

Nurseries offer drought-resistant alternatives

By **JULIA HOLLISTER**
For the Capital Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Parched by the 4-year-old drought, California gardeners are turning to nurseries for help in relieving their watering guilt.

One way is to replace thirsty lawns with drought-tolerant native plants.

“The Bay Area is one of only a few places on the planet with remarkably diverse native flora,” said Geoffrey Coffey, general partner of Bay Natives in San Francisco. “This is because of the Mediterranean climate — mild, wet winter, and nice, warm summer and fog. There are 7,000 different native species in California and 75 percent are drought tolerant — they only drink when it rains.”

In this dry period he said homeowners and gardeners don’t have to let their lawns die; they just have to re-think the word “lawn.”

The challenge, he said, is education. Lawns originally came from England, where it rains often and grass is a lush green. When the English settlers came to the Eastern United States, the climate supported lawns.

However, when settlers

came to California they brought their mental baggage, too, Coffey said. Most of California is dry and lawns have never made sense.

“You can still have a lawn and a garden, just a different type with native grass that stays green because of its long tap roots,” he said. “Carex pausa is the most popular grass that thrives in sand dunes or just dirt.”

Coffey said he gets calls every day from people asking what they should do about the drought.

“It is a challenge for people to shift gears in their thinking,” he said. “The real work is to move past the panic and into new understanding into a different kind of gardening. My fear is there are more people who are not calling for advice, they are just not watering.”

California beach strawberries are another option for lawns, he said. “They are happy being dry.”

Drought tolerant plants are the same price as traditional plants, he said.

“It’s not a new idea but

one whose time has come,” Coffey said.

Finding alternatives to traditional plants also is a major concern for the state’s nursery industry. Consumer calls have noticeably increased over the past two years.

“Drought is very serious, and we are taking a serious approach and providing the consumers with options and information,” said Chris Zanobini, president of the California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers, a trade organization that promotes the state’s nursery industry.

The organization represents 300 nurseries statewide.

“There is no reason for someone to over water and there is no reason people cannot continue to enjoy the California lifestyle in their homes and yard,” Zanobini said. “We are presenting them with ways to use water more efficiently.”

Zanobini said drought-resistant plants have been in demand and sales for succulents and native plants are

high. There is also an effort to utilize slow-release fertilizers that require less water. Using mulch around plants reduces evaporation, too.

“Consumers are coming to nurseries looking for options and asking questions,” he said.

Geoffrey Coffey, general partner of Bay Natives in San Francisco, receives calls daily from people concerned about the lack of rain. He says drought-resistant plants are the answer.



Julia Hollister/For the Capital Press



BIG POWER IN NARROW SPACES.

The New Holland T4.95F squeezes major power into a narrow, low-profile package — perfect for working in orchards, nut groves, vineyards and other jobs in confined spaces or under low overhangs. This tractor is built New Holland SMART to give you maneuverable power and operating comfort with your choice of open platform or the cleaner-breathing, climate-controlled New Holland Blue Cab. Either way, you get:

- DEPENDABLE, CLEAN, 82-PTO-HP COMMON-RAIL ENGINE
- SUPERSTEER™ FRONT AXLE FOR ULTIMATE MANEUVERABILITY
- BRAWNY, 3-POINT-HITCH LIFT CAPACITY UP TO 4,045 POUNDS



METRO NEW HOLLAND

SALES • SERVICE • PARTS

29685 NW West Union Rd • North Plains, OR

1-877-235-0811 • (503) 647-5577

www.metronewholland.com



**Nursery Insurance
and the Line-Out
Stock Endorsement**

Available exclusively through Hudson Crop



Tracy Jankovic
National Nursery Sales Manager
(561) 402-1411
tjankovic@hudsoninsgroup.com

© 2015 Hudson Insurance Group. Nursery Line-Out Stock Endorsement was developed by Watts and Associates, Inc., Billings, MT. Hudson Insurance Company is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

N15-7/#4X

**TALLMAN
LADDERS**

Celebrating 60 years!
Thank you to all of our loyal customers!

Quality
Tripod
Orchard
Ladders
Made
in the
U.S.A.

Step up to Quality!
Step up to a Tallman!

www.tallmanladders.com
(541) 386-2733
(800) 354-2733

N15-4/#B

© 2014 CNH Industrial America LLC. All rights reserved. New Holland is a trademark registered in the United States and many other countries, owned by or licensed to CNH Industrial N.V., its subsidiaries or affiliates. New Holland is a trademark in the United States and many other countries, owned by or licensed to CNH Industrial N.V., its subsidiaries or affiliates.

N15-4/#B