

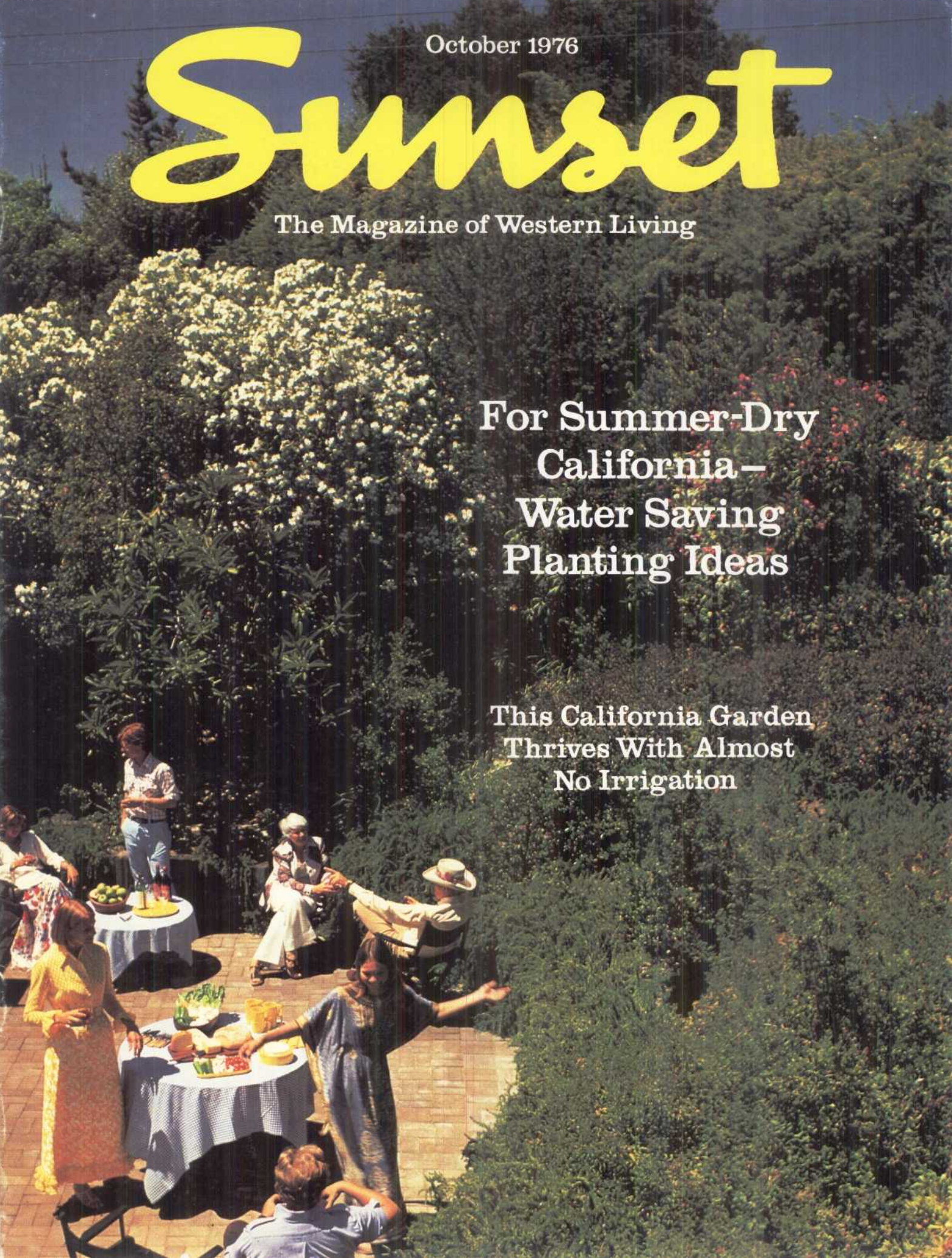
October 1976

# Sunset

The Magazine of Western Living

For Summer-Dry  
California—  
Water Saving  
Planting Ideas

This California Garden  
Thrives With Almost  
No Irrigation

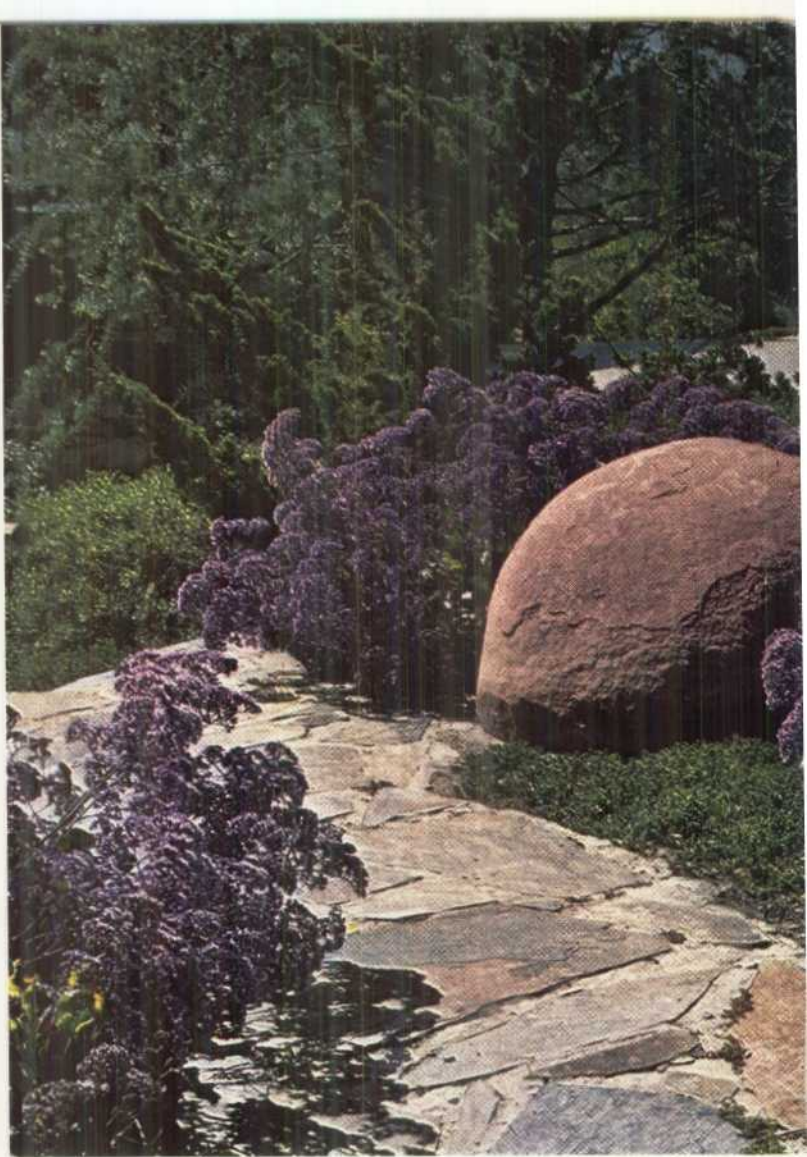






GLENN CHRISTIANSEN

**No-water trio in April:** Yellow-headed shrub-tree is *Cytisus racemosus*, with gazania ground cover, eucalyptus, in Menlo Park, California



WILLIAM APLIN

**Arid pair in June:** Purple dome plants are *Limonium perezii*. All-green ground cover is *Baccharis pilularis*. They're in the garden of Mrs. Patricia Weinberger, Ojai, California

# Good looking...unthirsty

Here are dozens of don't-need-a-drink-all-summer plants to help you with watering and even garden survival in summer-dry California, Arizona

**Call them** drought-tolerant or drought-resistant or unthirsty—these are the plants that can grow well with little or no water beyond what nature provides. They are the plants that many Western gardeners probably will want to turn to more and more.

California's low rainfall winter of

1975-76 brought serious water shortages to some districts (Santa Barbara to Sonoma County) and awakened Californians elsewhere to the fact that in time they could be in the same predicament. In Tucson a falling water table threatens the city's wells.

When you set out to save water in the

garden, sooner or later you must reckon with the thirstiness of plants—whether landscaping a new garden, relandscaping an existing one, or just routinely replacing plants that have run their course. The West's best unthirsty plants are what you see here, on our cover, and on the pages that follow. Their water needs vary





**Yellow-flowered kniphofias** bloom above another bed of *Baccharis pilularis*; July, Santa Rosa, California. Design: Lester Hawkins

NORMAN A. PLATE



**Seldom-watered bank of aloes**—five kinds (count them) in March, West Los Angeles. Design by Dave Verity



PETER O. WHITELEY

