



Planting and Care of California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*)



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About California Buckeye

- **Form:** Deciduous large shrub or small tree. Grows up to 12 to 40 ft high and as wide with a rounded form. It has a moderate growth rate. Summer deciduous and winter deciduous, leaves are palmate and drop in summer unless watered regularly. Fall brings 2" seeds hanging from the branch ends.
- **Care:** Easy to care for; very low to low water need; will keep its leaves and look better in summer with occasional deep watering.
- **Light conditions:** Part shade to full sun
- **Soil conditions:** Tolerates a variety of soils, including clay. Prefers good drainage.
- **Flowering Season:** Spring and summer (can be as early as February) will bring fragrant white, cream flowers clustered on 4- to 12-inch-long flower spikes (flower candle).
- **Attracts:** Great food source for many native insects, especially butterflies and hummingbirds. However, the pollen and nectar are toxic to non-native honey bees and all parts are toxic to mammals. Deer resistant.

Planting

- Don't let the seed dry out! Plant immediately and keep moist.
- Plant seed with the lighter patch side down (photo above shows patch side or "buck's eye" up), 90% buried in soil, may be best with gopher basket. If radicle (root) is present, plant it pointing downward.
- Will need regular water for the first few years until established

Maintenance

- Summer deciduous, but will keep leaves and look better with regular water during the summer.
- Minor pruning as needed for shape.
- For better wildfire defense, give regular water and rake leaves.
- If burned, it may return by sprouting from the root crown. Growth in first year growing season and in subsequent seasons may be rapid.

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