

Perfect Poolside Plants

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Most pool owners find the joys of a cool summer dip are offset by the drudgery and expense of keeping the backyard waterhole clean of dust and plant debris. Anyone who has a bougainvillea crawling on their pool fence knows what I mean. Choosing the right species for poolside planting can go a long way to reducing the hassles and make those summer swims more enjoyable.

Good plants for poolside landscapes are clean, unarmed, tolerant of full sun, and perhaps tolerant of small planting spaces. The same plants should provide the soft, colorful lushness of a tropical pool or the drama and sculpture of a desert water hole depending on the owner's preference. The list of plants below is far from comprehensive, but provides a good start in choosing plants that meet the above criteria. Most are readily available from local nurseries.

Consider these ideas:

- Use sculpture, colored walls and artwork, and containers of annuals for interest around the pool.
- Cover or enclose part or all of the pool with a ramada or sail cloth instead of using trees for shade.
- Occasionally flush poolside beds with fresh water to reduce the buildup of pool chemicals.
- Use steel netting on the lower part of your pool fencing to prevent blow-in of leaves and trash.
- Create positive drainage to prevent stormwater running into pool.

Perfect Poolside Plants

Trees (or large shrubs):

Acacia willardiana "Palo blanco"
Brahea armata "Blue hesper palm"
Chamaerops humilis "Mediterranean fan palm"
Eysenhardtia orthocarpa "Kidneywood"
Fraxinus greggii "Littleleaf ash"
Nannorrhops ritchieana "Mazeri palm"
Pistacia lentiscus "Mastic tree"
Sabal minor "Dwarf palmetto"
Sophora secundiflora "Texas mountain laurel"
Vauquelinia californica "Arizona rosewood"

Shrubs:

Anisacanthus thurberi "Desert honeysuckle"
Anisacanthus quadrifidus "Flame anisacanthus"
Artemisia ludoviciana "Western mugwort"
Asclepias linaria "Pineleaf milkweed"
Asclepias subulata "Desert milkweed"
Eriogonum fasciculatum v. poliofolium "Flat-top buckwheat"
Euphorbia antisyphilitica "Candelilla"
Euphorbia rigida "Gopher weed"
Guardiola platyphylla "Apache plant"
Hymenoxis acaulis "Angelita daisy"
Justicia spicigera "Mexican firecracker"
Phlomis fruticosa "Jerusalem sage"
Poliomintha incanum "Lavender mint"
Poliomintha maderensis "Lavender spice"
Salvia greggii and other Salvia species
Simmondsia chinensis "Jojoba"
Teucrium chamaedrys "Creeping germander"
Teucrium frutescens "Bush germander"
Tradescantia pallida "Wandering jew"
Trixis californica "Trixis"
Zephyranthes candidum "White rain lily"
Zinnia acerosa "Desert zinnia"

Cacti and Succulents:

Agave bracteosa "Squid agave"
Agave parviflora
Agave victoriae-reginae "Queen Victoria agave"
Agave vilmoriniana "Octopus agave"
Aloe striata "Coral aloe"
Aloe variegata "Partridge breast aloe"
Ariocarpus retusus
Cephalophyllum sp. "Red spike"

Cycas revoluta "Sago palm"
Dasylirion longissimum "Mexican grass tree"
Dioon edule and other cycads
Echinocereus rigidissimus "Az. rainbow cactus"
Euphorbia esculenta "Medusa head"
Euphorbia obesa "Baseball plant"
Fouquieria splendens "Ocotillo"
Hesperaloe funifera "Coahuilan hesperaloe"
Hesperaloe parviflora "Red yucca"
Nolina bigelovii "Bigelow's nolina"
Nolina matapensis "Tree bear grass"
Nolina nelsonii "Blue nolina"
Opuntia basilaris "Beavertail cactus"
Pedilanthus macrocarpus "Slipper plant"
Stenocereus marginatus "Mexican fencepost cactus"
Tephrocactus articulatus "Spruce cones cactus"
Yucca baccata "Banana yucca"
Yucca elata "Soaptree yucca"
Yucca rigida "Blue yucca"
Yucca rostrata "Beaked yucca"
Zamia floridana

Grasses and Grass-like Plants:

Bouteloua curtipendula "Sideoats grama"
Bouteloua gracilis "Blue grama"
Calibanus hookeri
Muhlenbergia capillaris "Regal mist"
Muhlenbergia emersleyi "Bull grass"
Muhlenbergia rigida "Deer grass"
Nolina microcarpa "Bear grass"

Wildflowers:

Bahia absinthifolia "Bahia"
Dichelostemma pulchellum "Blue dicks"
Dyssodia pentachaeta "Dogweed"
Oenothera caespitosa "Tufted evening primrose"
Penstemon eatoni "Eaton's penstemon"
Penstemon parryi "Parry penstemon"
Zinnia grandiflora "Prairie zinnia"

Other plants:

Rhodofiala bifida "Oxblood lily"
Drimia, Oxalis, and other bulb plants
Desert ferns