



# CITY OF ARCADIA

## RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPING GUIDE



CITY OF  
ARCADIA





## **Water Conservation in the City**

The State of California is in a third year of drought, which increasingly impacts our water supply. In response, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-7-22 on March 28, 2022, calling on Californians to limit summertime watering and directed the State Water Resources Control Board to consider adopting emergency regulations, which went into effect on June 10, 2022. On May 17, 2022, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 7430, amending the summer watering schedule from three days per week to two days, limited to only Tuesday and Saturdays between 6 p.m. to 9 a.m., with 10 minutes per station. The reduction of outdoor watering days will help us reach our 20% water conservation goal, since 70% of customer water use is on outdoor irrigation. To protect and conserve the City's groundwater supply, it is important for us, as a community, to prepare and build resilience to a drought that could worsen in the coming months or even years. Additional information on the City's water conservation efforts can be found at [ArcadiaCA.gov/WaterConservation](https://ArcadiaCA.gov/WaterConservation).

## **The City's Residential Landscaping Expectations**

Green lawns and vibrant landscaping have been a hallmark of the City of Arcadia and its beautiful neighborhoods over time. However, given the drought conditions across the state, the City's policies on what is allowable landscaping have been altered. Drought tolerant landscaping, as part of a cohesive landscape plan, including the modification of lawn areas, is strongly encouraged. The City's Residential Landscaping Guide provides homeowners with the City's standards, requirements, and expectations for landscaping in the front yard and/or street side areas and includes a planting palette from the City's Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines. This guide can be found at [ArcadiaCA.gov/Landscaping](https://ArcadiaCA.gov/Landscaping).

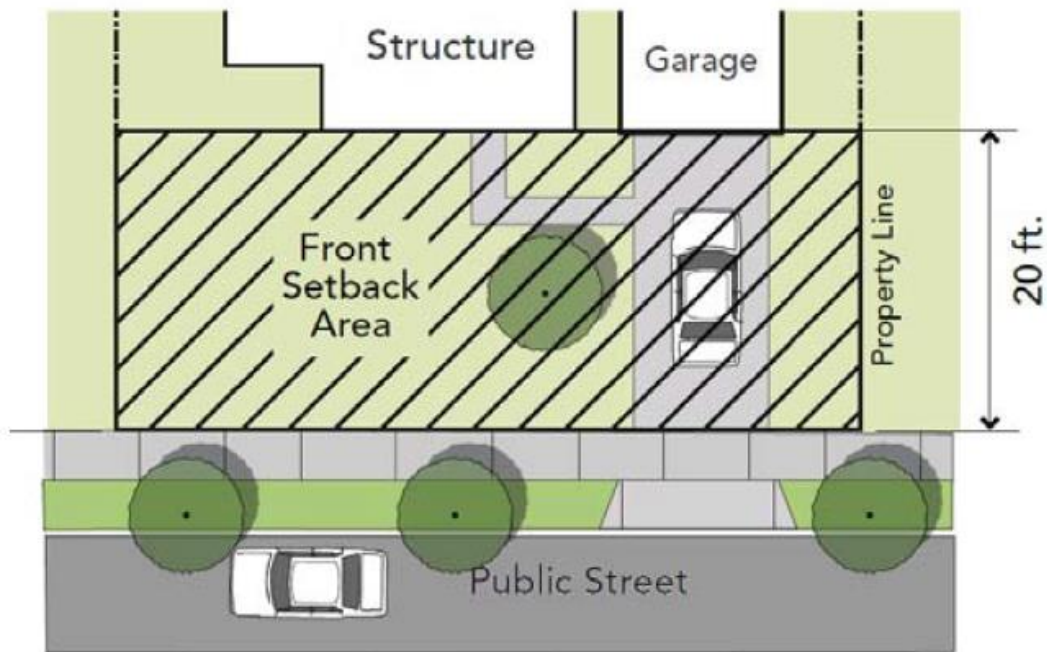
The following highlights important policies for landscaping within the City during this drought situation:

- It is understood that with water restrictions, lawns will not remain green and lush. This is simply a reality given the drought. Although brown lawns will be tolerated, it is necessary to make sure a lawn area is not allowed to become weeds or bare dirt. Lawns must remain mowed and kept regardless of health of the lawn.
- It is the City's policy to encourage California native vegetation as the key feature of new drought tolerant landscaping. The City is encouraging a thoughtful layout of drought tolerant landscaping, including native materials, trees, and other vertical landscaping such as hedges.
- Although materials such as mulch, gravel, decomposed granite, and the like are allowed, they must be integrated into a cohesive landscaping plan, whether designed by a professional firm or completed by a homeowner.

