

Desert Hardy Shrubs

The Mojave Desert is an environment of extremes, yet it offers a unique canvas for creating landscapes of breathtaking beauty. Far from being a barren wasteland, the Desert Southwest can be a lush, vibrant sanctuary when you choose the right plant palette. This Star Note highlights a selection of "tried and true" hardy shrubs that have proven their resilience against our intense summer sun and freezing winter nights. These plants are the backbone of successful desert landscapes, offering everything from brilliant seasonal blooms to architectural evergreen textures.

Beyond their aesthetic appeal, these shrubs serve as a vital lifeline for our local ecosystem. By incorporating these varieties, you create a sanctuary for wildlife and pollinators; nectar-rich blooms invite hummingbirds & butterflies, while dense foliage provides essential nesting sites & cover for desert birds.

To ensure these desert stars thrive, proper care is essential. All of the plants listed below require well-drained soil to prevent root rot during our occasional heavy rains. To keep them healthy and vigorous, we recommend seasonal fertilizing with **Dr. Q's Desert Plant Food**. Its well-balanced, slow-release nitrogen formula is specifically designed to provide the steady nutrition desert plants need without causing the surge of weak growth common with standard fertilizers.

Desert Hardy Shrubs:

Common Name	Scientific Name	Water Usage	Flower Color	Description
Apache Plume	<i>Fallugia paradoxa</i>	Low to Moderate	White (Pink seeds)	Unique for its feathery, pink seed heads that look like "smoke" after white flowers bloom.
Arizona Rosewood	<i>Vauquelinia californica</i>	Low to Moderate	White	A slow-growing evergreen that serves as a desert-hardy alternative to Oleander.
Autumn Sage	<i>Salvia greggii</i>	Low to Moderate	Various Colors	Comes in many colors; very durable and blooms for long periods in spring and fall.
Baja Fairy Duster	<i>Calliandra californica</i>	Low to Moderate	Crimson Red	Features red "powder puff" flowers that attract hummingbirds year-round.
Brittlebush	<i>Encelia farinosa</i>	Very Low	Yellow	Silver-gray foliage with bright yellow daisies; very fast-growing and drought-hardy.
Butterfly Bush	<i>Buddleia davidii</i> spp.	Low to Moderate	Various Colors	Features marble-sized flowers and soft, velvety silver leaves.
Creosote Bush	<i>Larrea tridentata</i>	Very Low	Yellow	The iconic scent of the desert rain; incredibly drought-tolerant and virtually indestructible.
Dalea	<i>Dalea</i> spp.	Low to Moderate	Purple or Yellow	Includes the Indigo Bush and Sierra Gold; offers fine texture and vibrant flowers.
Desert Daisy	<i>Chrysactinia mexicana</i>	Low to Moderate	Yellow	A small, aromatic shrub that looks like a mounding pine until covered in daisies.
Desert Globemallow	<i>Sphaeralcea ambigua</i>	Very Low	Orange, Pink, White	Native with cup-shaped flowers; very tough and drought-resistant.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Water Usage	Flower Color	Description
Desert Marigold	<i>Baileya multiradiata</i>	Very Low	Yellow	A prolific yellow bloomer that loves rocky, poor soil.
Desert Sage	<i>Salvia dorrii</i>	Low to Moderate	Blue-Purple	A local native with striking flower spikes and silvery foliage.
Desert Willow	<i>Chilopsis linearis</i>	Low to Moderate	Pink/Burgundy	Often a small tree, can be grown as a large, airy shrub with orchid-like blooms.
Firecracker Penstemon	<i>Penstemon eatonii</i>	Low to Moderate	Scarlet Red	Low-growing but high impact. Attracts hummingbirds. Best in morning sun.
Hopseed Bush	<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>	Low to Moderate	Green/Bronze	Excellent for evergreen privacy screens or hedges; takes reflected heat well.
Little Leaf Cordia	<i>Cordia parvifolia</i>	Low to Moderate	White	A "tough as nails" shrub with white, tissue-paper-like flowers in spring and summer.
Mexican Bird of Paradise	<i>Caesalpinia mexicana</i>	Low to Moderate	Yellow	Known for its fern-like leaves and bright yellow flower clusters.
Parry's Agave	<i>Agave parryi</i>	Low to Moderate	Blue Green or Yellow (rare)	A structural succulent shrub that adds architectural "art" to the garden.
Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia spp.</i>	Low to Moderate	Various Colors	While a cactus, it functions as a shrub; famous for its purple-tinged pads.
Red Bird of Paradise	<i>Caesalpinia pulcherrima</i>	Low to Moderate	Red-Orange	Loves the heat; produces spectacular "sunset" flowers.
Red Yucca	<i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i>	Very Low	Coral/Red	Not a true yucca; evergreen, thornless, and produces long-lasting flower spikes.
Spanish Lavender	<i>Lavandula stoechas</i>	Low to Moderate	Blue-Violet	Highly fragrant, silvery shrub that attracts bees and butterflies.
Texas Mountain Laurel	<i>Sophora Secundiflora</i>	Low to Moderate	Purple/Violet	Large shrub with fragrant purple cascading spring flowers; slow grower but once established, a reliable sun and heat-tolerant evergreen.
Texas Ranger	<i>Leucophyllum frutescens</i>	Very Low	Purple/Lavender	Extremely hardy; famous for purple blooms triggered by humidity.
Valentine Emu Bush	<i>Eremophila maculata</i>	Low to Moderate	Red/Hot Pink	An Australian native that thrives in Vegas; blooms in the dead of winter.
Yellow Bells	<i>Tecoma stans</i>	Low to Moderate	Bright Yellow	Provides a lush, tropical look despite high heat.