**Two low plants** that give the most for the least water—santolina (yellow flowers), rosemary (it's out of bloom, foreground)



—and much depends on your climate— but most can get along on no water once established.

There's a substantial reason for planting these plants in October: In the next four to six months, most Western gardens will get all the free water (rain) that they're going to get for a year. Even if the





DON NORMARK

**Trailing gazania** under palo verde tree. Howard Kroehl garden, Tucson. Design: Warren D. Jones



**Fountain grass**, 3 feet high, 4 feet wide, blooms in June



**It's July**—no water since last rain in April. *Coreopsis verticillata*

WILLIAM APLIN



**Flower of Matilija poppy** (*Romneya coulteria*), 6 inches wide, May to July



**Famous dry plant** in coastal Southern California, *Echium fastuosum*

PETER O. WHITELEY

NORMAN A. PLATE

JERRY FREDRICK



**Smoke tree** (*Cotinus coggygria*) makes these big puffs in summer. No water



**Tree is Parkinsonia aculeata**, ground cover is baccharis. No irrigation ever

STEVE W. MARLEY



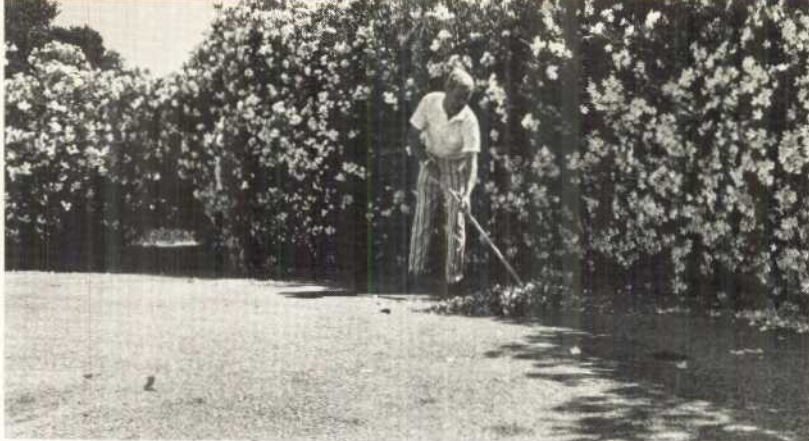
**The same lavender** that goes with old lace is a tough drought fighter

**He's looking** at *Cistus villosus* flowers; they bloom May to July on rainfall alone





## Unthirsty doesn't mean unlovely. Consider the lavender or the Matilija. Or the cistus



A hedge of oleander (single-flowered white—one of a dozen kinds) in July. No watering needed, once established

rainfall is less than normal, it will irrigate newly-set-out plants without diminishing local supplies.

For those desert climates that get summer rainfall, fall is the best planting season because plants establish themselves in winter when there's the least stress from heat.

Planting doesn't have to take place only within October's 31 days. November, December, and January will also do.

