

Drought-tolerant plants

GWF402
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Generally, most plants with small, leathery, grassy or succulent leaves, as well as those with grey or hairy leaves, will tolerate drought conditions.

All the plants listed here should fare better than average in a hot, dry summer.

Trees and shrubs

Aralia elata (angelica tree) ✂
Arbutus unedo (strawberry tree) ✂
Berberis, evergreen ✂
Betula (birch) ✂
Brachyglottis 'Sunshine' ☼ □
Buddleja davidii (butterfly bush) ☼
Buxus (box) ☼
Caragana arborescens (pea tree) ☼
Caryopteris x clandonensis ✂
Chaenomeles (flowering quince) ✂
Ceanothus ●
Choisya ●
Cistus (sun rose) ☼ □
Colutea arborescens ☼ □
Convolvulus cneorum ☼
Cordyline australis (cabbage tree) ✂
Corokia cotoneaster ☼ □
Cotoneaster ✂
Cytisus (broom) ☼ □
Danae racemosa ✂
Daphne mezereum (poisonous) ✂ □
Elaeagnus ☼
Euonymus europaeus (poisonous) ●
Euonymus fortunei ● □
Fagus sylvatica (beech) ☼
Genista (broom) ✂ □
Gleditsia triacanthos 'Sunburst' ☼ □
Griselinia littoralis ✂
x Halimocistus ☼ □
Hebe, small-leaved ● □
Helianthemum (rock rose) ☼ □
Hibiscus syriacus ●
Hippophaë rhamnoides (sea buckthorn) ✂

Indigofera ✂ □
Ilex (holly) ☼
Jasminum nudiflorum ● □
Juniperus ✂
Kerria japonica ✂
Lavandula (lavender) ✂
Lavatera (tree mallow) ✂
Ligustrum (privet) ☼
Lithodora ✂
Olearia (daisy bush) ☼ □
Perovskia (Russian sage) ☼ □
Philadelphus (mock orange) ●
Phlomis fruticosa (Jerusalem sage) ☼ □
Phlomis longifolia ☼ □
Phormium ●
Physocarpus ●
Picea pungens 'Glauca' ✂
Pinus mugo (dwarf pine) ☼ □
Pittosporum tenuifolium ✂ □
Potentilla fruticosa ●
Prunus laurocerasus 'Otto Luyken' ☼
Prunus laurocerasus 'Zabeliana' ☼
Prunus subhirtella 'Autumnalis' ●
Rhus typhina (sumach) ✂ □
Ribes sanguineum (flowering currant) ●
Robinia pseudoacacia 'Frisia' ✂
Rosa glauca ✂
Rosa rugosa ✂
Rosmarinus officinalis (rosemary) ✂ □
Ruscus aculeatus (butcher's broom) ☼
Ruta (rue, irritant) ☼ □
Salvia officinalis (sage) ✂ □
Santolina (cotton lavender) ✂ □
Sasa veitchii (bamboo) ✂
Sophora japonica (pagoda tree) ✂ □
Spartium junceum ☼
Symphoricarpos (snowberry) ☼
Tamarix ☼

Taxus baccata (yew) ☼
Ulex europaeus (gorse) ☼
Viburnum, evergreen ●
Vinca (periwinkle) ☼
Yucca gloriosa ☼ □

Climbers

Clematis montana ✂
Fallopia baldschuanica ☼
Hedera (ivy) ✂
Parthenocissus ✂
Trachelospermum asiaticum ✂
Tropaeolum tuberosum ✂
Vitis coignetiae ✂
Vitis vinifera 'Purpurea' ✂

Perennials

Acaena (New Zealand burr) ☼
Acanthus (bear's breeches) ●
Achillea ✂
Aconitum (wolf's bane, poisonous) ✂
Agapanthus ✂
Alcea rugosa (hollyhock) ✂
Alchemilla mollis (lady's mantle) ✂
Anthemis ✂ □
Artemisia 'Powis Castle' ☼ □
Arum italicum (poisonous) ✂
Aster ericoides ✂
Aquilegia (columbine) ●
Bergenia ✂
Brunnera macrophylla ●
Calamintha nepeta ☼ □
Campanula carpatica ✂
Campanula poscharskyana ☼
Catananche caerulea ●
Cerastium tomentosum ☼
Cichorium intybus 'Album' ✂
Cirsium rivulare 'Atropurpureum' ☼
Coreopsis grandiflora ✂
Coreopsis verticillata ✂

