Select ‘Low-Water’ Plants for MWELo Compliance

Suzie Wiest, Village Nurseries
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- 8 Growing Grounds from Sacramento to San Diego provide the full spectrum in micro-climates allowing us to supply fully acclimatized and **top quality** plant material.

- 4 Landscape Centers in Huntington Beach, Orange, San Diego, and Sacramento

Founded in 1976 and offering nearly **1,000 acres** of the West’s most varied and **complete inventory** of trees, shrubs, and perennials, Village is your **single source for landscape** material.

Partnerships developed with top breeders keep Village on the **leading edge** with the latest and most improved **plant introductions**.
Good News for New Introductions!!!

Although there is not a current method of adding plants onto the WUCOLS list, the regulation wording has been modified and is not quite as restrictive as in the original version. It now says …

23 CCR § 492.4 - § 492.4. Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet.
(b) Water budget calculations shall adhere to the following requirements:
(1) The plant factor used shall be from WUCOLS or from horticultural researchers with academic institutions or professional associations as approved by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).
UC horticulturists are evaluating exciting new cultivars provided by breeders and growers, including Village Nurseries, who want their new introductions evaluated for low-water use in hot California gardens.

After being grown for one year with regular irrigation to develop healthy root systems, the plants are irrigated through the 2nd growing season using irrigation frequencies that correspond to the WUCOLS categories of Low, Moderate, and High.

Performance is then evaluated (with a rating of 1-5) in foliage, flowering, pest tolerance/disease resistance, vigor, and overall appearance.

This warm season grass with fine-textured gray-green leaves is more vigorous with larger blooms that age to blonde rather than the typical purple of the species.

Beginning in early summer, they sway in the breeze about a foot taller than the foliage and look like flags cheering you on!

Native to the Southwest, this is a tough grass that can handle drought as well as extremely cold temperatures.

- **Exposure** - Full Sun
- **Bloom Color / Season** – Blonde in Summer
- **Water Requirements** – Low; Drought-tolerant

**Dimensions** – 1-2 ft. x 1-2 ft.

**Origin** – Southwest (USA)

**Winter Hardiness**: 20 to 25°F

*WUCOLS classification for the species is “Low”; 2017 UC Water Trials -“Low”*

**Bouteloua gracilis ‘Blonde Ambition’** (PP# 22,048)
This low-growing, rounded shrub has stiff stems and small tough, dark green leaves. This is a low-maintenance and adaptable variety of Ceanothus as it will handle summer water and grow well in both full sun and light shade.

It is known to have greater longevity, possibly as a result of it’s slower growth rate.

Named a UC Davis “Arboretum All-Star” for excellent landscape performance.

- **Exposure** - Full Sun or Light Shade
- **Water Requirements** – Very Low; Drought-tolerant
- **Bloom** – Blue-purple to violet clusters in Spring

**Dimensions** – 2-3 ft. x 3-4 ft.
**Winter Hardiness**: 15° F
**Origin** – California

*WUCOLS classification for Regions 3 and 4 – “Low”; UC Water Trials – “Low”*
This is a more compact Sweet Bay with highly aromatic, deep green foliage that emerges on unique red-tinged stems, providing a lush look to a water-wise landscape.

It requires very little maintenance as an upright shrub or small tree and is handsome in its natural form or easily clipped into a 6-8 foot formal hedge or topiary shape. It will also thrive in containers.

**Exposure** – Full Sun to Part Shade

**Dimensions** – 6-8’ x 6-8’ in 10 years

**Water requirements** – Needs only occasional water, once established.

**Winter hardiness** - 15-20° F

Laurus nobilis ‘MonRik’ Little Ragu® (PP# 25,915)
Lomandras look like grasses, but are actually tough, low water perennials.

‘Platinum Beauty’ is the first green and white striped variegated form, and looks great with succulents and other low water use plants.

It is highly adaptable, low maintenance, and resistant to deer and rabbits and performs best in a well-drained soil.

- **Exposure** - Full Sun to Part Shade
- **Water Requirements** – Very Low; Drought-tolerant
- **Bloom** – In Spring, short yellow fragrant spikes

**Dimensions** – 2-3 ft. x 2-3 ft.

**Winter Hardiness**: 15° F

*Included in the 2017 Irrigation Trial – observed as “Low” water use*

**Lomandra longifolia Platinum Beauty™** (PP# 25,962)
Muhlenbergia capillaris ‘Irvine’ Plumetastic™ (PPAF)

Stately and showy foliage, with exceptional upright and slightly arching form. Glittering clouds of vivid purplish pink plumes emerge in late summer and persist through Fall. Bloom begins 3-5 weeks later than regular species and Regal Mist®.

Lends far richer color and more uniform bloom than others of it’s type. Outstanding texture for specimen plant or en masse in borders, meadows, and native gardens.

**Bloom Color** – Purplish-pink  
**Foliage Color** – Green  
**Water** – Regular  
**Winter Hardiness**: to -15 °

**Bloom Season** – Late summer through fall  
**Exposure** – Partial to Full Sun  
**Dimensions** – 2-3 ft. tall (blooms are 4 ft.)  
**Key Feature** – Showy Flower Plumes

- To be included in the 2018 field trials; sponsored by Village Nurseries
A seedling of this hardy California native perennial was discovered by Las Pilitas Nursery in Santa Margarita at the back of the porch … or “BOP”.

It is naturally found in our coastal mountain ranges and the Sierra Nevada foothills in grassland, chaparral, oak woodland, and forest plant communities.

The flowers begin a bright blue and slowly fade to a rose-purple to lavender color, resembling a beautiful watercolor painting.

**Exposure** – Full Sun  
**Dimensions** – 1-3 ft. x 1-2 ft.  
**Water** – Low; drought-tolerant  
**Winter hardiness** - 10° F

**WUCOLS classification in Regions 3 and 4** - “Low”; **UC Davis Water Trials** – “Low”

**Penstemon heterophyllus ‘Margarita BOP’**
Native to dry chaparral areas, the gray-green foliage of this aromatic shrub has been described as “sweet”.

The spectacular electric-blue flowers, formed in whorls and also fragrant, begin in late Spring to early Summer and put on a stunning display.

It is very drought-tolerant and can live without any supplemental water, yet looks best with occasional deep irrigation, provided the soil has good drainage.

Prune back in winter to about 1/3 it’s size, for best performance and blooms.

- **Exposure** – Full Sun
- **Water Requirements** – Low; Drought-tolerant
- **Bloom** – Electric-blue in Summer

**Dimensions** – 3-4 ft. x 3-4 ft.
**Winter Hardiness**: 15-20° F
**Origin** – California

**WUCOLS classification in Region 3 is “Low” and 4 - “Very Low”**

*Salvia clevelandii ‘Winifred Gilman’*
Verbena lilacina ‘De La Mina’

With sweetly fragrant blooms on delicately dissected mid-green foliage, the mounding habit of this tidy California native adds color and beauty to drought-tolerant landscapes.

It may bloom year-round, yet peaks in Spring and Summer with flowers that hover 8” above the foliage.

This plant was collected by Carol Bornstein in the Canyon de la Mina on Cedros Island off the west coast of Baja California.

- **Exposure** – Cool Sun to Light Shade
- **Water Requirements** – Low; Drought-tolerant
- **Bloom** – Purple in Spring through Summer

**Dimensions** – 1-2 ft. x 3-4 ft.

**Winter Hardiness**: 20-25° F

**Origin** – California

*WUCOLS classification in Regions 3 and 4 - “Low”*