### The Mediterranean climate plants

Charts on the next four pages describe the 92 nursery-available plants that do the best job of living through California's typical five to seven-month dry season without being watered.

About 25 percent of these best drought-tolerant plants are native in the arid West, mostly in California. California—except for the mountains and deserts—has a Mediterranean climate. Another 37 percent are from the world's five other Mediterranean climates.

A Mediterranean climate is one with mild wet winters and mostly rainless summers. Besides California, the other five are: the lands around the Mediterranean Sea, part of South Africa, the coast of Western Australia, part of South Australia, and part of coastal Chile.

Chapters of the California Native Plant Society are staging two big plant sales this month. They'd be good places to buy some of the drought-tolerant plants. (But remember that not all California native plants will tolerate drought.)

In Oakland on October 7, the San Francisco Bay Area chapter sale will be at Merritt College, Redwood Road and Campus Drive, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

In Riverside on October 30, the Southern California chapter sale will be held at the U.S. Forest Service Forest Fire Laboratory, 4955 Canyon Crest Drive, from 10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

### How to get the plants established

"Once established" is the zinger in the heading of the last column in the charts, the "how unthirsty?" column.

Obviously, no plant could make it through a rainless summer if it was just removed from its container and planted. To become drought-tolerant a plant must grow its roots down to the soil level where some moisture from winter rain remains far into the dry season. You must help them grow to that level.

The deeper and more permeable the soil, and the more rain it gets during the rainy season, the more likely a drought-tolerant plant is to survive.

Other factors that help determine survival or nonsurvival are: the plant's inherent ability to root deep and do other things that minimize water loss; how hot or how windy it gets in the dry season—the hotter or windier, the more difficult survival is; the kind of soil (clay holds water longer than sand); the presence of mulches or the practice of regular cultivation (both retain moisture below).

As a general rule, water drought-tolerant plants during the first winter and spring if rains aren't frequent and heavy enough to keep the soil damp. And water them heavily two, three, or four times during their first dry season. By their second summer, most such plants should not need water. But some may.

We assume that the winter of 1975-76 was just a freak and that weather patterns will return to what we consider normal. This past summer, some long-established drought-tolerant plants died—presumably because there wasn't enough rainfall during the preceding winter to supply the deep reservoirs from which the plants had previously taken their dry-season survival juice.

### Your climate zone—basic information

The Pacific Ocean, our hills and mountains, and the latitude (distance from the equator) prevail as the basic determiners of which plants grow where. Mostly, climate zones are defined by how much cold a spot gets in winter.

Climate zones in the charts are from the *Sunset Western Garden Book*. Briefly, this is what the zone numbers mean:

**1, 2, and 3.** The coldest-winter climates in the West; with snow every winter.

**4, 5, and 6.** Climates west of the Cascades in the Pacific Northwest.

**7.** In California, the foothill elevations where Digger pines grow.

**8, 9.** The Great Central Valley's colder and milder parts, respectively.

**10, 11.** High deserts in Arizona and California, respectively.

**12, 13.** Intermediate and low deserts respectively.

**14.** Cold-winter valleys with some coastal influence: Ukiah, Santa Rosa, Sacramento, Walnut Creek, Woodside, Gilroy, King City, Santa Ynez.

**15, 16, 17.** Northern California's coast and Bay Area, coldest to mildest parts respectively.

**18, 19.** Interior Southern California, coldest (Northridge, Chino) and mildest (Encino, Ontario) respectively.

**20, 21.** Intermediate Southern California, coldest (Burbank, El Monte) and mildest (Pasadena, Escondido) respectively.

**22, 23.** Subtropical Southern California, coldest (Inglewood, Fountain Valley) and mildest (Beverly Hills, Fallbrook) respectively.

**24.** Southern California beaches.

On the next 4 pages  
we chart 92  
plants noted for  
drought tolerance

What do the charts mean when they say "climate zones" and "... once established?" Read the explanations on this page.