Crambe cordifolia ✨
Crocsmia ●
Cynara cardunculus (cardoon) ✨
Cynara Scolymus Group ✨
Dianthus (pinks) ✨
Dictamnus albus (burning bush) ✨
Digitalis purpurea (foxglove) ●
Echinacea purpurea (coneflower) ✨
Echinops ritro (globe thistle) ✨
Eremurus (foxtali lily) ●
Erodium (stork's bill) ✨
Eruca vesicaria sativa ✨
Eryngium maritima
 (sea holly) ✨ □
Erysimum (perennial wallflower) ●
Euphorbia (spurge, irritant) ✨
Festuca glauca ✨
Foeniculum vulgare (fennel) ✨
Gaillardia ✨
Geranium 'Wargrave Pink' ✨
Geranium renardii ✨
Geranium sanguineum ✨
Geranium 'Spinners' ✨
Geum ●
Helictotrichon sempervirens
 (blue oat grass) ✨
Heliopsis helianthoides ●
Hemerocallis (dayily) ●
Heuchera micrantha 'Palace
 Purple' ●
Heuchera sanguinea ●
x Heucherella alba ●
Hosta, small-leafed ✨
Iris foetidissima (stinking iris) ✨
Knautia ✨ □
Kniphofia (red-hot poker) ✨
Leucanthemum x superba ●
Levisticum (lovage) ✨
Limonium latifolium
 (sea lavender) ✨
Linaria (toadflax) ✨
Linum narbonense ✨
Linum perenne (flax) ✨
Liriope muscari (lily turf) ✨
Macleaya cordata (plume poppy) ✨
Malva moschata ✨ □
Muscari comosum 'Plumosum' ✨
Nepeta cataria (catmint) ✨ □
Oenothera missouriensis (evening
 primrose) ✨ □
Onopordum acanthium ✨
Ophiopogon jaburan 'Vittatus' ✨
Ophiopogon planiscapus
 'Nigrescens' ✨
Papaver orientale ●
Penstemon pinifolius ✨ □
Polygonatum biflorum ● □

Pulmonaria (lungwort) ✨
Rudbeckia fulgida 'Goldsturm' ✨
Saxifraga x urbium (London pride) ✨
Sedum spectabile (ice plant) ✨
Sedum telephium 'Atropurpureum' ✨
Silene uniflora 'Flore Pleno' ✨
Sisyrinchium striatum ✨
Stachys byzantina (lamb's ears) ✨
Symphytum grandiflorum ✨
Tanacetum balsamita ✨
Thalictrum aquilegifolium ●
Verbascum thapsus ✨
Veronica perfoliata ✨
Viola 'Freckles' ●
Waldsteinia ternata ✨

Bedding and patio plants

Alonsoa ✨ □
Arctotis ✨ □
Argyranthemum (marguerite) ✨ □
Begonia fuchsoides ✨
Bidens ✨
Diascia ✨
Helichrysum petiolare ✨
Lantana (poisonous) ✨
Nicotiana (poisonous) ✨
Osteospermum ✨ □
Pelargonium (geranium) ✨
Perilla frutescens ✨
Petunia ✨
Plectranthus ✨
Portulaca grandiflora ✨ □
Senecio maritima ✨
Zinnia ✨ □

Annuals

Atriplex hortensis ✨
Cosmos bipinnatus ✨
Eschscholzia californica (Californian
 poppy) ✨
Gaillardia pulchella ✨
Gazania ✨ □
Gomphrena globosa ✨
Helichrysum bracteatum ✨
Helipterum ✨
Ipomoea purpurea (poisonous) ✨
Mesembryanthemum ✨ □
Papaver somniferum ✨
Silybum marianum ✨
Tithonia rotundifolia ✨ □
Tropaeolum majus (nasturtium) ✨

Rock garden plants

Achillea tomentosa 'Aurea' ✨ □
Androsace ✨
Antennaria dioica 'Rubra' ✨
Armeria maritima (thrift) ✨ □
Calceolaria biflora ● □

Dianthus alpinus 'Allwoodii'
 (alpine pink) ✨ □
Dianthus 'Spring Beauty' ✨ □
Erinus alpinus ✨ □
Genista sagittalis ✨ □
Geranium 'Ballerina' ✨ □
Helianthemum (rock rose) ✨ □
Lewisia cotyledon Sunset
 Group ✨ □
Phlox douglasii ✨
Sedum spathulifolium
 'Cape Blanco' ✨ □
Sempervivum tectorum ✨

Key

- ✨ Very drought tolerant once established
- ✨ Drought tolerant once established
- Moderately drought tolerant once established
- Needs well-drained soil

Getting plants established

Even drought-resistant plants need watering while they are getting established.

Give plants a good soaking before you put them in. If the rootball is very dry, submerge it in a bucket of water for a while.

On free-draining soils, mix in organic matter to improve water retention. Put the plant in the hole and water it in before filling in with soil. Give a final watering after firming in to settle the roots.

On heavy soils, incorporate a mixture of organic matter and sharp sand or grit. This will open up the structure, improve water retention and reduce the chances of clay soils cracking during a dry summer.

Apply a mulch around the plant to help keep the soil cool, reduce surface evaporation and keep down competition from weeds and other plants. Keep the mulch away from the centre of the plant as this could lead to rotting in winter.

When planting a new garden or border, create shelter using drought-resistant trees and shrubs. Minimise plants' exposure to winds to reduce the amount of water lost through the plant leaves and through evaporation from the soil.