



Native Plant Landscaping Policy Options Public Workshop

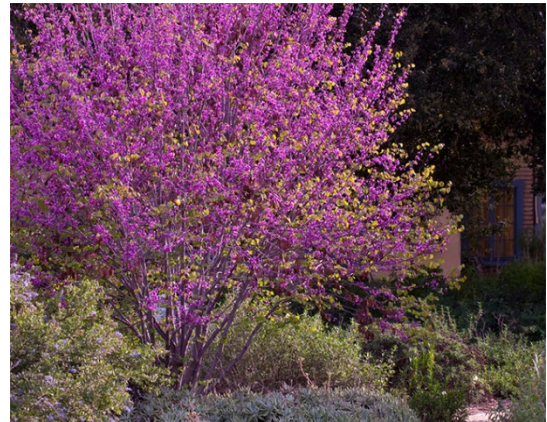
Introduction

The County of San Diego Planning & Development Services is developing options for increasing the use of native plants in landscaping at County facilities and in the unincorporated area. The proposed project will be brought to the Board of Supervisors this Winter 2022/23 for consideration and direction on recommended actions. Learn more about the Native Plant Landscaping Policy Options project [here](#).

Monday
August 29, 2022
6:00 p.m.
Zoom

On Monday, August 29, 2022, County staff held a virtual public workshop to present an overview of the project, discuss draft options for Board consideration, and solicit input from attendees. In advance of the meeting, staff promoted the event through e-blasts, social media posts, and direct emails to relevant and interested stakeholders.

During the event, 89 participants joined representing horticulturists, agriculture and nursery industries, landscaping professionals, environmental advocacy groups, residents across the region, and more. This summary documents meeting objectives and format, how input was solicited, and what was learned from the participants.



Western redbud tree in a native landscape. Photo from the San Diego County Native Landscape Program Recommendations by the San Diego County Biodiversity Working Group.

Objectives

The meeting was organized and conducted to accomplish the following objectives:

- Create a comfortable, engaging environment where all participants have an opportunity to provide meaningful input and share concerns.
- Provide an overview of the Native Plant Landscaping Policy Options project in a clear and easy to understand way, including the purpose, process, outcomes, timeline, and future opportunities to provide input.
- Obtain public input on the draft options for Board consideration to develop a San Diego County Native Landscape Program.

Format

At the virtual meeting, community members participated in a staff-led presentation and polling questions. The presentation reviewed the Board's direction that initiated the project and the San Diego Biodiversity Working Group's recommendation to develop a San Diego County Native Landscape Program and discussed proposed Program objectives and ten draft options. Throughout the workshop, community members were invited to share their perspectives through the chat, polls, and open discussion.

A recording from the workshop is available [here](#).

Major Themes

Major themes common to all the input received from participants are listed below. The ordering does not reflect importance or frequency.

- Support for the educational and incentive programming development. Examples include an informational website, demonstration pilot projects in underserved communities, and residential



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and landscaping professional training programs to increase awareness of the benefits of using native plants in landscaped areas, including using locally-produced nursery stock.

- Stakeholders have expressed concern about the establishment of new regulations for private development.
- Avoid establishing a prescriptive plant list as part of any guidelines, educational, or incentive programming developed to support the Program.
- Ensure Indigenous principles of respecting native wildlife and uses of native plants is incorporated into the Program.

Poll Everywhere Responses

Staff asked five questions throughout the workshop, and a total of 57 workshop participants responded.

I am a...	Total responses	61
	Unique participants	42
Responses:	Count	Percent
Resident of the unincorporated county	10	16.39
Resident of an incorporated city (e.g., City of San Diego, Poway, Encinitas...)	29	47.54
Resident of a Native American reservation	0	0
Resident of another area (outside of SD County, on a military base, etc.)	1	1.64
Farmer / Horticulturist	3	4.92
Landscaping Professional	4	6.56
County employee	6	9.84
Other	8	13.11

Which of the proposed Program objectives is MOST important to you?	Total responses	41
	Unique participants	41
Responses:	Count	Percent
Create adaptive and resilient landscapes to buffer natural areas	10	24.39
Support the County's Landscaping Ordinance outdoor water use reduction goals through the use of native plant landscaping	2	4.88
Support native wildlife and pollinators through landscaping plant selection, design, and placement	22	53.66
Support the local nursery economy and landscaping industry by developing educational materials and strengthening local demand for native plant products and services	5	12.2
Create resources that are easily accessible from the Program website and support the use of native plants in landscaping throughout the entire region	2	4.88

Are there additional Program objectives that should be included?	Total responses	51
	Unique participants	35
Responses:		
100% CA Natives on all newly landscaped public lands. Perhaps similarly, 1 native tree minimum per 1000 square feet of private land. Something quantifiable that can be measured and verified.		
A voluntary program would work best.		