|  | Where from?                       | Climate zones     | Size  | Performance   | How easy to get?                   | How unthirsty once established?  |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Achillea</b><br>Yarrow                        | Northern Hemisphere               | All               | 1-foot mat to 5-foot plant                    | Erect stem with aromatic green or gray ferny leaves and flat-headed clusters of yellow or white flowers   | Fairly easy                        | Very unthirsty but typically it collapses late summer, comes back after rains                            |
| <b>Aloe</b>                                      | South Africa mostly               | 8, 9, 12-24       | 12 to 18 feet high                            | Picture at upper right on page 79 shows a bunch of aloes and what they do   | You must shop around               | Can shrink and curl up from absolute drought but perks up with watering                                  |
| <b>Callistemon citrinus</b><br>Lemon bottlebrush | Australia                         | 8, 9, 12-24       | 25 feet high, 15 feet wide                    | Massive shrub, small pruned tree, hedge, or espalier. Flowers are abundant, bright red brushes  | Easy                               | Completely unthirsty if soil is deep and you wean it gradually   |
| <b>Cassia artemisioides</b><br>Feathery cassia   | Australia                         | 8, 9, 12-24       | 3 to 5 feet high                              | Light, airy evergreen shrub   | Sometimes easy                     | Shows <b>yellow flowers</b><br>Holds up through whatever California summers can throw at it              |
| <b>Centranthus ruber</b><br>Red valerian         | Mediterranean                     | All               | To 3 feet high                                | See them in vacant lots and along railroad tracks. Selected varieties can be well worth growing—reds, pinks, whites   | Not often sold                     | Dependable spring bloom annually with no irrigation, usually collapses in late summer                    |
| <b>Cistus</b><br>Rockrose                        | Mediterranean                     | 7-9, 12-24        | 2 to 6 feet high, 6 feet wide                 | Picture at bottom of page 80 was taken at end of spring flowering season. At peak, plants have more flowers   | Fairly easy                        | When really dry the leaves fold up tight—but plants always survive                                       |
| <b>Convolvulus cneorum</b><br>Bush morning glory | Mediterranean                     | 7-9, 12-24        | 2 to 4 feet high and as wide                  | Silvery shrub flowers in abundance. Good on banks with cistus   | Usually available                  | Shows <b>Flowers all summer</b><br>May get along on no water or may benefit from monthly waterings       |
| <b>Cortaderia selloana</b><br>Pampas grass       | Argentina                         | 4-24              | 8 to 20 feet high                             | Big white plumes ride above broad clumps of big tough grassy leaves. Can become a nuisance  | Very easy                          | Not a desert plant. Give it some water in the dry season if it looks tacky                               |
| <b>Coreopsis verticillata</b>                    | Eastern U.S.                      | All               | 2½ feet high and wide                         | See it at top right, page 80. A plant for rock gardens or flower borders. Bare in winter  | Mail-order it from east            | Completely unthirsty as are most of the other kinds of coreopsis   |
| <b>Cotinus coggygria</b><br>Smoke tree           | S. Europe to Asia                 | All               | 8 to 25 feet high                             | See it at lower left, page 80. Use it as a singular summertime showpiece. Bare in winter  | Some nurseries sell it             | Very unthirsty. It may look better if you water it   |
| <b>Cytisus and Spartium</b><br>Broom             | Europe, Canary Islands            | 5-9, 11-24        | 3 to 8 feet high, 4 to 6 feet wide            | See one kind upper left, page 78; others bloom red, purplish, cream, white. Plants usually have many stems. Mass them for dramatic spring color display           | Easy                               | Very unthirsty. Many brooms naturalize in our dry hills  |
| <b>Echium fastuosum</b><br>Pride of Madeira      | Canary Islands                    | 7-9, 14-24        | 3 to 6 feet high, many widths                 | See it at center of page 80. Showy near or far. Best on coast   | Fairly easy                        | Shows <b>Great bank plant</b><br>Very. Plant it on a slope—on a flat it would drown from too much water  |
| <b>Escallonia</b>                                | Chile                             | 14-17, 20-24      | 3 to 15 feet high                             | Evergreen shrubs with glossy leaves and white, pink, or red flowers in clusters. Good screen or hedge   | Easy                               | Quite unthirsty  |
| <b>Eriogonum</b><br>Buckwheat                    | California chaparral              | 7, 13-24          | 1 to 6 or 8 feet tall, 1 to 5 feet wide       | Clouds of tiny flowers in pale yellow, pink, red, or white. They dry to clouds of buff or brown; good for flower arrangements                                     | Scarce, but obtainable with effort | Very unthirsty. Once established needs no water; must have good drainage; self-sows                      |
| <b>Fremontodendron</b><br>Fremontia              | California foothills              | 7-9, 14-24        | 6 to 20 feet tall, about as wide              | Spectacular show of big, bright yellow flowers over a long season in spring, early summer   | Spottily available                 | Wants <i>no</i> summer water. Needs good drainage. No good in desert                                     |
| <b>Garrya elliptica</b>                          | California coast and coast ranges | 6-9, 14-21        | 4 to 8 feet, possibly 30-foot tree            | Attractive foliage; looks like evergreen oak. Male plants have attractive long flower catkins   | Fairly easy in northern California | Shows <b>Likes the coast</b><br>Thrives without water in sun or light shade. Tolerates summer water, too |
| <b>Kniphofia uvaria</b><br>Red-hot poker         | South Africa                      | 1-9, 14-24        | Flowers to 6 feet, 4-foot leaf clump          | See young plants of yellow-flowered kind at lower left, page 79. Red form is more common  | An over-the-fence plant            | If it gets a wet winter it will perform through any summer   |
| <b>Lantana</b>                                   | Tropics around the world          | 12, 13, 15-22     | 1 to 6 feet high, can spread for miles        | The fewer the frosts, the better lantana can cover the landscape. Profuse display of 2-inch flower clusters (choose from many colors) through all the warm months | Easy                               | As drought tolerant as most plants described here  |
| <b>Lavandula</b><br>Lavender                     | Mediterranean                     | All               | To 3 or 4 feet high and across                | See one kind on right-hand side of page 80. Plant beds of it or mix with other colorful drought resisters   | Fairly easy                        | Reasonably drought tolerant, but should be watched   |
| <b>Limonium perezii</b><br>Sea lavender          | Mediterranean, Europe, Asia       | 13, 16, 17, 20-24 | 12-inch leaves and flower spikes up to 3 feet | See it across top of pages 78 and 79. Supplies purple in summer and even blooms in winter in mild places  | Easy                               | Shows <b>Its name is purple</b><br>Never seems to suffer   |
| <b>Nerium oleander</b><br>Oleander               | Mediterranean                     | 8-16, 18-23       | 8 to 12 feet high and as wide                 | See it on the cover (a white and a red) and as a hedge on page 81. Use as screen, hedge, bank plant   | Very easy                          | Freeway plants get watered but many private ones don't—they all look the same                            |
| <b>Ochna serrulata</b><br>Mickey Mouse plant     | Tropical Africa                   | 14-24             | 4 to 8 feet tall and across                   | Year-round performer. Yellow flowers, red and black fruit, angular branch pattern. Good espalier, feature plant   | Supply is improving                | Has survived 3 years in abandoned gardens. Thrives with once-a-month watering                            |



