

MINDFUL LANDSCAPING: NATIVE PLANT ALTERNATIVES TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Importance of Planting Native

Did you know that Arizona is home to nearly 4,000 species of native plants?

You are living in one of the most biologically diverse states in the nation! You can do your part to protect and preserve the unique beauty of our state by choosing to landscape with native species.



Invasive Plant Impacts

The introduction of invasive species causes both economic and environmental harm.

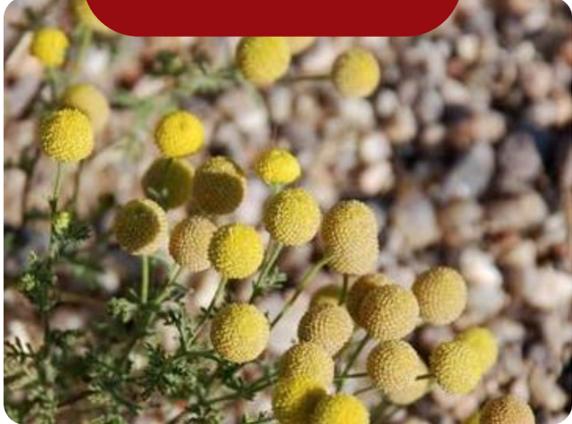
Invasive plants outcompete native species, transform landscapes, alter watersheds, and increase the frequency and intensity of wildfires.

Native Plant Benefits

Native plants are uniquely adapted to Arizona landscapes.

For you this translates into cost savings! Native plants require less water, fertilizer, and soil amendments to thrive. They also prevent soil run-off and erosion, while providing critical habitat and food for local wildlife.

Invasive

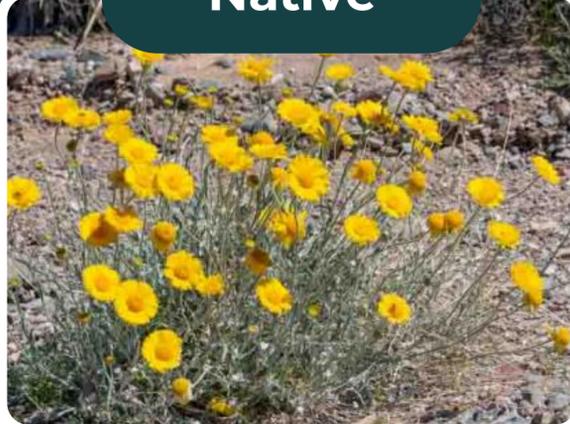


Stinknet

Oncosiphon pilulifer

- Small flower heads that are bright yellow spheres
- Leaves and stems are bright green and have a pungent odor
- Looks similar to carrots tops

Native



Desert Marigold

Baileya multiradiata

- Annual or short-lived perennial
- White, wooly leaves with showy, daisy-like yellow flowers

Native

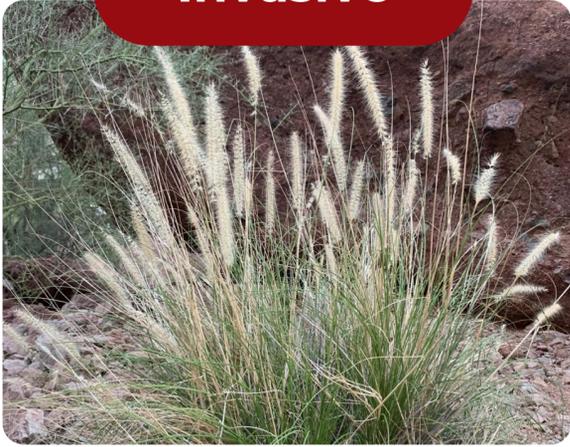


Desert Senna

Senna covesii

- Deciduous shrub that grows up to 2.5 ft tall
- Silvery green leaflets with showy yellow flowers