- In the front and corner yard areas, straight rock gardens, artificial turf covering the entire the front yard area, and desert-like gardens, are not acceptable.
- Artificial turf is allowed and may be installed in the front and side yard areas up to a maximum of 15% of the yard area. It may not be installed within 10 feet of a sidewalk or within 20 feet of the curb if there is no sidewalk and it is not allowed in the parkway area. Approval by the Planning Services Division is required prior to installation of any artificial turf.

The Planning Services Division is available to answer questions regarding residential landscaping standards at (626) 574-5423 or email at [Planning@ArcadiaCA.gov](mailto:Planning@ArcadiaCA.gov). Drought-tolerant landscaping is a requirement of all newly submitted homes and remodels through the Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (WELO). A WELO handout, which highlights the requirements for various landscaping projects, is available at the Planning Services counter or the City's website at [ArcadiaCA.gov/WELO](http://ArcadiaCA.gov/WELO).

## 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.

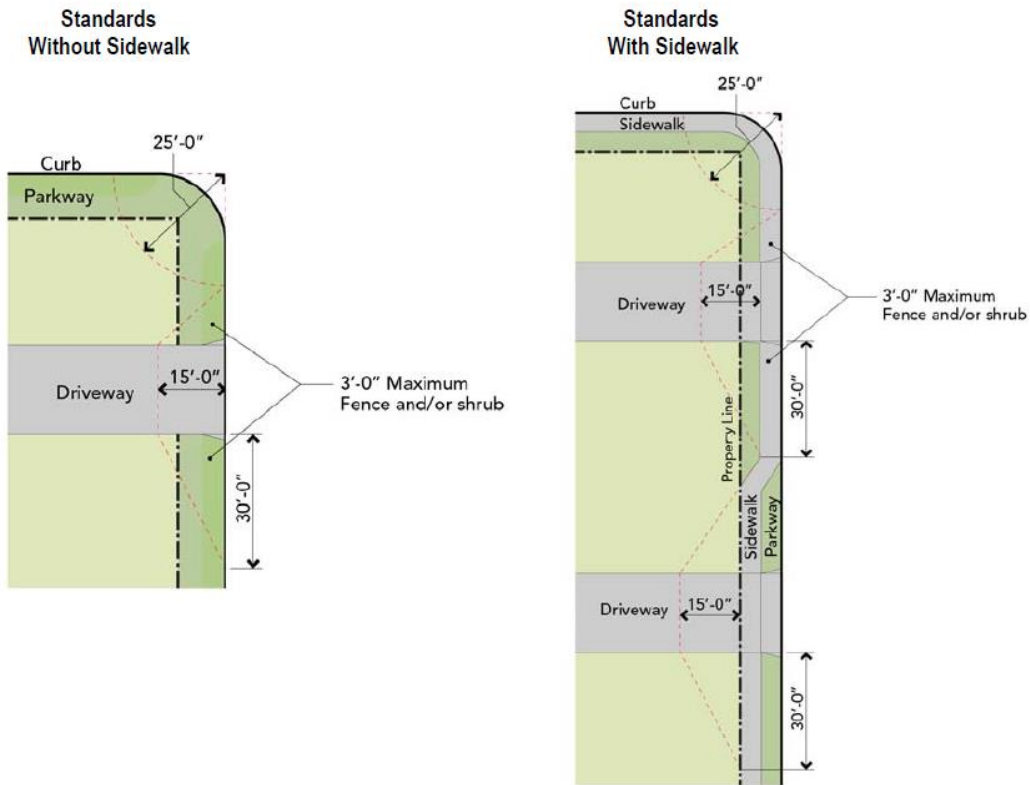
B. Landscape Requirement for Residential Zones. All areas of a site not devoted to structures, driveways, or walkways shall be landscaped with lawn, trees, shrubs, or other plant materials, and shall be permanently maintained in a neat and orderly manner.

