

CreekWise Use of Local Native Plant Species

Native plants are ecologically best suited to the creek environment. Using locally native plants for landscaping and revegetation projects near streams and riparian areas provide improved habitat and protection from bank erosion with the least amount of long term maintenance. Most cities require that natives be used for new and major redevelopment.

How to Find and Select Natives in the Watershed

When vegetating the creek, choose native species growing nearby. If possible, make sure the plants used were propagated from seeds, cuttings or divisions collected from the same local creek or watershed. Try local home-grown native plants by collecting and planting seeds, or installing divisions and cuttings on the creek bank.

Oaks, buckeye and bay trees are easy to grow from seed planted directly into moist creek bank soil. Cottonwood and willow are easy to grow from cuttings stuck directly into moist sandbars. California rose, California blackberry, snowberry, mugwort, beardless wildrye and others can be propagated readily from vegetative offsets and divisions.

Want even more information?

Try the California Native Plant Society's web site @ www.cnps.org

Guidelines for Planting Native Species

The purpose of choosing natives is to establish or enhance the native habitat. When choosing natives:

Ensure that the initial planting density is high, averaging 6 to 12 feet on center, to create canopy coverage and closure quickly. Include a range of species in the plant palette to fill in the understory, mid-story and overstory.

Avoid hardscape such as patios, walkways and decks within these areas to minimize human impacts and maximize habitat value.

Maintain and monitor plantings for a 3 to 5 year period to ensure healthy establishment. Performance and success criteria include percentage of allowable mortality and goals for an annual percentage of vegetative cover.

Slowly eliminate the need for human intervention, including irrigation, weed control, replanting, pruning, etc. The final goal is to discontinue maintenance activities when habitat is self sustainable.