Invasive



Fountain Grass

Pennisetum setaceum

- Perennial bunchgrass that grows up to 5 ft tall
- Clean, upright appearance
- Flower heads are pink-purple with a brush-like appearance

Native

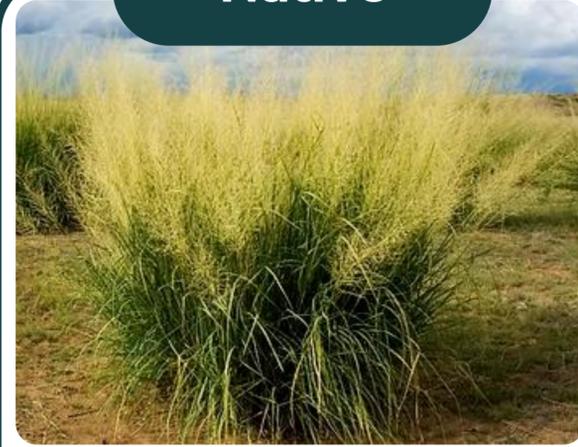


Deer Grass

Muhlenbergia rigens

- Perennial bunchgrass that grows up to 4 ft tall
- Green-gray foliage
- Tan flower spikes

Native



Giant Sacaton

Sporobolus wrightii

- Perennial bunchgrass that grows up to 7 ft tall
- Striking, golden seed heads
- Excellent for erosion control

Invasive

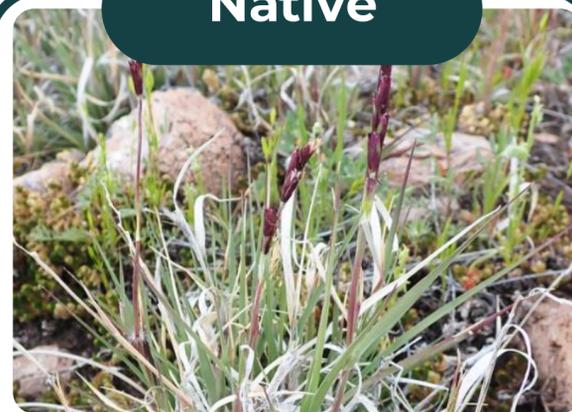


Buffelgrass

Cenchrus ciliaris

- Perennial bunchgrass that can grow up to 5 ft tall
- Messy, tangled stems
- Red-purple seeds head look similar to a bottlebrush

Native

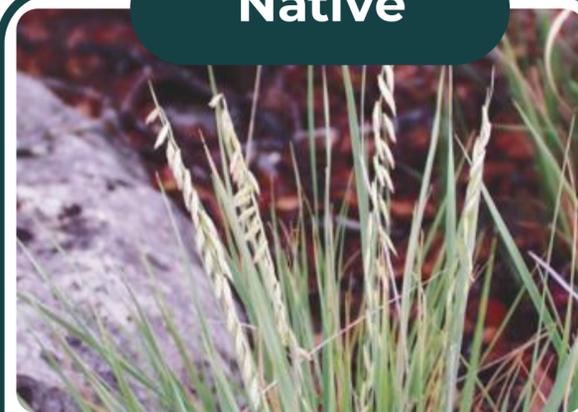


Curly Mesquite

Asclepias sublata

- Small, perennial bunchgrass 4-12 inches tall
- Purple flower spikes have a zig-zag appearance
- Sod-forming, drought tolerant

Native



Sideoats Grama

Bouteloua curtipendula

- Perennial that grows 1 to 3 ft in height
- Oat-like spikelets that hang to one side of seed stalk
- Excellent forage for herbivores

Invasive



Red Brome

Bromus rubens

- Annual, tufted bunchgrass that grows 8-20" tall
- Stems covered in fine hairs
- Seed heads are 2-3" long and red-purple in color