|  |                                   |               |  |   |   |                           |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------|--|---|---|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Pennisetum setaceum</b><br>Fountain grass                       | North Africa                      | All           | 2 to 4-foot clumps                               | See it at top center, page 80. Use it singly or in mass for its fuzzy display   |   | Fairly easy               | Self-sows even in desert. Can look dry and dreary with absolutely no water   |
| <b>Plumbago auriculata</b><br>Cape plumbago                        | South Africa                      | 8, 9, 12-24   | To 6 feet high, 8 to 10 feet wide                | Cool blue or white flowers in hottest weather. Boundary plant, bank cover   | <b>In summer looks cool</b>             | Easy                      | Survives with no water during dry season   |
| <b>Poinciana gilliesii</b><br>Bird of paradise bush                | South America                     | 8-16, 18-23   | 10 feet high and nearly as wide                  | Filmy foliage, attractive structure, exotic-looking yellow flowers with long red stamens. All-summer bloom  |   | Fairly easy               | Has gone native in Southern California and Arizona. Takes what you give it   |
| <b>Romneya coulteri</b><br>Matilija poppy                          | Southern California, Mexico       | 5-10, 12-24   | Long stems reaching to 8 feet or more            | See a single flower at center of page 80. Flowers grow individually at top of vertical stems—many of them. Grows and shows well on banks or flats |   | Scarcer than it should be | Quite unthirsty. If it gets ratty looking after bloom, cut it back   |
| <b>Satureja montana</b><br>Winter savory                           | Mediterranean                     | All           | 6 to 15 inches high, spreading                   | An edging plant. Aromatic olive-green leaves (good for flavoring) and white to lilac flowers at branch ends                                       |   | Sold some as an herb      | Try it first with monthly waterings. It might get along with even less   |
| <b>Teucrium fruticans</b><br>Bush germander                        | Mediterranean                     | 4-24          | 4 to 8 feet high and as wide                     | Silvery shrub with blue flowers. Makes good hedge or screen   | <b>Good hedge</b>                       | One nursery in three      | Looks best with two or three waterings in a summer   |
| <b>Agave</b>   | Mexico, tropical America          | 12-24         | 1 to 6 feet high, flower spikes often to 40 feet | Thick, fleshy, long-pointed leaves in clumps. Some have spines on sides of leaves. Succulent  |   | Easy                      | Shrivels from serious drought but plumps up again when watered or rained on  |
| <b>Arbutus unedo</b><br>Strawberry tree                            | S. Europe, Ireland                | 4-24          | 8 to 35 feet high and as wide                    | Grows as a large shrub, or prune to make it a tree. Good screen plant, too  | <b>Nice big green blob</b>              | Easy                      | Can grow on rainfall alone   |
| <b>Artemisia</b><br>Wormwood                                       | Northern Hemisphere               | All           | 1 to 15 feet                                     | Low woody perennials to big shrubs. Some grown for attractive silvery to white leaves, others for flavoring                                       |   | Available if you search   | Silvery sheen develops best under drought conditions   |
| <b>Atriplex</b><br>Saltbush  | Dry climates around world         | 8, 9, 14-24   | 1 to 7 feet high, 1 to 8 wide                    | Many kinds, all with gray or silvery foliage. Many are fire resistant. Tough but monotonous   |   | Shop to find it           | Never suffers from dryness but does suffer from watering   |
| <b>Centaurea gymnocarpa</b>  | Caprera Is., near Sardinia        | 8-24          | 18 to 24 inches high and as wide                 | Nice little plant makes ferny white feltlike leaves; a plant to feel  | <b>White felty leaves</b>               | Usually available         | Monthly watering may be needed   |
| <b>Dodonaea viscosa</b><br>Hopseed bush                            | Arizona and other warm climates   | 7-9, 12-24    | 12 feet high, 6 to 8 wide                        | Willowlike green or bronze-purple leaves 4 inches long grow from many upright stems   |   | Easy                      | An exemplary no-irrigation shrub. Needs some irrigation in desert  |
| <b>Elaeagnus</b>   | Around the world                  | 1-9, 14-24    | Mostly very big shrubs                           | Serves as screen plant with very little upkeep. Dull green foliage with metallic dusting  |   | Easy                      | Will make it through summer with no water in most places but not in desert   |
| <b>Pittosporum</b><br>(some species)                               | Australia, Asia, South Africa     | 12-24         | 12 to 25 feet high                               | Grow these evergreens for foliage and form. Very popular ornamentals  | <b>Some are tough enough for desert</b> | Very easy                 | <i>P. phillyraeoides</i> is tough, naturalizes in desert. <i>P. viridiflorum</i> , <i>P. crassifolium</i> also tough. Others suffer drought, but recover |
| <b>Portulacaria afra</b><br>Elephant's food                        | South Africa                      | 16, 17, 22-24 | 4 to 20 feet high and as wide                    | Unique, especially with age. From hefty trunks grow limber red stems carrying small, roundish, succulent leaves                                   |   | Easy to get little ones   | Very unthirsty. Grows in sun or black shade  |
| <b>Prunus lyoni</b> , <b>P. ilicifolia</b> , <b>P. caroliniana</b> | Southern California, eastern U.S. | 7-24          | 6 to 40 feet high                                | Attractive, densely foliated evergreens that make good screens or clipped hedges and don't look drought resistant                                 |   | Very easy                 | They make it unwatered with no visible distress  |
| <b>Rhamnus alaternus</b> , <b>R. crocea ilicifolia</b>             | Mediterranean, California         | 7-24          | To 15 feet high                                  | <i>R. alaternus</i> is a fast-growing screen or hedge plant. <i>R. crocea ilicifolia</i> has singular character                                   | <b>Quick screen or hedge</b>            | Fairly easy               | No trouble   |
| <b>Rhus ovata</b><br>Sugar bush                                    | Southwestern U.S.                 | 7-24          | 2½ to 10 feet high and as wide                   | Glossy-leaved, willing evergreen shrub. Pinkish white flowers in spring followed by reddish berries with a sweet-tasting crust                    |   | Five growers offer it     | Needs no summer water at all   |
| <b>Senecio cineraria</b><br>Dusty miller                           | Mediterranean                     | All           | 1 to 3 feet high and spreading                   | Silvery shrub grown for its woolly-white leaves and yellow flowers  |   | Spottily available        | Will survive all but driest summers without water  |
| <b>Xylosma congestum</b>   | Southeast China                   | 8-24          | 8 to 10 feet high and often wider                | Graceful, spreading evergreen shrub with shiny, light green foliage   | <b>Both graceful and tough</b>          | Sold everywhere           | Will survive any dryness but might look sparse during the worst  |
| <b>Yucca</b>   | North America                     | All           | 2 to 20 feet or more                             | Clusters of sword-shaped leaves; stemless shrub or tree, showy white or whitish flower spikes   |   | Fairly easy               | Can be dry all summer and give no indication of trouble  |



