Native Landscaping

ANDI CAMPOGNONE

Working with our land –
not against it.

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WHY PLANT CALIFORNIA NATIVES?

– Benefits for people, place, and the wildlife they support

Ecological

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PLANTS EVOLVED OVER TIME TO THRIVE

- Native plants evolved with California’s climate, soils, and fire regimes

- They provide the highest ecological value per square foot compared with non-native ornamentals

Resilient

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CLIMATE & WATER-WISE BENEFITS

- Deep or drought-adapted roots reduce irrigation needs and improve groundwater recharge

- Lower maintenance: minimal fertilizer, fewer pesticides, less mowing

- Better resilience to drought and heat extremes

Adapted

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SOIL AND ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

- Native roots stabilize soil, reduce erosion, and improve structure

- Support diverse soil microbiomes and mycorrhizal networks that benefit plant communities

- Enhance nutrient cycling and carbon storage in native habitats

Biodiversity

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POLLINATORS AND INSECTS (KEYSTONE)

- Native flowers provide specialized nectar/pollen resources timed to local pollinator life cycles

- Host plants for native bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, and other beneficial insects

- Many specialist insects (e.g., native bees, butterflies) rely on specific native plant species for larval food

Ecosystem

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BIRDS AND FOOD WEBS

- Native shrubs, trees, and perennials supply fruits, seeds, insects, and nesting habitat for birds year-round

- Denser, structurally diverse plantings support higher bird abundance and diversity than exotic monocultures

- Example: native Ceanothus and manzanita attract insect prey and provide cover for songbirds

Habitat

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MAMMALS, AMPHIBIANS, REPTILES

– Native plant communities provide forage, shelter, and travel corridors for small mammals and large herbivores

– Leaf litter, downed wood, and shaded microhabitats foster amphibians and reptiles by maintaining moisture and thermal refugia

– Riparian natives (willows, sedges) are critical for amphibian breeding and aquatic food chains

Support

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SEASONAL AND LANDSCAPE-SCALE BENEFITS

- Native phenology supplies seasonal resources (early spring nectar, summer seeds, fall fruit) that sustain fauna through the year

- Using diverse native species builds resilient habitat networks across yards, parks, and reserves

—supporting migration and dispersal

Seasonal

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BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

- Native plantings increase species richness and functional diversity, improving pollination, pest control, and soil health

- Support for native predators and parasitoids reduces pest outbreaks naturally

- Contribute to climate adaptation by creating refugia and lowering urban heat islands

Climate Adaptation

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PRACTICAL DESIGN TIPS TO MAXIMIZE FAUNAL VALUE

- Use a diversity of growth forms (trees, shrubs, perennials, grasses, groundcovers) and bloom times

- Prioritize host plants for target species (e.g., milkweeds for monarchs, Ceanothus for native bees)

- Provide water sources, snags/brush piles, and native seed/fruit-bearing species for winter food

- Avoid pesticides, especially systemic insecticides; use clustered plantings to create habitat patches

Sources

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MEASURABLE OUTCOMES AND COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Increased counts of native pollinators, birds, and beneficial insects in native gardens vs. conventional lawns

- Reduced water use and maintenance costs over time

- Educational and community value: native gardens act as living classrooms and wildlife corridors

Maintenance

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CALL TO ACTION

- Start small: replace a lawn strip or plant a pollinator patch with diverse natives

- Source local ecotype plants or seed when possible; consult local native plant nurseries and restoration groups

- Monitor and share results: document wildlife visits to build community stewardship

Ecotype

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RESOURCES

- California Native Plant Society (CNPS) local chapter links

- Native plant nurseries, regional planting guides, and pollinator plant lists

- Local Master Gardener or conservation district contacts

Regional Contacts

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CLOSING

– Planting California natives is a high-impact investment: it conserves water, restores ecosystem function, and directly supports the insects, birds, and other wildlife that keep our landscapes healthy and resilient.

High-impact

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RESOURCES

- “Master Gardeners, county conservation districts, and regional planting guides for site-specific advice.” Tehachapi Resource Conservation District https://www.tehachapircd.org/

- “Local native plant nurseries and restoration groups — provenance and plant availability.” and Theodore Payne Foundation https://theodorepayne.org/

- “California Native Plant Society (local chapter is https://chapters.cnps.org/kern) — plant lists and nurseries.”

Thank You

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