Native

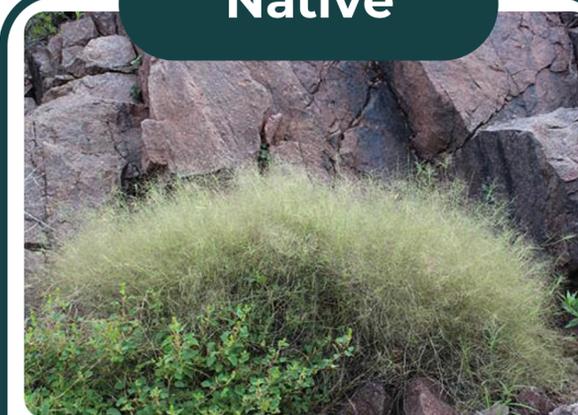


Purple Three-Awn

Aristida purpurea

- Small perennial bunchgrass that grows up to 2 ft
- Nodding seed heads have reddish-purple hue

Native

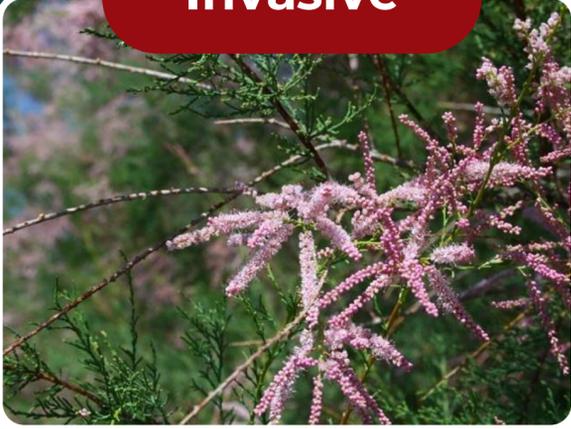


Bush Muhly

Muhlenbergia porteri

- Perennial bunchgrass that grows up to 3 ft tall
- Interwoven stems create bush-like appearance
- Purplish seed heads

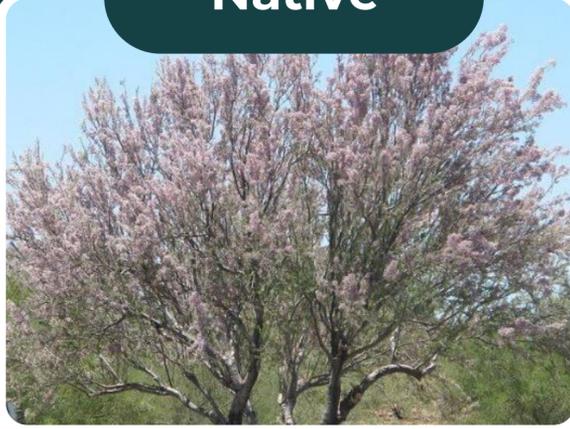
Invasive



Salt Cedar
Tamarix spp.

- Grow as large shrubs or trees, generally 10'-15' but can reach up to 50'
- Flowers are feathery spikes that are white or pink

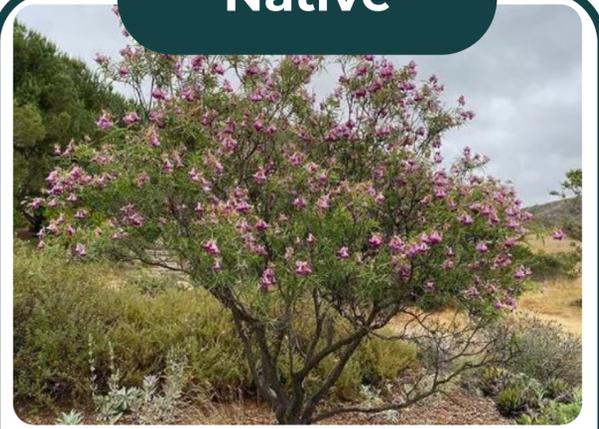
Native



Ironwood
Olneya tesota

- Evergreen tree with a dense canopy that grows up to 30 ft tall
- Bark is light gray with pea-like purple/pinkish flowers

