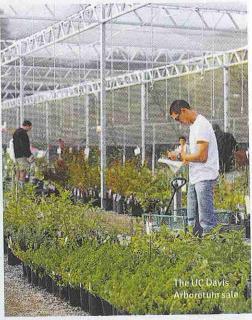


You too can score big at this fall's plant sales
BY JOHANNA SILVER | PHOTOGRAPHS BY RACHEL WELLL

AUTUMN IS SALE SEASON at some of the best botanical gardens, plant societies, and horticultural schools around the West. Which is perfect timing, because many perennials, shrubs, and trees should be planted now. The cool months ahead (and, in many areas, the winter rains) will give plants a jump-start on developing strong roots, making them guaranteed crown jewels of the garden by next spring.

Shop at plant sales and you'll often have access to a more unusual selection of plants at low prices, but they'll be a far cry from the perfect specimens packing the neat aisles at your favorite nursery. Think of these sales as the flea markets of the botanical world: lots of dinged-up merchandise that could, with a little TLC, turn into treasures. >46



# THE LOWDOWN

Set your alarm Many of these sales become mayhem by midday. Arrive early (most open around 9) to get the best plants.

Expect the unexpected

You'll generally see more obscure plants than what the typical nursery stocks. Some sales post inventories online before the event, which gives you time to do a little research. Or, when you arrive, ask for a plant list, grab a cup of coffee, and take a few minutes to plan your attack.

Look beyond the surface Many of the plants for sale will look rattier than those you'd find in a nursery. It's okay: They're just slowing down for winter. Given time to spread their roots, they'll come soaring back in spring.

Cash, check, or charge? Find out before you go—there's nothing worse than having to pass on that one-of-a-kind acacia just because the sale accepts only cash and you didn't bring any. Unlike flea markets, though, these sales are usually fund-raisers—getting a bargain is fine, but bargaining itself isn't cool.

BYO Be a pro and bring some bags or a cart to get your haul to your car. Join the club Become a member of your favorite garden or plant society. Chances are you'll get early access to its sale.



never see such a sad-looking salvia at a nursery, but plants often look a bit bedraggled at a nonprofit's plant sale. We sunk this Salvia greggii 'San Takao' into the ground in fall, and it made an amazing comeback the next spring.

# **WHERE THE SALES ARE**

#### NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Oct 1 & 2, Oakland
Merritt College Fall
Plant Sale Unusual
edibles that you won't
find at your local nursery. merrittlandhort.com

### Oct 8, Santa Cruz

Arboretum at UC Santa Cruz Colorful exotics and natives. arboretum. ucsc.edu

#### Oct 8, Walnut Creek

Ruth Bancroft Garden
Fall Plant Sale Succulents and natives.
ruthbancroftgarden.org
Oct 9, Davis UC Davis
Arboretum Teaching
Nursery plant sale One
of the best in the whole
region, including plants
adapted to growing in
the Central Valley.
arboretum.ucdavis.edu

### SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Oct 1-31, Santa Barbara Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Fall Plant Sale Spectacular California natives. sbbg. org (click on "classes") Oct 15, San Diego

California Native Plant Society, San Diego chapter Natives for drought-tolerant gardens. cnpssd.org

### Oct 15 & 16, Encinitas

San Diego Botanic Garden Annual Fall Plant Sale California natives, cactus, succulents, bromeliads, fruit trees, and subtropicals. \$12 garden admission fee; sdbgarden.org

# NORTHWEST

Oct 1, Beaverton, OR Tualatin Hills Nature Park Fall Native Plant Sale Trees, shrubs, and flowering plants. thprd.org

### Oct 1, Seattle

Washington Native Plant Society's Central Puget Sound Native Bulb, Seed & Plant Sale The name says it all. wnbs.org

Oct 1, Tacoma Tacoma
Nature Center's Fall
Native Plant Sale
Trees, shrubs, flowering

plants, and bulbs. tacomanaturecenter.org

## SOUTHWEST

Oct 15, Las Vegas

Las Vegas State Tree Nursery plant sale Native and desertadapted plants and pine trees. forestry.nv.gov

# Oct 15 & 16, Phoenix

Desert Botanical
Garden Fall Plant Sale
Desert-adapted plants,
along with just about
every low-water-use
landscaping plant
under the sun. dbg.org/
plantsale

## Oct 15 & 16, Tucson

Tohono Chul Park Fall Plant Sale Arid area-adapted plants, including many Arizona natives. tohonochul park.org

### MOUNTAIN

Sep 24, Denver Denver Botanic Gardens Fall Plant and Bulb Sale Rockies plant sales tend to take place in September; this 10,000-bulb spectacular is one of the month's latest. botanicgardens.org