



Xeric Display

What does xeric mean?

The term xeric is derived from the Greek word, *xeros*, which means dry. Plants that are adapted to dry conditions are known as xerophytes. In California, there are numerous xerophytes that are adapted to a mediterranean type climate that is characteristically dry during the summer and wet during the winter. Many of our native plants live in plant communities with desert-like conditions, receiving little or no summer rain.

Among the largest of our xeric native plants are the evergreen oak trees and madrones found in dry savannahs and woodlands. Many chaparral, coastal sage scrub and channel island plants are xeric as well, including manzanita, woolly blue curls, showy island snapdragon, and the Matalija poppy, boasting the largest flower of any plant native to California!



Showy Island Snapdragon

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Channel Island Tree Poppy

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Woolly Blue Curls

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How do xeric native plants benefit native wildlife?

Xeric plants have co-evolved with a variety of animals that are adapted to unique microclimates in different habitats. This co-evolution has produced many interdependent relationships that have allowed many unique organisms to survive.

Native birds, butterflies, bees and other animals are attracted to xeric native plants. The tubular flowers provide nectar for butterflies and hummingbirds, while the bowl-shaped flowers attract bees and other insects. The fruits and seeds provided by xeric plants are also prized by birds and small mammals. The entire food web depends upon plants that have managed to adapt to the often severe summer droughts that frequent California's mediterranean climate.



Apache Plume

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California Poppy

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A season of their own.

Native plants bloom and set seed at the optimum time of the year to maximize reproductive success. Each habitat hosts a variety of plants that bloom at different times. Many plant communities produce the most abundant floral display in the spring months following the rainy season. During the rainy season, plants produce larger leaves that provide more surface area for photosynthesis. During the dry season, many of these same plants will shed their large winter leaves and replace them with smaller, waxy-coated leaves to reduce water loss.

To the casual observer, many of these xeric plants will look like they are dead or dying during the summer, because the winter leaves begin turning brown and dry before they are shed. This seasonal adaptation allows xeric plants to survive during droughts, but it is not often appreciated by people who are more focused on aesthetics than intrinsic value.



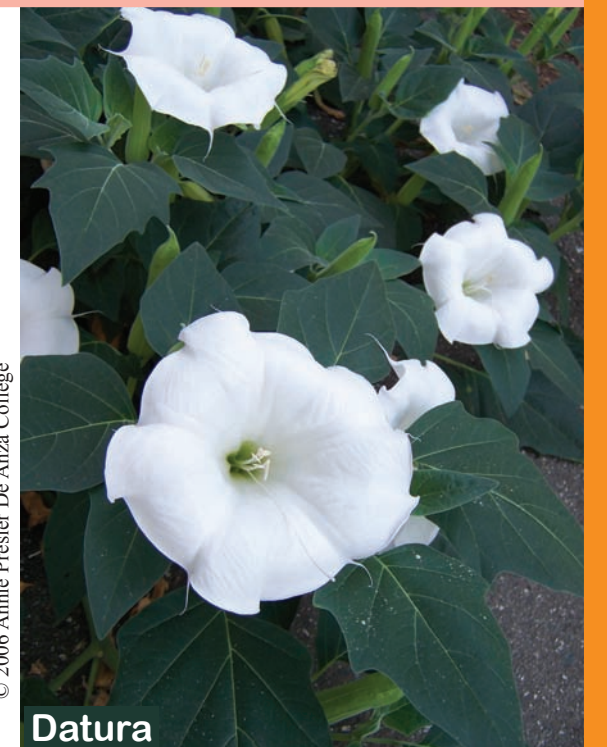
California Rose

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Baby Blue Eyes

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Datura

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Why plant xeric native plants?

Drought tolerant native plants are the perfect solution for dry landscapes and water conservation. Water conservation is an important issue throughout the country, but especially in California. Utilizing plants that use less water is an important step towards solving California's water crisis.

Many of our drought tolerant native plants are currently being used along freeway medians and overpasses as an effective way to reduce water use. Native xeric plants are also becoming popular for commercial and residential landscapes as water resources become more limited and people begin to appreciate the biodiversity of our native plants and animals. In addition to being drought tolerant, native xeric plants are beautiful and can offer abundant color, texture and fragrance for your garden.



Arroyo Lupine

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Fuchsia-Flowered Gooseberry

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Pink Island Yarrow

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