



BEST PRACTICES

5 Reasons To Go Native

As the population of Thurston County continues to grow with more impervious surface covering the landscape, the role of native plants in our landscape is more important than ever. Stream Team and WSU Native Plant Salvage continue to team up to help homeowners increase the beauty and functionality of their property while protecting and improving our local water resources.

1. **It's better to retain deep, mature soils and the native plants growing in them with their highly developed root structures than it is to start from scratch.**
2. **Where we've already lost those, we can replant with native plants and waterwise varieties in layers, starting with large and medium size trees, then a variety of shrubs, and, finally, groundcover plants. This multi-layered structure intercepts precipitation, increasing evaporation and root absorption, thus reducing the quantity of stormwater runoff while providing habitat for a variety of birds and other small species of wildlife.**
3. **Landscapes featuring native plants slow down our winter rains and allow water to slowly infiltrate back into the ground, recharging groundwater. During the summer dry season, native plants, once established, require little to no supplemental water. This reduces the use of potable water, leaving more groundwater to recharge streams, lakes and other waterways—all while saving homeowners money.**
4. **Native plants co-evolved with native wildlife and are essential sources of forage, nectar, pollen and cover for a variety of beautiful birds, insects, mammals and amphibians. Set the table for hummingbirds, chickadees and chorus frogs with native plants.**
5. **Native plants are beautiful and part of the deep natural and cultural heritage of Thurston County and the Puget Sound region—far more so than exotic plants shipped in from other regions or foreign countries.**

Interested in learning more about how you can incorporate native plants into your shoreline or upland property? This spring, Stream Team and WSU Native Plant Salvage Project are offering two classes to choose from. For more information, and to see which class is right for your situation, keep reading...

Whether you are new to the area or unfamiliar with the native flora of South Sound, or an experienced and knowledgeable gardener, Stream Team and WSU Native Plant Salvage have the class for you! The Naturescaping Field Class is a day-long comprehensive class designed for people who have perhaps taken the evening Naturescaping class offered twice a year or for gardeners interested in in-depth information on landscaping with native and drought-tolerant plants. The “Meet the Trees of Western Washington” field class is a wonderful introductory class to the beauty and diversity of our local plant communities. Register for one or both at www.streamteam.info and click on “Calendar”.

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