#### 1. All Residential 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.



**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.



## **Drought Tolerant Landscaping That is Acceptable**

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.





## Artificial Turf Regulations

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.

### Specific Requirements for Artificial Turf

- The blade height should have a minimum of 1.5 inches and installed in a manner where the top of the turf pile(s) is not flush with adjacent surfaces.
- The style of the fiber, color, and texture should resemble common natural grass blades such as Fescue, Rye, Bermuda, and St. Augustine. Examples of common grass types should be used as reference for selecting artificial turf.
- Color of the grass must be green, giving the turf a natural appearance indistinguishable from natural turf.

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

The following are examples of **acceptable** use of artificial turf that has been integrated into a cohesive landscaping layout.





The following are examples of **unacceptable** use of artificial turf that has not been integrated into a cohesive landscaping layout and exceeds the maximum percentage allowed of the yard area.



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **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). See the WELO standards at [ArcadiaCA.gov/WELO](http://ArcadiaCA.gov/WELO) for more information.

## 7. Is artificial turf allowed?

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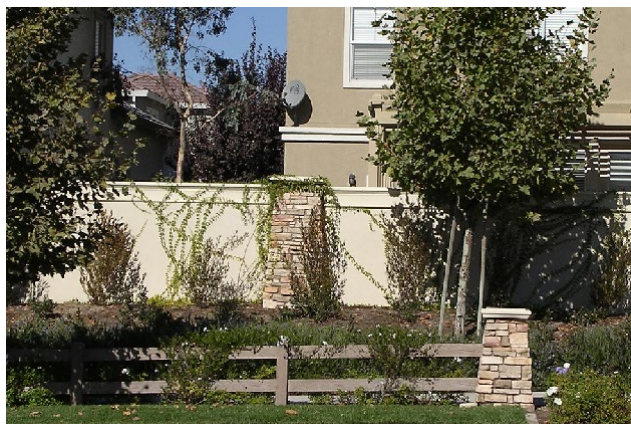
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**Note:** For all relevant development standards related to landscaping, please visit [ArcadiaCA.gov/Landscaping](http://ArcadiaCA.gov/Landscaping).

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

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.





*On lots with existing walls or fences, new walls or fences should be compatible with existing*





*Existing trees in good condition should be preserved*



*The use of decorative hardscape materials are encouraged*

## 17. Impervious Coverage and Landscape Areas



- a. Landscape design should be an integral part of the overall project design and be complementary to the architecture of a home. The landscape design should also fit in with the neighborhood and the surrounding environment.
- b. Existing trees in good condition should be preserved whenever possible.
-  c. To the extent feasible, applicants should pursue use of drought-tolerant, and low water using plantings within a projects landscape design. Some integration of moderate water using plantings may be acceptable as long as a project water allowance remains under applicable WELO requirements.
-  d. Low impact development (LID) strategies, such as permeable paving, vegetated swales, and/or infiltration areas, should be incorporated into the design of all projects.
- e. Landscaping should be utilized to define outdoor spaces while also softening the transition of a building's appearance at the ground plane.
- f. Trees and/or screening hedges should be utilized along property lines to provide screening and enhance privacy. However, such landscaping should not obscure the entire view of the building.
- g. Design of front yard areas should provide a balance between landscape and hardscape, while also balancing both impervious and permeable surfaces. Permeable hardscape materials are encouraged.



