

# Plants for Problem Areas

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# Types of Problem Areas

- Shady
- Low Water
- Overly Wet
- Hillsides Subject to Erosion and Low Water
- Hell Strip
- Tight Clay Soil
- Privacy Hedge
- Fast Draining and Low Water



# Plants for Shady Areas



# Liriope

**Genus:** Liriope

**Species:** muscari or spicata \*

**Description:**

- Flowering plant from Asia
- Grows to about 1 ft tall
- Clumping groundcover
- Valued for
  - Adding color to shady areas

**Interesting Facts:**

- Named after a water nymph from Greek mythology
- Has the nickname of creeping lilyturf
- Also known as spider grass or monkey grass
- The roots are used in traditional Chinese medicine
- Don't eat the berries!



# Lamium

**Genus:** Lamium

**Species:** amplexicaule \*

**Description:**

- Annual / biennial
- Forb
- Grows to 20 inches tall with a pinkish violet flower
- Valued for
  - Deer Resistant groundcover
  - Creates nice color in a shady spot

**Interesting Facts:**

- Often referred to as Henbit Deadnettle
- Where and when during year they are planted most often determines color
- Considered a weed by some



# Coral Bells

**Genus:** Heuchera

**Species:** sanguinea \*

**Description:**

- Perennial forb
- Glowering stalks up to 18 inches
- Has native status in Arizona
- Valued for
  - Hummingbird gardens

**Interesting Facts:**

- Sometimes called alumroot though that is a different species of Heuchera
- Native americans used some species medicinally. *H. glabra* was used as an herbal remedy for inflammation of the testicles



# Creeping Oregon Grape

**Genus:** Mahonia

**Species:** repens

**Description:**

- Evergreen but leaves turn bronze in fall
- Berries are edible(tart) , good for jelly
- Valued for
  - Grows 4-8 in high
  - Good ground cover for cold locations
  - Natural landscapes
  - Reduce the need for irrigation of other plants such as oaks

**Interesting Facts:**

- Also known as creeping barberry or prostrate barberry
- Indians used the plant for medicinal, food, and ceremonial needs. Also used stem to produce yellow dyes



# Wax Currant

**Genus:** Ribes

**Species:** cereum

**Description:**

- Grows 2-6 ft
- Aromatic
- Fruit is edible but unpalatable
- Valued for drought tolerant and grows well in partial sun
- Great for a bird or butterfly garden

**Interesting Facts:**

- Also known as squaw or whiskey currant
- Member of the gooseberry family
- Infusion of inner bark used by some indians as a sore eye wash
- Fruit eaten by Indians to induce vomiting or stop diarrhea



# Drought Tolerant Plants



# Lavender

**Genus:** Lavendula

**Species:** angustifolia

**Description:**

- Low growing shrub
- Grows to about 2 ft
- Commonly used as an ornamental
- Valued for low water needs once established and its fragrance
- Is deer and rabbit resistant

**Interesting Facts:**

- Also known as English Lavender, true lavender or common lavender
- Not from England but from Spain



# Rosemary

**Genus:** Rosmarinus

**Species:** officinalis

**Description:**

- Hardy, evergreen perennial plant
- Can reach 5 ft tall
- Valued for drought resistant though it does need some water. Also for ability to survive colder weather

**Interesting Facts:**

- Greeks and Romans associated it with love
- Some people identify it as an effective insect repellent
- Rosemary oil has been topically applied for cancer prevention properties.
- Never ingest the oil as it can be poisonous



# Prickly Pear

**Genus:** Opuntia

**Species:** ficus-indica

**Description:**

- Cactus
- Valued for low water requirements, winter hardy, very edible

**Interesting Facts:**

- Also known as Barberry Fig or Indian Fig
- Used as a crop in Mexico
- Fruit contains vitamin C and was used as an early cure for scurvy
- Fruits are called “tunas”
- Pads are called “nopales” and are considered a vegetable



# Agave

**Genus: Monocot**

**Species: parryi \***

**Description:**

- Perennial
- Succulent plant often misnamed a cactus
- Valued for its remarkable cold hardiness and low water requirements

**Interesting Facts:**

- Also known as Parry's or mescal agave
- The agave was named after a queen in Greek mythology
- A monocarpic or semelparity plant – once it blooms it dies
- Cultivated by humans for food, fiber and alcohol



# Hummingbird Mint

**Genus:** Agastache (ag-ah-STAK-ee)

**Species:** 30 different species – 19 native to the US

**Agastache cana** – Texas Hummingbird Mint

**Description:**

- Aromatic Perennial
- Long bloom time, beautiful flower spikes
- May be grown as an annual
- Grow up to 3 feet in height
- Tolerate heat and early frost
- Valued for
  - Attracting birds, bees, and beneficial insects
  - Providing long lasting color in dryer areas

