

Plants for Problem Places: Salt Spray

It's a dream for many, living right on the beach. But that ocean view comes with a price. The salt from the spray can be very tough on plants. We have put together a list of plants that not only tolerate salt spray, but thrive in a coastal exposure.

Trees

- *Arbutus menziesii* or Pacific Madrone. Beautiful, moderate sized evergreen tree, very difficult to establish, but thrives in coastal areas. Messy leaf litter.
- *Arbutus unedo* or Strawberry Tree. Small evergreen tree with ornamental strawberry-like fruits in the fall. A close relative of our native Madrone.
- *Cryptomeria japonica* Japanese Cedar. Several cultivars available, small to medium sized conifers. Need moist summer soil to thrive.
- *Eucalyptus sp.* Eucalyptus. Several varieties of evergreen trees, small to large growing.
- *Ginkgo biloba* Ginkgo. Several cultivars available, from 10' dwarfs to 40' shade trees. Prefer deep soils. Spectacular fall color.
- *Nyssa sylvatica* Blackgum or Tupelo. Moderate sized shade tree, to 30'-40', tolerant of wet soil. Brilliant fall color.
- *Pinus sp.* Two-needled Pines. Includes Shore pine, Japanese Black pine, Scots pines, and Mugo pines. Five-needled pines are not tolerant of salt.

Shrubs

- *Acuba japonica* Acuba. Evergreen shrubs, ornamental berries, many cultivars available, best in shade.
- *Arctostaphylos sp.* Manzanita & Kinnikinnik. Moderate sized evergreen shrubs and groundcovers. Prefer well-drained soils, drought tolerant when established.
- *Ceanothus sp.* California wild lilac. Many cultivars available, most are evergreen with blue or white summer flowers. Drought tolerant when established.
- *Cistus* Rockroses. Evergreen shrubs, many cultivars available, growing from 2'-8' depending on variety. Full sun, needs well-drained soils.
- *Elaeagnus sp.* Deciduous and evergreen shrubs, most are drought tolerant when established, many of the deciduous species have berries.
- *Erica sp.* Heather. Low, evergreen shrubs for sun and good soil. Both winter and summer blooming varieties are available.
- *Escallonia* Escallonia are evergreen shrubs, many cultivars available, with summer flowers of pale to deep pink. Can be sheared for hedging.
- *Euonymus japonica* Wintercreeper. Evergreen shrubs in many colors, shapes and sizes.
- *Gaultheria sp.* Salal and its relatives. Evergreen small shrubs or large groundcovers, prefer moist soil in summers and partial shade.
- *Hebe sp.* Shrub Veronicas. Evergreen shrubs and groundcovers, many with colorful foliage and flowers.



Cistus - Rockrose

- *Hippophae rhamnoides* Seaberry. Vigorous deciduous shrubs with silvery leaves and edible, orange berries. Both male and female plants needed for fruit.
- *Hydrangea sp.* Bigleaf and other Hydrangeas. Deciduous shrubs, a variety of flower color and size available, all need summer moisture and prefer partial shade.
- *Juniperus sp.* Junipers. Available in many shapes and sizes, from low groundcovers to medium sized trees. All need well drained soils.
- *Lavendula sp.* Lavender. Shrubby herbs grown for their fragrant flowers. They need full sun and well drained soils.
- *Lonicera sp.* Shrub Honeysuckles. Deciduous and evergreen shrubs, many with fragrant flowers and/or ornamental berries.



Pacific Wax Myrtle

- *Morella (Myrica) californica* Pacific Wax Myrtle. Evergreen shrub native to the West Coast. Can grow quite large if wind protected. Can be sheared for hedges.
- *Pittosporum sp.* Pittosporums or Tobira. Evergreen shrubs, most growing to 10'-12' or more, easily hedged. Check hardiness for your site.
- *Rosa sp.* Species and Wild Roses. Many roses are quite tolerant of salt spray. Check for disease resistance if planting hybrids; the moist air can cause mildew and blackspot problems.
- *Rosmarinus officinalis* Rosemary. Shrubby evergreen herbs, needs well drained soils and full sun. Drought tolerant when established.
- *Viburnum sp.* Viburnums. Deciduous and evergreen shrubs in a wide range of shapes, sizes and flower color.

Perennials & Bulbs

- *Achilla sp.* Yarrow. Low ferny foliage topped by flat flowerheads in summer. Many colors available.
- *Armeria sp.* Seathrift. Grassy foliage topped in late spring by ball shaped flower heads, usually pink. Drought tolerant when established.
- *Camas sp.* Camas. Mid spring bloomers, most often blue, from bulbs. Tolerant of winter wet soils, often go dormant by early summer.
- *Erigeron sp.* Fleabanes. Many species of daisy like flowers native to the West Coast, and their hybrids.
- *Fritillaria sp.* Chocolate Lily. Native lily relatives with interesting checkered flowers in early spring. Summer dormant.
- *Iris tenax* Pacific Iris. Evergreen iris native to coastal California and Oregon.
- *Sedum sp.* Stonecrop. Deciduous and evergreen succulents, many colors and sizes, more often grown for leaf texture rather than flowers.
- *Lavatera sp.* Bush Mallow. Really a shrub, not a perennial, but best if cut to ground each spring. Prefers sandy, lean soils, full sun.

Grasses

- *Calamagrostis sp.* Reed Feather Grass. Tall deciduous grasses, several named varieties.
- *Festucas sp.* Fescues. Short evergreen clumping grasses, several in blues and grays. Drought tolerant when established.
- *Helictotrichon sempervirens* Blue Oat Grass. Evergreen blue grass, moderated sized, to 2', drought tolerant when established.
- *Pennisetum sp.* Fountain Grass. Deciduous clumping grasses, ornamental flowers.