|   | Where from?    | Climate zones | Size                                   | Performance   |                                   | How easy to get?       | How unthirsty once established?                                |
|---|----------------|---------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| <b>Bougainvillea</b>                          | South America  | 12-24         | Big mound or huge vine                 | Evergreen vine, ground cover, or lumpy shrub with showy blooms  | <b>The older the less thirsty</b> | Very easy              | Becomes really drought resistant once the stems become woody   |
| <b>Campsis</b><br>Trumpet creeper             | China and U.S. | All           | Can bury a house or a back yard        | Clinging vine or invasive ground cover. Pretty (orange to red flowers, late summer) and tough           |                                   | Some nurseries sell it | Grows on in abandoned gardens and places that get no water     |
| <b>Solanum hartwegii</b><br>Cup-of-gold vine  | Mexico         | 15-24         | One vine can run 40 feet along an eave | Frost-tender evergreen vine. Large glossy leaves, large yellow flowers in spring                        | <b>Likes a warm wall</b>          | Fairly easy            | Becomes drought resistant when stems get woody                 |
| <b>Solanum jasminoides</b><br>Potato vine     | South America  | 8, 9, 14-24   | To 30 feet                             | Evergreen, shiny dark foliage, beautiful white flowers the year around                                  |                                   | Fairly easy            | May do better with monthly waterings than with no water at all |
| <b>Tecomaria capensis</b><br>Cape honeysuckle | South Africa   | 12-13, 16-24  | A sprawling bush or a fence vine       | Fine-textured evergreen. Clusters of orange-red flowers, fall, winter                                   | <b>Grow it on a fence</b>         | Easy                   | Very unthirsty, very long-lived                                |
| <b>Vitis vinifera</b><br>Wine grape           | Europe, Asia   | 7-24          | With training to 10 feet or more       | Perfect vine for Mediterranean climates; provides shade in summer and ripe grapes in October. Deciduous |                                   | Very easy              | Deep rooted, withstands long dry periods                       |
| <b>Wisteria</b>                               | Japan, China   | All           | Can reach 100 feet or more             | Rampant deciduous woody vine provides grand spring flower show  | <b>The spring star</b>            | Very easy              | Drought-stressed plants often bloom better than watered plants |

|   |                                  |              |   |  |                                  |                      |  |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------|---|--|----------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| <b>Acacia—</b><br>certain species                                 | Mostly Australia                 | 7-9, 13-24   | Large shrubs to small trees                   | Profuse sprays of bright yellow or gold flowers, January to March. Excellent hedge, screen, windbreak                                    |                                  | Many kinds available | Most kinds make it through summer without looking bedraggled                           |
| <b>Casuarina</b><br>Beefwood                                      | Australia                        | 7-9, 11-24   | 20 to 60 feet                                 | Cypress lookalike with olive drab color. Tolerates heat and wind. Useful in coastal and desert areas                                     |                                  | Takes a search       | Pretty much on its own   |
| <b>Cedrus deodara</b>   | Himalayas                        | 4-12, 14-24  | Huge. Allow for 40-foot-diameter branch sweep | Graceful big gray-green tree with bent-over top. Nice in all ways for the right climates, but its hugeness limits its use in landscaping |                                  | Very easy            | Roots probably go as deep as its branches grow wide—no grief from lack of summer water |
| <b>Ceratonia siliqua</b><br>Carob                                 | Mediterranean                    | 13-16, 18-23 | Big shrub or tree to 40 feet                  | Worthy plant with dense dark green foliage and big leathery edible pods  | <b>Pods taste like chocolate</b> | Easy                 | Does better without summer water than with it  |
| <b>Cercis occidentalis</b><br>Western redbud                      | Western U.S.                     | 2, 9, 14-24  | Small tree, several trunks, to 20 feet        | Red flowers in spring, blue-green leaves and red bean pods in summer, fall-colored foliage, bare in winter                               |                                  | Search for it        | Grows wild in California to Utah with no summer water at all                           |
| <b>Cercidium</b><br>Palo verde                                    | Deserts of Southwest             | 10-13, 18-20 | To 25 feet and as wide                        | Bright yellow flower display in spring. Intricate branch pattern. Choice desert tree   |                                  | Easy in low desert   | At home under drought conditions   |
| <b>Cupressus glabra</b><br>Arizona cypress                        | Northern Hemisphere              | 8-24         | 20 to 40 feet high                            | Small scalelike evergreen leaves. Quickly becomes big part of landscape  | <b>Grows tall fast</b>           | Easy                 | Unusually drought resistant  |
| <b>Eriobotrya japonica</b><br>Loquat                              | China                            | 4-24         | 15 to 30 feet high                            | Evergreen tree, leathery leaves, tasty fruits; see one on the cover right above head of the standing man                                 |                                  | Easy                 | Takes drought in coastal climates (zones 14-17, 20-24)                                 |
| <b>Eucalyptus</b>   | Australia                        | 8-24         | Sprawling shrubs to towering trees            | Sturdy trees—some with colorful flowers, others have interesting foliage. Use tall ones as windbreaks or screens                         |                                  | Very easy            | Most are drought resistant, some extremely so  |
| <b>Geijera parvifolia</b>   | Australia                        | 7-24         | To 30 feet high, 20 feet wide                 | Fine-textured tree with graceful way of hanging all leaves down  | <b>Tough Australian</b>          | Fairly easy          | Considered <i>very</i> drought resistant in the dry interior of Australia              |
| <b>Hakea</b><br>(tree types)                                      | Australia                        | 9, 12-24     | 10 to 20 feet                                 | Popular barrier and screen tree. Dense, dark green foliage. Showy clusters of flowers on <i>H. laurina</i>                               |                                  | Easy                 | Holds up great all summer  |
| <b>Heteromeles arbutifolia</b><br>Toyon                           | Foothills of California and Baja | 5-24         | Shrub to 10 feet or multitrunked 25-foot tree | Toothy, glossy green leaves and abundant colorful red winter berries. One of few chaparral plants to grow in desert                      |                                  | Fairly easy          | Lives on just the rain in California but needs supplementary water in the desert       |
| <b>Juglans hindsii</b><br>California black walnut                 | Northern California              | 5-9, 14-20   | 30 to 60 feet                                 | Deciduous tree with broad crown, many leaflets. Edible nuts. Always has aphids—drop sticky stuff   | <b>Don't park under it</b>       | Shop for it          | Famous as an unirrigated roadside tree in northern California                          |
| <b>Lyonthamnus floribundus asplenifolius</b><br>Catalina ironwood | Channel Islands                  | 15-17, 19-24 | 30 to 60 feet high, 20 to 40 feet wide        | Evergreens with long, scallop-edged leaves, bark like redwoods, small white flowers  |                                  | Often available      | As drought resistant as our native oaks  |