- h. The use of decorative hardscape materials, such as brick, flagstone, interlocking pavers, tile, stamped or colored concrete, and decomposed granite, are encouraged.
- i. In order to promote “walkable” neighborhoods, a pedestrian path should be provided to the front door connecting to the public sidewalk and separate from the driveway. Where no public sidewalk exists, pedestrian paths should continue to the street.
- j. Landscape planters lining driveways, walkways, and property lines are encouraged.
- k. Drought-tolerant and low water-using planting design should utilize a variety of drought resistant grasses, turf substitutes, or ground covers that maintain the appearance of a living, continuous planting area. Desert landscapes or rock garden designs are strongly discouraged.
- l. Landscaping should be layered with low planting used in the foreground proceeding back to the tallest in the background.
- m. Large planting sizes (36-inch box or greater), shrubs (5-gallon and 15-gallon), and groundcover are recommended to make a new dwelling look established and soften the visual impact of a build’s mass.
- n. Planting designs should take into account the long-term growth and expected maturity of trees, shrubs, and ground cover landscaping on a site. Plantings should also be grouped based on similar water, nutrient, and sun needs to ensure long-term growth and maturity.



*Example of impervious surface integrated into a driveway*



*Example of a drought-tolerant focused landscape*



*Large planting sizes and groundcover are recommended for new dwellings to soften the visual impact of building’s mass and give an established appearance*



## 18. Sample Planting Palette

The following sample planting palette is provided to give homeowners, designers, and landscape architects an idea of planting types appropriate to the City. Planting palettes should seek to conserve existing, established plant materials when designing a new planting palette for a home, where feasible. Also, borrowing from the existing planting theme from the surrounding neighborhood context of a home ensures the proposed landscape design fits into the existing context.

Recommended plantings include the following; however additional planting selections that are appropriate to the City are also encouraged:

(\* denotes trees that need a large area for root growth)



*Cinnamomum camphora* (Camphor Tree)



*Quercus agrifolia* (Coast Live Oak)



*Olea europaea* (Olive Tree)



*Lagerstroemia indica* (Crape Myrtle)

### 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)

### Specimen Trees:

- *Agonis fluxuosa* (Peppermint Tree)
- *Ginkgo biloba* (Maidenhair Tree)
- *Olea europaea* (Olive Tree)
- *Pinus eldarica* (Afghan Pine)
- *Pinus pinea* (Italian Stone Pine)\*
- *Podocarpus gracilior* (Fern Pine)
- *Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry Tree)

### 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)



- *Magnolia grandiflora*
- *Pyrus kawakamii* (Evergreen Pear)
- *Prunus cerasifera* (Flowering Plum)
- *Tabebuia impetiginosa* (Pink Trumpet Tree)
- *Brachychilton acerifolius* (Australian Flame Tree)
- *Chilopsis linearis* (Desert Willow)
- *Cotinus coggyria* (Smoke Tree)
- *Parkinsonia x Desert Museum* (Palo Verde Hybrid)

### Palm Trees:

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

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

- *Prunus ilicifolia* (Catalina Cherry)
- *Azalea ssp.* (Azalea)
- *Arbutus unedo* (Strawberry Tree)
- *Alyogyne heugelii* & cvs (Blue Hibiscus)
- *Bamboo ssp.*\*
- *Buddleia davidii* (Butterfly Bush)
- *Camellia ssp.* (Camellia)\*
- *Carpenteria californica* (Bush Anemone)
- *Cassia splendida* (Golden Wonder Senna)
- *Ceanothus var.* (Wild Lilac)
- *Cistus purpureus* (Orchid Rockrose)
- *Cocculus laurifolius* (Laurel Leaf)\*
- *Cotoneaster lacteus* (Red Clusterberry)
- *Echium fastuosum* (Pride of Madeira)
- *Escallonia ssp.*\*
- *Euphorbia characias 'Wulfenii'* (Mediterranean Spurge)
- *Euphorbia rigida* (Silver Spurge)
- *Grevillea ssp.*\*



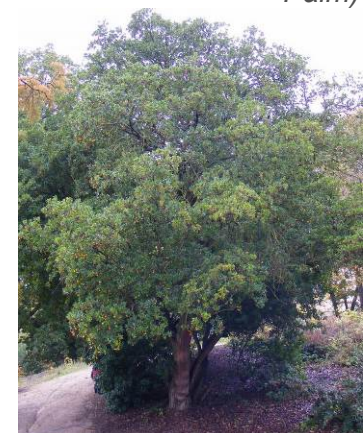
*Chilopsis linearis*  
(Desert Willow)



