

## The Five Steps for Native Plant Restoration

1. "Hand shake" or site survey: It is important to establish who owns the property and its boundaries. Walk the property and determine the type and amount of the vegetative cover. Look for any hazards. Record the aspect of the property, the soil type and if water is on or available to the property. Number and type of natives should be recorded for future evaluation of growth and survival rates.
2. Remove exotics: Any invasive and/or non-native vegetation should be removed. Trash debris or items that might injure volunteers should be removed and any topography that might cause tripping or a fall should be flagged.
3. Propagation: Native plants indigenous to the location should be secured which represent a diversity of species, are raised from seed or cuttings, or "rescues" that were found in great numbers but not in an advantageous location for them to survive and thrive. Use a native plant nursery that guarantees collection in the county and certifies their practices of collection and propagation. Harvesting of natives should follow the one in twenty rule or 5%, i.e., plant has twenty branches, just take one branch to make cuttings (it should be "juvenile" wood if possible).
4. Restoration plating of natives: Once the site has been prepared, dig the holes for the native, following attached instructions, This should be done the day before the planting event. Deeply water all the holes to provide a future "reservoir" for the roots to follow down. Plan on providing ten (10) gallons of water for each gallon of plant brought to the site. The hole should be twice as deep and three times as wide as the container of the native plant. Save any stones from the hole for future use.

Use any excess earth to build a dam around the plant if there is no overhead irrigation. If there are stones available, put three around the downhill side of the new plant. The rocks will absorb heat during the day and radiate into the soil at night (roots grow when they are warm), rain and irrigation will wash minerals off the stones to provide roots with need nutrients, add structural strength to the dam, and provide a future reference to where native plants are located in the event weeds invade the site. Record the location and species for future evaluation. Photos can be very helpful.

5. Monitor the site: Come back in a year and see what the condition of the planted vegetation is. Look for disease or stress. Any plants that died should be noted and a replacement plant put in that location (utilize all that effort expended digging that hole, transplanting the native to that location and watering). It is best to change the species of plant to see if another will adapt better to the specific location. If animal predation appears to be the problem. temporary cages can be put over the plant. But take the cages off once the plant's root system is established. Planting native flora is to attract native flora and all our natives are accustomed and probably need predation to some extent to grow strong and thrive. This can also be a key part of public education and enjoyment.