**Interesting Facts:**

- Also called Wild Hyssop, Mosquito Plant, Mexican Hyssop
- Agastache is Greek for “many spikes”
- Releases a mosquito-repelling odor. Crush plant and apply directly to skin



# Salvia

**Genus:** Salvia

**Species:** arizonica, columbariae, or officinalis

**Description:**

- Herbaceous annuals and perennials, largest genus in the mint family
- Arizona – deep blue flowering native that is deer and rabbit resistant
- Columbariae – commonly known as “chia”
- Officinalis – commonly known as sage, garden or common sage
- Valued for

**Interesting Facts:**

- Reproductive process is highly unusual
- *S. officinalis* has been cultivated since ancient times for warding off evil, snakebites, increasing women’s fertility and more



# Russian Sage

**Genus:** Perovskia

**Species:** atriplicifolia

**Description:**

- Flowering herbaaceous perennial
- Requires full sun but is hardy in extreme environments
- Grows to about 4 ft tall
- Valued for it's hardiness, multiple uses and that it is deer and rabbit resistant

**Interesting Facts:**

- Not in same genus as "sage"
- In it's native habitat flowers are eaten fresh and leaves are smoked like tobacco
- Used in the middle east for dysentery



# Prairie Zinnia

**Genus:** Zinnia

**Species:** grandiflora

**Description:**

- Flowering perennial shrub
- Grows 6-8 in tall
- Valued for as a water-wise plant
- Deer and rabbit resistant

**Interesting Facts:**

- Also known as wild zinnia or Rocky Mountain Zinnia
- Used in Native American ceremonies
- Zunis' used as a poultice to bruises, cold infusion of blossoms as an eyewash and smoke from the powdered plant inhaled in a sweatbath for fever



# Buffalo Grass

**Genus:** Buchloe

**Species:** dactyloides

**Description:**

- Warm season, perennial shortgrass
- Roots and stolens form a dense sod
- Can be used for meadows or turf
- Plant from plugs in sunny areas
- Valued for drought , heat, cold tolerant, nice filler grass for blue grama and weeds have a hard time competing with it

**Interesting Facts:**

- In Australia this grass is known as prairie grass
- Buffalo grass has adapted to fire and often grows better after a fire
- Often considered our only native turf



# Plants that Tolerate Excessive Water



# Joe-Pye Weed

**Genus:** Eutrochium

**Species:**

**Description:**

- Herbaceous, flowering plant
- 36-48 in tall
- Tolerates cold well
- Often considered a weed
- Valued for:
  - Growing in wet areas

**Interesting Facts:**

- Named after Jopi, an Indian healer from New England
- Folklore says this plant has been used to cure fever, treat typhus outbreaks, kidney stones and other urinary tract ailments.
- Entire plant ( *E. purpureum*) is edible and leaves can be used for teas



# Iris

**Genus:** Iris

**Species:** ensata, pseudacorus

**Description:**

- Herbaceous flowering perennial plants
- I. ensata – Japanese Iris
- I. pseudacorus – Yellow flag or Yellow Iris
- Multiple species of Louisiana Iris
- Valued for:
  - Growing in wet often shady areas

**Interesting Facts:**

- Yellow Iris is well known for bog garden planting
- Louisiana Iris is native to swamps and the interbreeding of the plant in the water has spawned a number of new species yet unnamed



# Arizona Walnut

**Genus:** Juglans

**Species:** major

**Description:**

- Grows up to 50 ft or more
- Size dependent on water
- Slow growing but live a long time
- Valued for:
  - Growing in wet areas

**Interesting Facts:**

- The flower pollen is a severe allergen
- Nuts are small but edible



# Plants Suitable for Hillsides and Erosion Control – Low Water



# Sandpaper verbena

**Genus:** Verbena

**Species:** rigida

**Description:**

- Evergreen, herbaceous groundcover
- Approximately 1 ft tall
- Long blooming period
- Valued for groundcover needing little water. Also good for erosion control on slopes

**Interesting Facts:**

- Also known as Prairie Verbena
- Native to South America
- When it looks ragged, cut it back to the ground and let it regrow



# Teucrium

**Genus: Teucrium**

**Species: chamaedrys \***

**Description:**

- Low mounding groundcover
- Evergreen
- 12-18 in tall
- Handles temps well below freezing
- Once established needs little water
- Valued for:
  - Low water needs
  - Happy home for bees

**Interesting Facts:**

- Historically used as a medicinal herb for the treatment of gout
- Also known as germander
- Great to use as an herb wreath to freshen a room



