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## NATURALISTIC PLANTINGS:

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*Create a truly inspiring setting right outside your door! With a naturalistic approach to planting your outdoor spaces, you can add life, depth and a sense of intimacy, while stimulating the senses of those who seek the solace of the outdoors. This concept deals with gardens that nurture the spirit and bring the healing experience of nature up close. The following five principles are key to designing and caring for a California nature garden:*

### 1. DIVERSITY OF NATURAL COMMUNITIES

Coastal sage scrub, oak woodland, chaparral and grassland themes should be the local models on a small scale when formulating your design and selecting plants. Choose one to several species of trees (evergreen and deciduous) and even more shrubs, subshrubs, herbaceous and woody perennials, succulents, bulbs, grasses and annuals. Naturalistic gardens display much greater species diversity than conventional landscapes, which tend to overuse the same few plants.

### 2. APPROPRIATE SPACING

In nature, you will observe areas that are sparsely vegetated. In the garden, this allows plants to grow to mature size and be admired individually. Bare places between plants reduces competition for moisture and minimizes pruning requirements. Birds and lizards use bare ground for hunting and foraging.

### 3. LAYERED PLANTINGS

Tall, medium and low plants growing together adds depth, interest, and privacy to gardens. A canopy layer, shrub layer and groundcover layer of locally native plants also increases habitat value.



### 4. NATURAL FEATURES

Borrowed from nature, these details lend authenticity and a sense of place to the California garden. Rocks and boulders, fallen branches, rolling mounds of soil, a dry streambed... all are artful and functional elements in naturalistic plantings. A water feature makes a wonderful focal point.

Furniture, pottery, fencing and paths can be made of natural materials like twigs, clay, wood and stone.

### 5. MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

A 'hands-off' approach is best for native, naturalistic plantings. Most importantly, water only when necessary. Become familiar with your soil type and how long it holds moisture. Also, the traditional standards of regular, heavy pruning, raking and spraying will not apply. Leaf litter should remain under plants and light pruning should only be done once a year, if necessary.



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*Loose arrangements of plants  
and other elements that represent nature...  
The soft lines, subtle textures and rich fragrance of the wild...  
The untamed spirit of authentic California...*

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*The ultimate reward for this effort is the reappearance of wildlife (songbirds, butterflies, hummingbirds, beneficial insects, lizards, etc.). These magical creatures will be drawn to nest, forage and seek cover in this newly restored bit of nature.*

*For MUCH more inspiration and information visit: [www.CaliforniaNativePlants.com](http://www.CaliforniaNativePlants.com)*