

***Tagetes lucida*: Mexican Marigold/Tarragon, Pericón**

- Mexican Marigold native to Southern Mexico (Oaxaca) and Guatemala;
- Perennial, compact and mounding plant;
- Very popular medicinal and spice plant in Mexico and Central America;
- Leaves used by Nahuatl to flavor “chocolatl”;
- Used by Tzeltal Maya to treat fever, nausea, flu, general gastrointestinal distress;
- Secretions from roots effective in nematode control;
- Anise-scented leaves popular in salsas.



Opuntia spp.: Prickly Pear, Nopal

- Plant used for thousands of years in Mexico and Central America for both food and medicine;
- Extremely drought tolerant cactus species, thornless cultivars available locally;
- Pads cooked, fruits (tuna) consumed raw;
- Mexican traditional medicine used to treat diabetes (normalizes blood sugar), said to lower cholesterol;
- Sap used as binding agent in adobe brick manufacturing during colonial period





Asclepias curassavica: Mexican Milkweed, Bloodflower, Hierba Lechosa



- 4' x 4' annual native to Central and South America;
- Excellent ethnobotanical story linking plants, insects and culture, also used by Maya to treat skin conditions (rash and lesions);
- Self seeds;
- Common to Georgia nurseries.



Dysphania ambrosioides: Epazote

formerly: *Chenopodium ambrosioides*

Used for 1000's of years by indigenous Mexicans/Central Americans to flavor food (beans) and cure stomach "issues."



Aloysia triphylla/*Lippia citriodora*, Lemon Verbena, Cedrón



- Lemon Verbena a compact 4' x 4' woody, perennial shrub from Argentina, Chile, Uruguay;
- Strong lemon scent (citral) of rough textured leaves;
- Drought tolerant once established;
- Leaves widely used in Latin America as a tea to combat depression, general tonic, indigestion, anti-inflammatory, edible leaves used to flavor salads, ice creams, etc.;
- Propagated by stem cuttings;
- Can be found in local nurseries;
- GA growing season usually too short for flowers.

Poliomintha longiflora: Mexican Oregano

- Mexican Oregano, native to Mexican state of Nuevo Leon found throughout Mexico and US Southwest as ornamental;
- Leaves used in Mexico as oregano-like spice in salsas;
- USDA study confirms high antioxidant activity;
- Exceptionally drought tolerant, woody sub-shrub;
- Plant has flushes of flowers from June until first hard freeze;
- To date, only available mail order.



Salvia leucantha: Mexican Bush Sage

- 4' x 4' perennial native to Mexico/Central America;
- Mounding habit, many cultivars;
- Late summer/fall flowering in zone 7;
- Primarily ornamental, some traditional use reported in Mexico as diabetes treatment (specifically treatment for low blood sugar);
- Attracts butterflies, hummingbirds;
- Propagation best through stem cuttings, division of rooted plants;
- Locally available species.



Salvia elegans: Pineapple Sage



- Another sage easily found in local nurseries, a perennial, compact sub-shrub growing to 3' x3';
- Very drought tolerant once established and does not spread;
- Pineapple scented edible leaves and flowers;
- Leaves used medicinally in teas to relieve indigestion and as general tonic for depression;
- Excellent plant choice for butterfly garden.

Ilex paraguayensis: Yerba Mate



- Native to Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil;
- Large evergreen shrub, small tree, drought tolerant when established (6 - 10' zone 7);
- Leaves used for tea popular among millions of South Americans;
- High caffeine content, plant used as stimulant, antidepressant, highly diuretic;
- Traditional healthful beverage of the Guarani.

Lantana camara: Shrub Verbena, Banderita

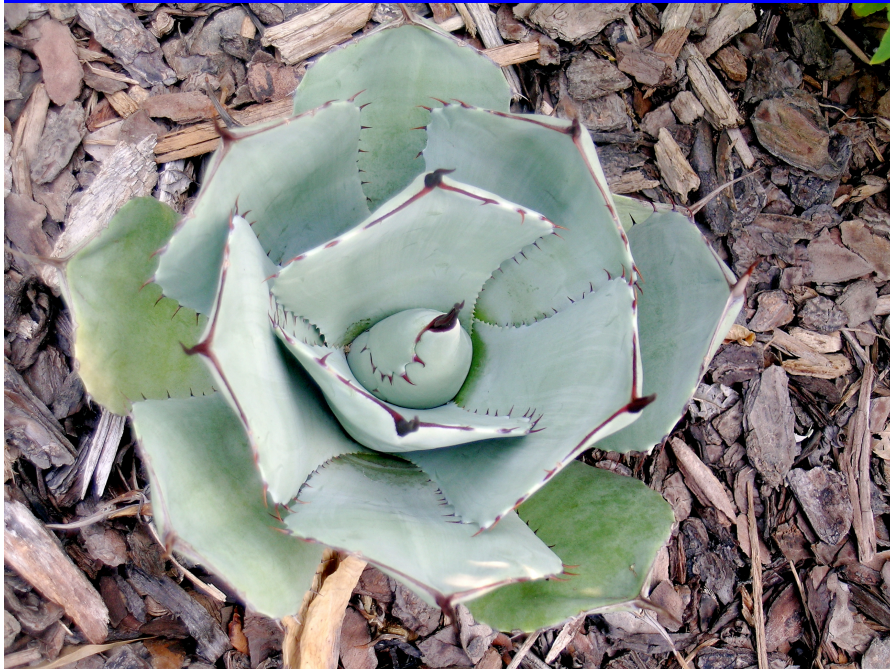


- Native to Tropical Americas, some 150 species throughout Americas and Africa;
- Exceptionally drought tolerant, fast growing woody perennial;
- Easily acquired at local nurseries;
- Can grow very large (10' x 10') with regular irrigation;
- Guaraní of Paraguay and Uruguay make use of plant to reduce fevers, as diuretic, Chiapas Maya to treat stomach conditions, woody stems also used as kindling;
- Exceptionally floriferous plant for butterfly gardens, hummingbirds;
- Propagated by seed or stem cutting.

Agave americana: Century Plant, Maguey



- *Agave* spp. Primarily found in arid areas of USA, Mexico, Central and South America;
- Many ethnobotanical uses: sisil (twine), drinks (Pulque, tequila, mescal), edible flowers, flower stalks, sweeteners, sap of various spp. has medicinal uses: laxative, diuretic, reduce swelling, also used for live fencing, ornamental;



Live Fence in highland Peru



Piper auritum: Root beer Plant, Hoja Santa

- A spreading perennial plant that grows 3-4' in height (zone 7) and ranges from México to Colombia.
- Fragrant anise/clove-scented leaves high in safrole, used in México to wrap tamales, fish, etc and flavor Mole verde in Oaxaca. Also used in central Mexico added to chocolate drinks and in SE Mexico to make liquor called Verdín.
- Called “sacred leaf” in México because plant is said to have been used to hang infant Jesus’ diapers to dry.
- Close relative to *Piper methysticum* and *Piper nigrum*.



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