# Common Ivy

**Genus:** Hedera

**Species:** H.helix

**Description:**

- A rampant, clinging evergreen vine that is fairly drought tolerant
- Considered a good food resource for birds and insects

**Interesting Facts:**

- Highly invasive species labeled as a noxious weed
- Sale and cultivation is banned in Oregon
- A substance in the leaves has been found to kill breast cancer cells.
- While some are allergic to it, a poultice made from the leaves has been used for cuts and sores
- Secondary compounds in the leaves are used for natural pesticides for insects



# Japanese Honeysuckle

Genus: *Lonicera*

Species: *L. japonica*

Description:

- aka Hall's Prolific (*Lonicera japonica* var. *halliana*)
- Effective groundcover with pleasant, strong smelling flowers
- Spreads via shoots
- **INVASIVE** so cut it back

Interesting Facts:

- Japanese call this “winter enduring vine”
- Use in traditional Chinese medicine to treat fever, headache, cough, thirst and sore throat
- Javalina seem to leave it alone



# Cotoneaster Dammeri

(broadleaf evergreen)

Genus: Cotoneaster

Species: *C. dammeri*

Description:

- Fast growing low shrub with creeping branches
- Reaches 12-16 in in height
- Bottom side of leaves turn a purple color in autumn
- Popular varieties are Coral Beauty & Eichholtz

Interesting Facts:

- Popular bonsai plant



# Blue Grama Grass

**Genus:** Bouteloua

**Species:** gracilis

**Description:**

- C4 perennial grass
- Warm season
- 6-12 inches in height
- Dense shallow root mass
- Grazing, cold, drought tolerant
- Valued for
  - Foraging grass for livestock
  - Erosion control
  - Habitat restoration
  - Native plant landscaping

**Interesting Facts:**

- State grass of NM and CO
- Endangered species in IL
- Zuni people used as hair brushes, brooms, and to strain goat's milk



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# Sideoats Grama Grass

**Genus:** Bouteloua

**Species:** curtipendula

**Description:**

- C4 perennial grass
- Warm season
- 12-40 inches in height
- Small oat-like seed on side of stalk
- Grazing, cold, drought tolerant
- Valued for
  - Foraging grass for livestock
  - Erosion control
  - Native plant landscaping

**Interesting Facts:**

- State grass of TX
- Endangered species in IL
- bright purple and orange flowers of sideoats grama give it a special grace and beauty



# Plants for the “Hell Strip”



# What the Heck is the Hell Strip?

Defined by the Urban Dictionary as:

Strip of dirt between the sidewalk and the street, notoriously hard to grow plants of any kind in due to several factors: lack of water, heat reflected from paved surfaces, foot traffic, trash, dog mess, and salt from winter snowmelt. Also called a [tree lawn](#), inferno strip, [devil strip](#) and [verge](#).

Term most often attributed to garden writer Lauren Springer.



# Virginia Creeper

**Genus:** Parthenocissus

**Species:** P.quinquefolia

**Description:**

- Popularly named 5 Finger Ivy
- Flowering plant in the grape family
- Has adhesive pads that attach to walls, trees, etc.
- Berries are toxic to humans but an important winter food for birds

**Interesting Facts:**

- Often mistaken for poison ivy
- The “Virginia Creeper” is also the name of a train in the Iron Mountains of Virginia. The plant grows wild along the train tracks



# Mint

**Genus: Mentha**

**Species: 13 to 18 species exist**

**Description:**

- Perennial herb that tends to take over
- Peppermint, spearmint, apple and wooly mint winter well

**Interesting Facts:**

- Mint without a qualifying like 'Peppermint' typically refers to Spearmint
- The name Menta was derived from the Greek mythological figure Minithe, a nymph who was transformed into the fragrant plant
- Mint has been used for millenia as a symbol of hospitality



# Tight Clay Soil



# Sandpaper Verbena

**Genus:** Verbena

**Species:** *V. rigida*

**Description:**

- Flowering herbaceous perennial
- Has a habit to spread
- Stalkless toothed leaves with bright purple or magenta, scented flowers
- Produces flowers from May to frost
- Attract butterflies

**Interesting Facts:**

- Native to South America but naturalized across the southwest



# Rosemary

**Genus:** Rosemarinus

**Species:** R.officinalis

**Description:**

- Aromatic evergreen
- Flowers in spring and summer
- Drought tolerant
- Easy to grow
- Pest resistant
- Be careful to check hardiness zone!

**Interesting Facts:**

- Has a tendency to flower outside of its normal cycle
- It has been used as a symbol for remembrance during war commemorations and funerals in Europe and Australia. "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance."



