




“Tools” to Assist the Non-Biologist Landscape Administrator with Technical Issues

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The use of native plants in public and residential landscapes is key to water conservation in Southern California. Issues surrounding a reliable supply of locally native plants became obvious to land managers, restorationists, and ecologists throughout the region. The **Native Seed Resources Coalition** was formed by the Council for Watershed Health in March 2012 to address these obstacles. The Coalition comprises ecologists, horticulturists, land managers, landscape architects, engineers, planners, seed collectors, and native plant nurseries. The Coalition first committed to educating the group on issues in the native plant supply chain.

We identified three priority issues that could be tackled within one year:

-  an appropriate propagule list
-  “best value” contract language for planting projects
-  best practices for seed collection

For more information, see our website at:
<http://nativeseed.watershedhealth.org>

Appropriate Propagule List

The appropriate propagule lists assists landscape contract administrators with a common design problem: which plant species to include in a seed mix and which to use container plants (as *nursery plants* to form and disperse seeds in the landscape).

SAMPLES OF THE PROPAGULE LISTS FOR LANDSCAPING VS. RESTORATION PROJECTS (SEE BELOW)

Appropriate Propagule List for Landscaping Projects					
Scientific Name	Common Name	Seed (Direct seeding)	Stem Cuttings (live staking)	Root Cuttings (Rhizomes)	Container (from seed & cuttings)
Shrubs and Perennials					
Muhlenbergia rigens	deergrass				X (seed)
Rhamnus sp.	buckthorn				X (seed)
Rhus integrifolia	lemonadeberry				X (seed)
Rhus ovata	sugar bush				X (seed)
Rhus trilobata	basket bush			X	
Ribes aureum var. gracillimum	golden currant			X	* (cuttings)
Rosa californica	California wild rose		*	X	* (cuttings)
Salvia sp.	sage				X (seed)
Yucca whipplei	Our Lord's candle				X (seed)
Annuals					
Clarkia sp.	clarkia	X			* (seed)
Eschscholzia californica	California poppies	X			* (seed)
Lasthenia californica	goldfields	X			* (seed)
Layia platyglossa	tidy tips	X			* (seed)
Nemophila menziesii	baby blue eyes	X			* (seed)
Phacelia campanularia	desert bells	X			* (seed)
Penstemon spectabilis	royal penstemon	X			* (seed)

Rank: Best X, just okay *, poor results ?

Appropriate Propagule List for Restoration Projects					
Scientific Name	Common Name	Seed (Direct seeding)	Stem Cuttings (live staking)	Root Cuttings (Rhizomes)	Container (from seed & cuttings)
Shrubs and Perennials					
Muhlenbergia rigens	deergrass	X			* (seed)
Rhamnus sp.	buckthorn	X			* (seed)
Rhus integrifolia	lemonadeberry	X			* (seed)
Rhus ovata	sugar bush	X			* (seed)
Rhus trilobata	basket bush			X	
Ribes aureum var. gracillimum	golden currant	X		*	* (cuttings)
Rosa californica	California wild rose		*	X	* (cuttings)
Salvia sp.	sage	X			* (seed)
Yucca whipplei	Our Lord's candle	X			* (seed)
Annuals					
Clarkia sp.	clarkia	X			
Eschscholzia californica	California poppies	X			
Lasthenia californica	goldfields	X			
Layia platyglossa	tidy tips	X			
Nemophila menziesii	baby blue eyes	X			
Phacelia campanularia	desert bells	X			
Penstemon spectabilis	royal penstemon	X			

Rank: Best X, just okay *, poor results ?

PLANT EXAMPLES FROM THE PROPAGULE LIST (SEE BELOW)

Golden flowering currant (Ribes Aureum)



Colorful fruits



Collected local seed preferred for restoration projects



Local cuttings grown in 1-gallon pots preferred for landscaping projects

Showy penstemon (Penstemon spectabilis)



short-lived perennial



Collected local seed preferred for restoration projects



Whereas local seed grown in 1-gallon pots is 2nd choice for landscaping projects

“Best Value” Contract Language

Rather than use lowest bid contractors for landscape installations, we feel that a “Best Value” contract, already used by several federal agencies, more consistently ensures that the hired landscape contractors have a history of successful and thriving native landscape installations. Ultimately, Best Value contracts are more cost effective and take less time than fixing failed landscapes.

PHOTOS (LEFT):
THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY.
An example of a failed landscape project.
(Photos courtesy of Los Angeles County Public Works)



(THE GOOD) desired landscape



(THE BAD) prior to hydroseeding



(THE UGLY) months after hydroseeding

Best Practices for Seed Collection

Overall seed collection best-practices are under development, such as not over-collecting or trampling, and once complete will join the propagule list as freely available resources on the Council for Watershed Health website. Below are examples of “bad” collection practices.



Do not over over-collect seed!

PHOTOS (LEFT):
Best Practice “No-No’s” For Seed Collection
(Thanks to Theodore Payne Foundation staff for helping stage the reenactments).



No trampling the native plants!

