

# “Totally Tucson”

## Local Plants for Low-care Landscapes

*Creating a spectacular landscape with local plants is probably nowhere easier than in Tucson. Within the four mountain ranges that define its boundaries, the city has an amazing array of plants, from stately saguaros to colorful perennial wildflowers which can be used for gardens that range from lush and green to stark and dramatic.*

### **“Totally Tucson” plants:**

The “Totally Tucson” plants occur within the valley and the four surrounding mountain ranges up to 4500 feet elevation, roughly in what could be considered the “saguaro zone”. The list below represents a fraction of the native species, but includes plants that are better known and generally available in nurseries. Most riparian species are omitted because they fare poorly outside of moist locations.

### **Why local plants?**

Tucson’s plants come in an incredible range of forms, textures and colors and can be mixed and matched to create lush oasis atmospheres or stark and dramatic desert-scapes. They are adapted to the extremes of temperature and rainfall, are easy to maintain, and feed and house local birds, insects, and other fauna. Using them in landscapes also helps preserve the strong “sense of place” which makes Tucson such a wonderful city to live in.

### **Suggested reading:**

These publications are useful for planting and care information on local plants:

- “Native plants for southwestern landscapes” by Judy Mielke
- “Low water use plants” by Carol Shuler
- “Pruning, planting and care” by Eric Johnson
- “Plants for dry climates” by Mary Rose Duffield and Warren Jones
- “Desert trees” published by the Arizona Native Plant Society
- “A natural history of western trees” by Donald Culross Peattie
- “Landscape plants for dry regions” by Jones and Sacamano
- Arizona Native Plant Society booklets
- “Agaves, yuccas and related plants” by Mary and Gary Irish

# “Totally Tucson” Plant List

## Trees:

Acacia greggii “Catclaw acacia”  
Celtis reticulata “Netleaf hackberry”  
Parkinsonia microphylla “Foothills palo verde”  
Chilopsis linearis “Desert willow”  
Eysenhardtia orthocarpa “Kidneywood”  
Lysiloma watsoni “Desert fern tree”  
Morus microphylla “Texas mulberry”  
Olneya tesota “Ironwood”  
Prosopis velutina “Velvet mesquite”  
Sapindus drummondii “Soapberry”

## Shrubs:

Acacia angustissima “Fern acacia”  
Acacia constricta “Whitethorn acacia”  
Acourtia wrightii “Desert holly”  
Aloysia wrightii “Oreganillo”  
Ambrosia deltoidea “Triangle-leaf bursage”  
Anisacanthus thurberi “Desert honeysuckle”  
Artemisia ludoviciana “Western mugwort”  
Asclepias linaria “Pineleaf milkweed”  
Atriplex canescens “Fourwing saltbush”  
Bouvardia glaberrima “Scarlet bouvardia”  
Calliandra eriophylla “Fairy duster”  
Celtis ehrenbergiana (pallida) “Desert hackberry”  
Coursetia glandulosa “Baby bonnets”  
Crossosoma bigelovii “Rhyolite bush”  
Dalea pulchra “Bush dalea”  
Dicliptera resupinata “Dicliptera”  
Dodonea angustifolia “Hopbush”  
Encelia farinosa “Brittlebush”  
Ephedra nevadensis “Mormon tea”  
Ericameria laricifolia “Turpentine bush”  
Eriogonum fasciculatum “Flattop buckwheat”  
Eriogonum wrightii “Wright’s buckwheat”  
Gossypium thurberi “Desert cotton”  
Guardiola platyphylla “Guardiola”  
Hibiscus biseptus “Rose mallow”  
Hibiscus coulteri “Desert rosemallow”  
Hyptis emoryi “Desert lavender”  
Jatropha cardiophylla “Limberbush”  
Justicia californica “Chuparosa”  
Justicia candicans “Red justicia”  
Larrea divaricata (tridentata) “Creosote”

Lotus rigidus "Deer vetch"  
Lycium fremontii "Wolfberry"  
Plumbago scandens "Plumbago"  
Simmondsia chinensis "Jojoba"  
Sphaeralcea ambigua "Globe mallow"  
Tecoma stans v. angustata "Yellow bells"  
Trichostema arizonicum "AZ bluecurls"  
Trixis californica "Trixis"  
Vauquelinia californica "Arizona rosewood"  
Zizyphus obtusifolia "Graythorn"

#### **Vines:**

Cissus trifoliata "Grape ivy"  
Gallactia wrightii "Milkpea"  
Janusia gracilis "Slender janusia"  
Maurandya antirrhiniflora "Snapdragon vine"  
Milkweed species

#### **Cacti:**

Carnegiea gigantea "Saguaro"  
Echinocereus rigidissimus "Az. rainbow cactus"  
Echinocereus fasciculatus "Pink flowered hedgehog cactus"  
Ferocactus wislizeni "Fishhook barrel"  
Mammillaria grahamii "Pincushion cactus"  
Opuntia arbuscula "Pencil cholla"  
Opuntia engelmannii "Engelmann prickly pear"  
Opuntia versicolor "Staghorn cholla"  
Opuntia santa rita "Purple prickly pear"  
Peniocereus greggii "Queen of the night"

#### **Accent Plants:**

Agave chrysantha "Golden-flowered agave"  
Agave schottii "Shindagger"  
Dasylirion wheeleri "Desert spoon"  
Erythrina flabelliformis "Coral bean"  
Fouquieria splendens "Ocotillo"  
Nolina microcarpa "Beargrass"  
Yucca baccata "Banana yucca"  
Yucca elata "Soaptree yucca"

**Perennial Wildflowers:**

Amoreuxia palmatifida "Saiya"  
Bahia absinthifolia "Bahia"  
Baileya multiradiata "Desert marigold"  
Datura wrightii "Sacred datura"  
Dyssodia pentachaeta "Dogweed"  
Jatropha macrorhiza "Ragged nettlespurge"  
Melampodium leucanthum "Blackfoot daisy"  
Oenothera caespitosa "Tufted evening primrose"  
Penstemon parryi "Parry penstemon"  
Psilostrophe cooperi "Paperflower"  
Ruellia nudiflora "Ruellia"  
Senna covesii "Desert senna"  
Glandularia gooddingii "Goodding verbena"  
Zinnia acerosa "Desert zinnia"

**Annual Wildflowers:**

Eschscholtzia mexicana "Mexican poppy"  
Gaillardia pulchella "Blanket flower"  
Kallstroemia grandiflora "Arizona caltrop"  
Orthocarpus purpurascens "Owl's clover"  
Proboscidea althaefolia "Devil's claw"

**Grasses:**

Aristida purpurea "Purple threeawn"  
Bouteloua curtipendula "Sideoats grama"  
Bouteloua gracilis "Blue grama"  
Heteropogon contortus "Tanglehead"  
Muhlenbergia emersleyi "Bull grass"  
Muhlenbergia rigens "Deer grass"  
Sporobolus airoides "Alkali sacaton"

*Gardening Insights, Inc.*  
1800 N. Norton Avenue Tucson, AZ. 85719  
603-2703 • [greg@gardeninginsights.com](mailto:greg@gardeninginsights.com) • [www.gardeninginsights.com](http://www.gardeninginsights.com)