*Archontophoenix cunninghamiana*  
(King Palm)



*Washingtonia filifera*  
(California Fan Palm)



*Arbutus unedo*  
(Strawberry Tree)



*Buddleia davidii*  
(Butterfly Bush)



*Cocculus laurifolius*  
(Laurel Leaf)



## DESIGN GUIDELINES



*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*  
(Chinese Hibiscus)\*



*Osmanthus fragrans*  
(Sweet Olive)



*Salvia leucophylla*  
(Purple Sage)



*Cistus salviifolius*  
(Sageleaf Rockrose)



*Liriope muscari*  
(Big Blue Lily Turf)



*Trachelospermum jasminoides*  
(Star Jasmine)

- *Hibiscus rosa-sinensis* (Chinese Hibiscus)\*
- *Lomandra longifolia* (Mat Rush)
- *Myrtus communis* (True Myrtle)\*
- *Osmanthus fragrans* (Sweet Olive)
- *Podocarpus henkelii* (Long-Leaf Yellow-Wood)
- *Prunus caroliniana* (Carolina Laurel Cherry)\*
- *Pyracantha* ssp. (Firethorn)\*
- *Rosa* ssp. (Rose)
- *Salvia leucophylla* (Purple Sage)
- *Salvia mellifera* (Black Sage)
- *Salvia apiana* (White Sage)
- *Zauschneria californica* (California Fuchsia)

### Groundcovers:

- *Arctostaphylos hookeri* (Monterey Manzanita)
- *Ceanothus griseus horizontalis* (Carmel Creeper)
- *Cistus salviifolius* (Sageleaf Rockrose)
- *Cotoneaster dammeri* (Lowfast Bearberry)
- *Dymondia margaretae* (Silver Carpet)
- *Lantana* spp.
- *Liriope muscari* (Big Blue Lily Turf)
- *Mahonia repens* (Creeping Mahonia)
- *Pelargonium peltatum* (Ivy Geranium)
- *Rosmarinus officinalis* (Rosemary)
- *Salvia chamaedryoides* (Germander Sage)
- *Salvia 'Mrs Beard'* (Mrs. Beard Sage)
- *Santolina chamaecyparissus* (Lavender Cotton)
- *Trachelospermum jasminoides* (Star Jasmine)
- *Verbena* spp.

### 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:**

- *Agapanthus* (Lily of the Nile)
- *Agave spp.*
- *Aloe spp.*
- *Anigozanthos species & cultivars* (Kangaroo Paw)
- *Bulbine Frutescens*
- *Hemerocallis hybrids* (Daylily)
- *Iris spp.*
- *Kniphofia uvaria* (Red-hot Poker)
- *Lavandula spp.* (Lavender)
- *Penstemon spectabilis* (Showy Penstemon)
- *Salvia Greggii* (Autumn Sage)

**Ornamental Grass:**

- *Muhlenbergia rigens* (Deer Grass)
- *Muhlenbergia capillaris* (Pink Muhly)
- *Bouteloua gracillis* (Blue Grama Grass)
- *Festuca californica* (California Fescue)
- *Festuca idahoensis* (Idahoe Fescue)
- *Leymus condensatus 'Canyon Prince'* (Canyon Prince Wild Rye)



*Pyrostegia venusta*  
(Flame Vine)



*Thunbergia alata*  
(Black-eyed Susan Vine)



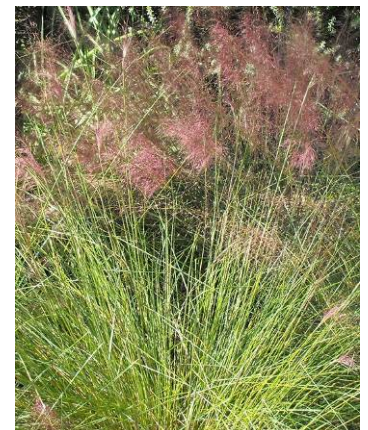
*Bulbine Frutescens*



*Kniphofia uvaria*  
(Red-hot Poker)



*Muhlenbergia rigens*



(Deer Grass)