Native



Desert Willow
Chilopsis linearis

- Deciduous tree that grows up to 15 ft tall
- Dark brown bark and long, linear leaves
- Pink trumpet shaped flowers

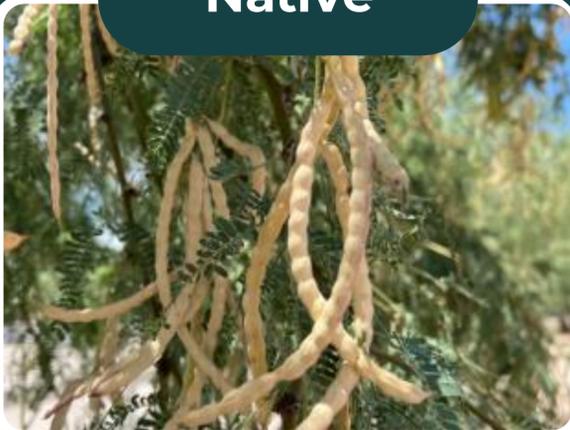
Invasive



African Sumac
Searsia lancea

- Tree that can grow 15'-30' tall
- Leaves occur in groups of 3 and are lance shaped
- Small white flowers give way to yellow or red berrylike fruit

Native



Velvet Mesquite
Prosopis velutina

- Woody perennial that grows up to 30 ft tall
- Tree has delicate leaflets with a velvety texture
- Yellow flower clusters

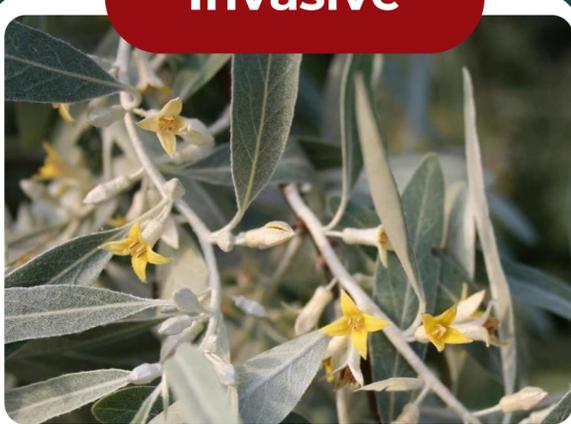
Native



Screwbean Mesquite
Strombocrapa pubescens

- Shrubby, multi trunk tree that grows up to 20 ft tall
- Yellow flowers in tubular spike 3 inches long
- Tightly coiled legume pod

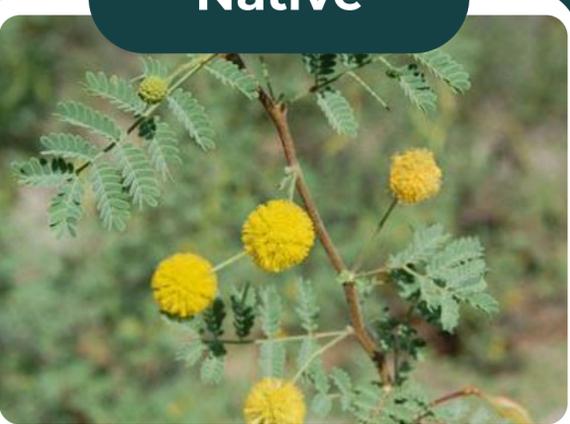
Invasive



Russian Olive
Elaeagnus angustifolia

- Fast growing, deciduous small tree or thorny shrub
- Egg shaped leaves that are bright green on top and silver underneath

