habit. This salvia does well in poor to average soils, and tolerates heavy soils better than most other salvia species.