|   |                         |                |                                 |  |                           |                               |  |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Melaleuca linarifolia</b> ,<br><b>M. styphelioides</b> | Australia               | 9,<br>13-24    | 20 to 40 feet                   | See them (even nursery youngsters) to appreciate their feathery foliage. Later, you get unique bark and flowers  |                           | Easy                          | Very unthirsty   |
| <b>Olea europaea</b><br>Olive                             | Mediterranean           | 7-24           | 25 to 30 feet                   | Choice tree with picturesque branch structure and willow foliage. Fruit is bonus to some, nuisance to others     |                           | Very easy                     | Holds up well; many old abandoned trees make it on their own   |
| <b>Palms</b>  | Mild climates worldwide | 5-24           | 20 to 100 feet high             | Since civilization began palms have given the soft, lush oasis look  | <b>Tall to lofty</b>      | Easy                          | <i>Chamaerops</i> , <i>Erythea</i> , <i>Phoenix</i> , and <i>Washingtonia</i> can do it with no irrigation |
| <b>Parkinsonia aculeata</b><br>Mexican palo verde         | American tropics        | 11-24          | 15 to 30 feet high and as wide  | See it on page 80 growing in a big bed of <i>Baccharis pilularis</i>   |                           | Easy in desert, hard on coast | Long dry seasons don't faze it   |
| <b>Pinus</b><br>Pines                                     | Northern Hemisphere     | All            | 30 to 80 feet or more           | Evergreens for practically any situation. Need little care, although pruning can improve shape of some varieties |                           | Very easy                     | Many, particularly <i>P. halepensis</i> and <i>P. pinea</i> , tolerate long drought                        |
| <b>Pistacia chinensis</b><br>Chinese pistache             | China                   | 8-16,<br>18-23 | To 60 feet high, 50 feet wide   | Reliable deciduous tree that gives nice foliage color in autumn  | <b>Great autumn color</b> | Fairly easy                   | In deep soils it can thrive on no summer water at all  |
| <b>Quercus</b><br>Oaks                                    | Northern Hemisphere     | All            | 30 to 90 feet                   | Evergreen or deciduous; an oak will become the dominant plant in its garden                                      |                           | Very easy                     | Deep tap roots get water from many feet down   |
| <b>Rhus lancea</b>  | South Africa            | 8, 9,<br>12-24 | To 25 feet, spreading           | Slow-growing evergreen with slightly weeping habit. Use as a single or multi-trunked tree or as a clipped hedge  |                           | Very easy in desert           | Drought resistant but also thrives in lawns  |
| <b>Robinia</b> (tree forms)<br>Locust                     | North America           | All            | 40 to 70 feet high              | Deciduous, fast, tough, brittle. Divided leaves, white or pink flowers   | <b>It's aggressive</b>    | Easy                          | Takes much drought   |
| <b>Schinus molle</b><br>California pepper                 | American tropics        | 8, 9,<br>12-24 | 25 to 40 feet with equal spread | Billowy, weeping tree is tough, dependable performer. Produces little rosy berries. Messy but worth it           |                           | Easy                          | Takes drought easily. Some older trees are very much at home in abandoned areas                            |
| <b>Sequoiadendron giganteum</b><br>Big tree               | Sierra Nevada           | All            | Biggest in the world            | Massive evergreen tree is densely foliated, symmetrical, surprisingly easy to live with for one so famous        |                           | Easy                          | If soil is deep, drought is no problem   |
| <b>Tamarix aphylla</b><br>Salt cedar                      | Asia                    | All            | 30 to 50 feet                   | Fast-growing, excellent windbreak tree. Very competitive roots—not for a cherished garden                        |                           | You can get it                | Perhaps the world's most drought-resistant tree. In Australia, it out-famed eucalyptus                     |