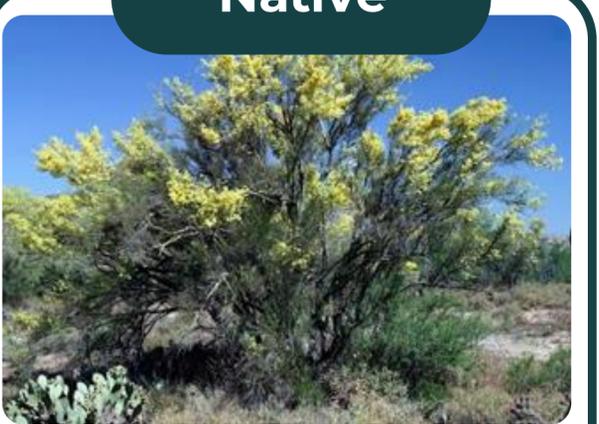
Native



White Thorn Acacia
Acacia constricta

- Shrub or small tree that grows up to 15 ft tall
- Small yellow flowers cluster in a dense ball
- Slender reddish pods

Native



Foothill Palo Verde
Cercidium microphyllum

- Large shrub or small tree that grows up to 15 ft tall
- Yellow-green trunk with green branches and twigs
- Bright yellow blooms

More Native Plant Alternatives



The Sonoran Desert is filled with hundreds of diverse, beautiful, and surprisingly colorful plants!

Please see the following pages for additional examples of native plants you can grow in your own backyard. Also included are resources to continue learning more about how you can protect and preserve our unique desert habitat.



Desert Lupin

Lupinus sparsiflorus

- Spring annual that grows up to 12 inches tall
- Fuzzy, light green palmate leaves
- Violet-blue, pea-like bloom



Desert Bluebells

Phacelia campanularia

- Spring annual that grows from 6 to 24 inches
- Green, fuzzy leaves with reddish stems
- Bell-shaped blue-purple flowers



Desert Chia

Salvia columbariae

- Spring annual that can grow up to 3 ft tall
- Upright stems with clusters of purple flowers
- Pink-purple seed heads
- Edible, nutritious seeds



Firecracker Penstemon

Penstemon eatonii

- Short-lived perennial that grows up to 4 ft tall
- Green leaves with clasping stems
- Red showy, tubular flowers
- Great for hummingbirds



Desert Milkweed

Asclepias subulata

- Perennial that grows up to 4 ft tall
- Upright gray-green stems with very few leaves
- Yellow clustered flowers
- Attracts monarch butterflies



Arizona Milkweed

Asclepias angustifolia

- Perennial that grows up to 3 ft tall
- Green, narrow leaves
- Whitish-pink clustered flowers
- Attracts monarch butterflies



Desert Globemallow
Sphaeralcea ambigua

- Perennial shrub with fuzzy, light green leaves
- Grows up to up to 4 ft tall
- Cup shaped orange flowers
- Great for butterflies



Arizona Poppy
Kallstroemia grandiflora

- Annual plant that grows 2-3 ft tall with fuzzy branches
- Small grayish green leaves
- Beautiful yellow-orange blooms with red centers



Gooding's Verbena
Verbena goodingii

- Short-lived perennial that grows up to 18 inches tall
- Ground cover plant that can grow up to 3 ft wide
- Clusters of small lilac flowers



Sweetbush
Bebbia juncea

- Perennial shrub that grows up to 4 ft tall
- Intricately branches with very few leaves
- Fragrant yellow flowers
- Nickname is "Chuckwalla's delight"



Chuparosa
Muhlenbergia rigens

- Perennial shrub that grows up to 5 ft tall
- Semi-succulent leaves and stems that store water
- Bright red, trumpet shaped flowers
- Hummingbird favorite!



Desert Hackberry
Celtis pallida

- Small shrubby tree that grows up to 10 ft tall
- Densely branched with small light-green leaves
- Small orange fruits ripen in the fall
- Great for wildlife habitat



Links & Resources

To learn more about invasive species please visit:

<https://azinvasiveplants.arizona.edu/>

To learn more about native species please visit:

<https://aznps.com/the-plant-list/>

<https://www.nativeseeds.org/collections/wildflowers>