



Plant a Bat Garden

Southern California bats feed heavily on night-flying insects such as moths, beetles, and mosquitoes. By planting a bat-friendly garden with native plants, you can provide critical insect habitat and help sustain local bat populations. Thank you to Luma Fowler, Southern California Bat Biologist, for the following information.

Native Plants for Southern California Bat Gardens

Wildflowers & Perennials

- California evening primrose (*Oenothera californica*) – night-blooming, moth-attracting
- Beach evening primrose (*Camissoniopsis cheiranthifolia*) – coastal areas
- California phlox (*Phlox diffusa* var. *subterranea*) – insect-rich groundcover
- Catchfly campion (*Silene laciniata*) – red night-blooming flower attractive to moths
- California fleabane (*Erigeron californicus*) – supports native bees & moths
- Goldenrod (*Solidago velutina* ssp. *californica*) – late-season nectar for insects
- California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*) – long-blooming, moth and hummingbird food
- Coyote mint (*Monardella villosa*) – fragrant, attracts moths & native pollinators
- Narrowleaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) – host for butterflies and moths



Shrubs & Subshrubs

- Cleveland sage (*Salvia clevelandii*) – fragrant, highly attractive to insects
- White sage (*Salvia apiana*) – classic SoCal plant, insect nectar source
- Black sage (*Salvia mellifera*) – supports diverse insect guilds
- California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) – prolific bloomer, excellent insect plant
- California lilac (*Ceanothus* spp., esp. *Ceanothus leucodermis*) – early blooms, high insect value
- Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) – insect-rich flowers, berry-bearing for birds
- California sunflower (*Helianthus californicus*) – strong insect draw



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Trees & Larger Structural Plants

- Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) – keystone species, supports hundreds of insects and roosting habitat for bats
- Western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) – riparian insect host
- Willows (*Salix lasiolepis*, *Salix gooddingii*) – crucial for moth larvae and riparian insects



Some other tips for a bat garden

Dead trees are also important bat habitats; they provide a place for insects to gather and as roosting spots for bats. Train fragrant perennial vines to climb walls or fences to provide possible roosting sites. Create a sheltered corner by using any combination of walls, fences, or hedges at two angles. Ponds provide water for insects to reproduce. Un-mown areas provide shelter and food for insect larvae. Garden lights can attract insects and serve as a feeder for the bats. Garden organically. Pesticides can be very harmful to bats and other wildlife.

Bats can help your garden

Bats eat many garden and agricultural pests including cutworm moths, chafer beetles, potato beetles and spotted cucumber beetles. Some moths can detect a bats' echolocation and will avoid the area where bats are present. Bat guano is also a great fertilizer.

Bats and plants around the world

Bats are very important to many species of plants around the world. In the tropics, fruit and nectar feeding bats are very important to the survival and re-growth of the rainforest. Fruit eating bats disperse rainforest seeds as they fly, many miles each night. Nectar feeding bats pollinate the flowers of many valuable plants, including bananas, mangoes, dates and figs. In desert areas, bats are important pollinators. Many cacti species depend on bats for pollination and only open their flowers at night. Bats are the primary pollinators of the pipe organ cactus and the agave from which we produce tequila. And of course, the many insect eating bats found around the world are important in protecting plants by controlling the insect pest population.