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Communication and consultation with Tribes about culturally important plants

Educate the mow and blow type gardeners who lack education on native landscaping

Establish prohibition on growing or sale of non-native invasive plants in the County

Have a requirement or protection to protect existing trees

Have clear guidelines on harmful pesticides and what is safe to use.

Have penalties for actions that endanger roots, irrigation, natural waterways, that could destroy natives, but particularly important are trees, shrubs, and pollinator habitat.

What is the plan to utilize site suitable California native plants to enhance our transportation corridors, especially active transportation areas where we are looking to increase the use of cycling, walking, and public transit? There is a nexus there that needs help. We can make transit corridors wildlife corridors as well where native and migratory species can have an appropriate habitat and humans can have much needed shade. Buena Creek Sprinter station is County!

I'm propose the County allocate funding for grants (with CBOs) to create jobs for impacted EJ communities. Goals to remove invasive plant species and place native plants. Especially urban canopy and tree shade. The Food Justice aspect needs attention as well with community gardens led by EJ leaders. These jobs can create space for more attention to growing community gardens and local grocery shops. Specified to North Inland County (D5).

Include large succulent plants to add fire retardant ability and seasonal beauty is reduced through seasonal fall off.

Incorporate Native plants that hold more carbon than others

Interpretive signage around the county in public parks and other frequently visited locations to share benefits of natives

Mandatory HOA requirements to eliminate invasive plants with financial penalties

Mandatory use of natives in County-funded developments

More encouragement to homeowners to not use non-native planting in landscaping especially in the foothills of SD that are close to undeveloped areas.

Penalties for illegal removals and for chemicals that kill natives.

Perhaps incentivize project contractors - public and private projects - to revegetate using native trees and veg

Protection of mature native trees to offset effects of the climate crisis, while offering habitat for wildlife and pollinators. Such as banning removal of 4" and greater diameter of most pines, oaks, sycamores, toyon, elderberry, and so on that are natives. Similar to the City of Los Angeles protections. Protection of trees is most critical, but also shrubs for the diversity.

Reduce eucalyptus trees

Start a certification program so local landscapers can learn how to maintain our new landscapes.

Start talking about the water utilized by swimming pools. They use as much as a lawn.

Website devoted to Native plant landscaping for the average homeowner.

When land get developed, other lands should be replanted with native plants

Work with School District Landscape directors and staff to only use native landscaping and educate their staff. School Gardens are already incorporating and teaching native landscaping, but School District staff need to be a part of the plan.

30 x 30

Access to native plant resources for indigenous communities

Adaptation to climate change and sea level rise with wetlands restoration, no more pesticides and herbicides.

An objective of using native plants as a means of reducing unplanned wildfires



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As the climate collapses or changes, the plants will be changing. Some will die out and others will move from south to north, I would expect. Do we have anyone looking at that?

Better freeway planting

Create a local sense of place for our children

Emphasizing or mandating water use reducing

Fire resiliency, less use of pesticides

Fire risk reduction

I already saw this, but I want to see wildlife corridors and am interested in the homegrown national parks, where homes all have native plants, which is actually better than corridors

Include Native American principles of respecting native wildlife and uses of native plants

Land acquisition and conservation

Major public education push about the myriad benefits of natives

Objective to raise awareness of invasive (non-native) plant use and advocate for their removal

Offering more alternatives to invasive plants that are on the market in the nurseries.

Over development seems like an issue

Reduce/replace grass lawns.

Reduction in loss of existing native plants, promote intrinsic value of native plants in our community

Research and communicate the new landscape plants as the habitat changes with the climate.

Responsible conversion of non-native to native habitats, if wildlife is dependent on current existing habitat.

Restoration of cultural relationships and connection with local plants, indigenous wisdom and cultural uses restored

Save rare plants and local genetics on San Diego meeting wildlife corridors

Share the Kumeyaay name of the native plants

Stopping the use of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers

Support and expand resilient wildlife corridors

**Which of the proposed options are the most important to you?
Choose your top three.**

Total responses 130
Unique participants 46

Responses:	Count	Percent
Native Plant Landscaping Guidelines document	19	14.62
Board Policy for County facilities	9	6.92
Interactive Program website	11	8.46
Instructor-led and web-based training and education materials	6	4.62
School gardens and curriculum	13	10.00
Landscaping professional certification program	24	18.46
Demonstration gardens at County facilities	9	6.92
Pilot program for private development in priority locations	9	6.92
Full incentive program for private development	17	13.08
Design templates for varying habitat structures	13	10.00



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Are there any other actions the County should consider to increase the use of native plant landscaping?