# Arizona Cypress

**Genus:** Cupressus

**Species:** C. arizonica

**Description:**

- Coniferous evergreen tree
- Foliage is dense sprays ranging in color from dull gray to bright blue green
- Widely cultivated as an ornamental tree
- Fast growing
- Great for windbreaks

**Interesting Facts:**

- The cones remain closed for many years, only opening after the parent tree is killed in a wildfire, thereby allowing the seeds to colonize the bare ground exposed by the fire.



# Deodar Cedar

**Genus:** Cedrus

**Species:** C. deodara

**Description:**

- Widely grown as an ornamental tree
- Has a conical crown with level branches and drooping branchlets

**Interesting Facts:**

- National tree of Pakistan
- The inner wood is aromatic and used to make incense
- Insects tend to avoid this tree
- The outer bark is astringent



# Privacy Hedges



# Parney Cotoneaster

**Genus:** Cotoneaster

**Species:** *C. lacteus*

**Description:**

- Large evergreen shrub
- A flowering member of the genus

**Interesting Facts:**

- From China and escaped to the Pacific Northwest to become invasive
- Loved by birds and butterflies
- Deer resistant



# Italian Cypress

**Genus:** Cupressus

**Species:** C. sempervirens

**Description:**

- Medium sized coniferous tree
- Long lived
- Known as the “drama tree” for it’s dramatic bends in the wind
- It is susceptible to the fungus, Seiridium cardinale (cypress canker)

**Interesting Facts:**

- It is used as astringent, firming, anti-seborrheic, anti-dandruff, anti-aging and as fragrance.
- It is also the traditional wood used for Italian harpsichords.



# Privet

**Genus:** Ligustrum

**Species:** L. (many species – need to check when purchasing for hardiness zone)

**Description:**

- Fast growing deciduous shrub

**Interesting Facts:**

- A decoction of Chinese Privet leaves has been used to treat diarrhea, stomach ulcers, chronic bowel problems, chapped lips, sore mouths and throat, and dry skin
- Typically considered invasive



# Photinia

**Genus:** Photinia

**Species:** frazeri (cross between *P. glabra* and *P. serrulata*)

**Description:**

- Evergreen woody shrub
- Typical growth 6' to 8' but can get 20' tall
- Spectacular red foliage and colorful spring flowers
- Fast growing

**Interesting Facts:**

- One of the Southwest's quintessential landscape workhorses
- Commonly used as a background, foundation, large border, or tall screen, Photinia can also be pruned into a small patio-sized tree, and it does great in large containers.



# Fast Draining and Low Water



# Winter Jasmine

**Genus:** Jasminum

**Species:** J. nudiflorum

**Description:**

- Arching green shoots with dark green leaves
- Valued by gardeners as one of the few plants that flower in cooler weather
- Lends itself to ground cover and can be trained to climb a wall

**Interesting Facts:**

- In China it's called Yingchun which means "the flower that welcomes Spring"



# Autumn Sage

**Genus:** *Salvia*

**Species:** *S. greggii*

**Description:**

- Herbaceous perennial typically growing in rocky soil
- Green leaves with a spicy fragrance
- Flowers vary in color

**Interesting Facts:**

- As plants go, a more newly discovered one – named and described in 1870



# Penstemon

## Genus: Penstemon

### Species:

*P. pseudospectabilis* **Arizona Penstemon** is 3 to 4 feet tall, robust, bushy plant with fuchsia colored flowers. The leaves are gray-green, triangular and completely encircle the stem. It is native throughout Arizona and western New Mexico.

*P. superbis* **Superb Penstemon** is 2 to 3 feet tall and finer textured than Arizona Penstemon with coral colored flowers. It has blue-green smooth leaves.

*P. parryi* **Parry's Penstemon** is 2 to 3 feet tall with lavender-red flowers. It has blue-green smooth leaves and is native to the lower deserts of Arizona.

*P. eatonii* **Firecracker Penstemon** is 1 to 2 feet tall with scarlet flowers. The leaves are green and have a slightly wavy margin. It is native to Arizona, northern New Mexico, and the southwest Rocky Mountains.

*P. strictus* **Rocky Mountain Penstemon** is 1 to 2 feet tall with bluish-purple flowers. The strap-like leaves are smooth and dark green. This prolific plant is native to the mountains of Nevada, Arizona, northern New Mexico, and the Rocky Mountains.

*P. barbatus* **Southwestern Penstemon** is 2 to 4 feet tall with bright reddish-orange flowers. The leaves are very narrow (almost grass-like) and dark green. It is native to the mountains of the southwest, west Texas, and the Rocky Mountains.



Thank you!