GROUND COVER

|  |                           |           |   |   |                      |           |   |
|--|---------------------------|-----------|---|---|----------------------|-----------|---|
| <b>Baccharis pilularis</b><br>Dwarf coyote brush     | Northern California coast | 7-24      | 8 to 24-inch billowy mat with 6-foot spread | See it at top and bottom on page 79 and under the parkinsonia on page 80. High-growing ground cover or low-growing foliage mass |                      | Very easy | Needs no water at all wherever trees grow naturally. In hot barren places, needs some |
| <b>Gazania</b>                                       | South Africa              | 8-24      | 6 to 8 inches high                          | See it at upper left on page 78 and at upper left on page 80. Colorful ground cover in spring and early summer                  |                      | Very easy | Unthirsty in mild-summer coastal climates. Elsewhere, drought collapses it in summer  |
| <b>Hypericum calycinum</b><br>Creeping St. Johnswort | Asia Minor                | 2-24      | 1 foot high                                 | Evergreen with 4-inch-long leaves, bright yellow 3-inch flowers   | <b>It's invasive</b> | Easy      | Known to be unthirsty where the coast influences the climate                          |
| <b>Rosmarinus officinalis</b><br>Rosemary            | Mediterranean             | 4-24      | 2 to 6 feet tall, 4 to 8 feet wide          | See it at base of bank on cover and at lower right, page 79. In spring, profusions of lavender-blue flowers                     |                      | Very easy | Really outstanding performance in most drought situations                             |
| <b>Santolina chamaecyparissus</b>                    | Mediterranean             | All zones | Can reach 2 feet                            | See it at lower right on page 79. Attractive with or without yellow flowers. Aromatic foliage                                   |                      | Easy      | Generally better under drought conditions than when watered                           |

MANY FORMS

|                             |                     |                |  |  |                          |             |   |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--|--|--------------------------|-------------|---|
| <b>Ceanothus</b>            | California mostly   | 5-9,<br>15-24  | 2-inch-high mat to 14-foot shrub-tree      | Dark green evergreen foliage is perfect background for its spring blue flowers (many shades)   | <b>Great slope cover</b> | Fairly easy | Totally unthirsty   |
| <b>Cotoneaster</b>          | China mostly        | All            | Ground cover to 20-foot fountain-ing shrub | Evergreen and deciduous, mostly with oval leaves shorter than an inch, white flowers followed by red berries. Vigorous, easy to maintain |                          | Easy        | Can get by on no water if soil and climate are right                  |
| <b>Grevillea</b>            | Australia           | 8, 9,<br>12-24 | Low, ground-covering shrub to 60-foot tree | Many forms—all evergreen, with fine-textured foliage and long, slender, curved flowers (red, pink, white, cream) in dense clusters       |                          | Fairly easy | All are unthirsty; more kinds succeed on coast than inland            |
| <b>Juniperus</b><br>Juniper | Northern Hemisphere | All            | Ground covers 2 inches high, shrubs, trees | All have needlelike or scalelike foliage and fleshy berrylike cones. Susceptible to various mites and insects but otherwise amenable     |                          | Easy        | Pretty unthirsty but you don't know they're in trouble until they die |





DON NORMARK

**River rock and rosemary** make an unthirsty ground-cover spread in this good-looking desert garden in Tucson. Landscape architect was Warren D. Jones



NORMAN A. PLATE

**Nonthirsty deck** replaced beds of annuals. Deck contains plants in containers. Trimmed xylosma hedge in background is watered once a month. Landscape architect was Roy Rydell



**Rock and masonry** combine here to provide walls and floor for a desert garden. It's an unthirsty, good-looking entryway. Landscape architect was Thomas C. Zimmerman for the Robert Langs of Phoenix

## Instead of a big thirsty lawn

There are many other good-looking ways to go, among them crushed rock, bricks in sand, unthirsty ground covers, or a small lawn





PETER O. WHITELEY

**Truck spreads** crushed granite in even, thin layer, saves gardener-owner hours of wheelbarrow and shovel work. Metal rake (right photograph) is ideal tool for final spreading of rock, also for freshening the look of older, settled-in rock areas

When there's water in abundance, there will be lawns. But where water is now limited, or is likely to be in the future, you may want to look at alternatives. On these two pages we show several ways gardeners in arid areas of the West are attractively covering level garden areas in an unthirsty manner.

Crushed rock and gravel are one answer. These materials can be stylish, even elegant, and there are other advantages: The rock is relatively cheap and widely available, and a rock cover allows what rain you get to enter the soil, instead of running off. Bark and wood chips also soak up rain with no runoff. Brick on sand is almost as water absorptive. All these have the added advantage of keeping the soil cool and thereby reducing evaporation. Weed growth can be greatly controlled by spraying or putting down plastic film under the cover, perforated here and there for drainage.

Decks also shade the soil and allow what rain you do get to drip down between the boards. Tree and shrub roots growing under the structure also get excess water dripping from containers you water on the deck.

Lawns are the thirsty ground cover. One useful idea is to cut back on lawn area. In some situations, a small lawn with a definite shape—square, rectangular, even round—becomes a special place. It helps to edge it with a wood or masonry mowing strip.

The grass you take out can be replaced with unthirsty ground covers, with paving, or with deck. □

**A green 10 by 24-foot island**, this small lawn provides a soft play surface and a cool color expanse, uses little water. Landscape architect was Roy Rydell for Mr. and Mrs. Donald Mays, Santa Cruz, California



**Raised planting tiers and railroad tie steps** lead to a small lawn that's a cool contrast to the brick patio below. Landscape architect was George Fuller for the Robert E. Hinerfelds, Los Angeles





This **Sunset Magazine** reprint is presented as a public service by the Santa Clara Valley Water District in the hope that its contents will prove helpful to all who would like to know how and why to use drought resistant species in new or existing gardens. Widespread acceptance and use of these beautiful plants could eventually reduce outdoor water use in Santa Clara Valley by 10 per cent. Further information about "unthirsty" species, their availability and uses can be found at your local nursery.

**Santa Clara Valley Water District**

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