Total responses 62
Unique participants 34

Responses:

Ensure grants for fire safety brush management include CNPS guidelines on proper techniques to treat native plant areas.

Educate fire staff on how to do brush management of native species that can achieve fire safety goals without destroying existing native plants.

Would like to see what native plants/trees support specific insects and wildlife in specific areas of the County. For example which native tree do owls like to nest in. Unfortunately I see owls nesting in non-native super tall palm trees or eucalyptus.

Local plant genetics

If you give people financial incentives to plant more native plants, have a condition attached to that money that ensures the homeowner doesn't have fountain grass or other highly flammable non-native plants or invasive plants.

Halloween Native seed giveaways since kids can bring them home at the best time to plant, ahead of rainy season.

Work with nurseries to ensure there is a supply

Yes, a specific HOA education program on native plants would be good

Offer free plants to people who do community cleanups to plant

Partner with local nature centers to provide info to public

Help folks become citizen scientists

Speakers at the County Fair to educate the public

Reduce HOA strict regulations on homeowners who choose to plant native landscapes that aren't green year-round.

Go to a Native Plant Sale by CNPS Oct 15, 8 am to 3 pm, Balboa Park's Casa del Prado Courtyard

Create native plant companion plant guide.

Provide speakers bureau for local garden clubs

How to define a native plant-locally found or regional or in CA?

Offer free native seeds at County libraries

Incentives for the actual maintenance workers of Landscapes to get trained not just designers and architects

Create a County Plant Corps--jobs for youth

Connect with Master Gardeners and use them to spread the word.

Educate people that just because it says 'Native Sons' or 'wild flowers', it is probably not native.

Make the current ones look better with proper maintenance and design

Instruction on invasive removal to maintain the quality of native habitat.

Engage with school districts for class credits on native plants

Discourage nurseries from selling tropical milkweed

Encourage use of native plants in local foods.

Free County Native Plant plant tags to mark gardens who are interested

Private property owners should not get fire services if not implementing native fire-retardant plantings

Use of certain devastating invasives should be banned for growing or planting

Collaboration with California Native Plant Society (CNPS)

Participate in Homegrown National Park



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Don't allow invasive seeds and plants to be sold.

Second "aggressive non-natives removal program"

Have a native plant recipe contest

If residents see native plant landscapes in a demonstration gardens or public spaces, and like them, they will naturally want to adopt native plants in their own landscapes. The key is for the gardens to look good!

Make sure the people overseeing these programs are also knowledgeable of native plants and are able to ID native plants well.

Private property owners should not be forced to participate in this program. Property owners should still be free to landscape per their own aesthetic choices

Have crews that seed areas where plants can survive by existing irrigation or natural water present. Rights of way, and other locations with irrigation being easiest.

Map of existing demo native gardens

Stop approving small and large projects that facilitate invasive plant colonization

Create volunteer events to get the community involved

Aggressive invasive removal program. Education and actual funding to hire ppl for removal program

Ways to include/partner/share development of these programs with incorporated areas so the effort is more county-wide

Invest lots of money into marketing these programs.

Incentives for growers to grow more native plants

Native alternatives to common invasive plants like ice plant, pepper trees, etc.

Seed libraries

Eliminating the invasives which have overtaken native plant areas

Use Kumeyaay names for the native plants

Establish dates that recognize what is a native plant and what is not, ie plants here only since 1905 are not native.

Education on what plants attract pollinators and birds

Add mandatory provisions into contracts with contractors for projects

Consider having an app where people can get information related to their project based on their garden zone and landscape needs

Ordinances requiring native landscaping for development

Work with and encourage the incorporated Cities to adopt similar/same guidelines.

Have landscape plans comply with the native plant guidelines in new unincorporated county development.

Make all materials, trainings, and programs available in Spanish and other relevant languages

Assertively promoting backed by education and incentives. Teaching by example.

Integrated pest management instead of pesticides. Education and harms of pesticides

Educate on what is invasive or non-native vs. native.

The County allocate funding for CBOs to create jobs for impacted EJ communities. Goals to remove invasive plant species and place native plants. Especially urban canopy and tree shade.
