



got to have it

## Some Like It Dry

by William McClenathan

Ah summer...it forces us to look at the plethora of plants us Northwest gardeners have to choose from, and consider a few that perform well with less water. It's amazing, but yes, every year we have a drought period...it's called summer. There is no reason your summer garden doesn't have to be less than you desire it to be. There are an abundant amount of beautiful plant choices that, once established, will thrive with little or no additional watering.

Here are a few options you might want to consider.

The **Matilija Poppy** (*Romneya coulteri*) is a very large perennial shrub. Give this one lots of space as it can reach 7 feet tall and wider than that with age. Its leaves are a soft gray green but its true glory is the large white poppy like flowers that bloom in late spring and thru to fall. It does tend to sucker so be prepared to give away many starts to your friends. **[Shown above.]**



Cactus in the Northwest? You betcha! **Opuntia Cycloides** is a beautiful cactus that has survived readily in my gardens for over a decade. It has gotten so large that last year I took my chainsaw to it to prune it! Well draining soil is a must. Once this handsome guest is grown in...it can easily survive with only nature's water. Plus starting in late June you will get several weeks of large 2-3" bright, buttery-yellow blooms. If saving water is a big concern of yours, your garden can't be without this gem.

For a smaller plant consider the **Leprosperman humifusum 'Squiggly'**. It reaches about 3-4 feet slowly. It has cinnamon colored bark and beautiful small grayish green, evergreen leaves. In the late spring, small pink beads appear that open to white flowers. Not only is this a great drought tolerant shrub, but it also is a great cut flower and a florist favorite.

The key to any drought tolerant plant is making sure that the first year or two they are supplemented with good watering. Once their root systems have established, they are really almost on their own. With some occasional pruning and fertilizer, the only thing you'll need to do is sit back and enjoy these plants for many years to come.

Remember, this is a small glimpse of the many drought tolerant plants available at your local independent garden centers. Saving water doesn't mean you have to have a desert for a yard. It does mean that you will save money, and time because many of these plants are slow growing so less pruning is needed, they do not need the consistent fertilizing that other plants need, and quite often are evergreen and have stunning blooms.

It seems to me that's a win/win situation.