



# ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Procedure No. 51-3

Effective Date: July 15, 2016

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_

  
County Administrator

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SUBJECT: **Plant Materials Salvage and Selection for Pima County Projects**

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DEPARTMENT(S) RESPONSIBLE: All Public Works, Facilities Management

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Administrative Procedure is to establish a consistent procedure for plant selection and salvage for projects constructed by Pima County and Pima County Regional Flood Control District (District) to ensure compliance with state and local requirements, and to provide a unified approach for use of native plants.

Pima County is characterized by unique biological and cultural resources that define its strong regional identity. The Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and the Comprehensive Plan, Pima Prospers promote planning to preserve this identity. The Pima County Native Plant Nursery was established in 2003 to provide native plants to Pima County projects. The Arizona Native Plant Law restricts some activities affecting native plants, as do other state, federal and local authorities under which County departments may operate when plant materials are removed, salvaged, or planted.

The Native Plant Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 18.73 in the Pima County Code), enforced by Development Services and applied to private development, does not apply to County or District projects. The Environmentally Sensitive Roadway Design Guidelines applies only to Pima County Department of Transportation. Therefore, these new procedures will provide a consistent and unified approach to selection of plants across all County departments, including facilities or improvements constructed and operated by Pima County. All departments shall follow these procedures for new construction, whether or not there is any "landscaping" planned.

## **PLANT MATERIAL SALVAGE AND SELECTION**

### 1. Site Design:

When planning for Pima County facilities and projects, practices to preserve-in-place native plants on the site shall be implemented to the maximum extent practicable through:

- a. avoidance and minimization of impacts by such practices as conserving natural areas,
- b. preservation or avoidance of natural drainage flow in site design, and
- c. minimization of disturbed areas.

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Contact the Pima County Department of Transportation for guidance in applying the Environmentally Sensitive Roadway Design Guidelines on transportation projects.

2. Regulated Riparian Habitat:

Review limits of disturbance for your project to avoid Regulated Riparian Habitat. (These can be determined on [PimaMaps](#).) If there are Regulated Riparian Habitats, contact [RFCD](#) for compliance requirements.

3. Compliance with other Jurisdictions:

If this a County- or District-managed project that is to be maintained, owned or operated by another jurisdiction, contact that jurisdiction regarding any requirements. If there are conflicting requirements between the jurisdiction and this procedure, contact Pima County Office of Sustainability and Conservation.

4. Prohibited Plants:

The Pima County Health Department prohibits the following vegetation: Texas mulberry and fruiting olive trees. These shall not be used under any circumstance.

5. Arizona Native Plant Law:

Regardless of jurisdiction, if there is potential for native plants to exist currently on site and there will be removal of the plants or plant parts from the site, compliance with the Arizona Native Plant law is required. Landowners must provide notice of any destruction or removal of protected native plants, as required by [Arizona Department of Agriculture](#).

6. Plant Salvage:

If any native plants exist onsite, the Pima County Native Plant Nursery shall be contacted for potential plant salvage. Salvage of native plants to be transplanted on site, or relocated to the Pima County [Native Plant Nursery](#) or other location is encouraged.

7. Plant Selection:

When plant materials are to be specified as part of a new Pima County project or facility, the priority of plant specification shall be as follows:

- First Choice: Plants native to project site
- Second Choice: Sonoran Desert Plants
- Third Choice: Chihuahuan Desert Plants
- Fourth Choice: ADWR Tucson Active Management Area Category 1 and 2 plants

The use of plants not native to the Sonoran and Chihuahuan deserts may be unavoidable in some locations, due to a lack of native species with the required plant characteristics. Unless the elevation of the site is greater than 5000 feet or there is a need to maintain an historic landscape, consider species from outside the Sonoran desert only after consideration of native or Sonoran Desert plants. For historic landscapes, see the "Historical Plantings" list at [Pima County Native Plants](#).

Contact the Pima County [Native Plant Nursery](#) in order to provide native plants to Pima County projects. While it may not be able to provide all the plants for Pima County facilities, particularly large size trees, it shall be the first source used. The Native Plant Nursery shall be consulted at the initial stages of landscape plan development in order to make recommendations regarding availability of plants, costs and sizes to specify, and to coordinate a schedule.

Regardless of the plant materials supplier, Sonoran Desert native plants shall be selected to the maximum extent practicable.

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Some resources that can be used in plant selection are:

[Pima County Native Plant Tool](#) can assist in selecting appropriate native plants for the site, even where the original plant community has been largely altered or removed..

For the Pima County Native Plant Nursery, contact the manager at Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Department, or phone 724-5000.

The [Low-Impact Development Guidance Manual](#) has an excellent plant list for Pima County facilities.

[Grow Native: Don't Plant a Pest brochure](#) suggests plants to avoid and appropriate substitutes.

For historic landscapes, see the [Pima County Native Plant Tool](#) for a list of historically appropriate plant material.

8. Invasive Species Management:

Management and control of invasive species, particularly buffelgrass, fountain grass, and Sahara mustard are of critical concern. These species are to be identified and managed per Public Works Standard Operating Procedure 2009-02 or its successor.

9. Low Impact Design and Plant Irrigation

Rather than relying solely on supplemental irrigation, County and District projects using plant materials shall be designed to incorporate water harvesting principles. For additional guidance consult the [Low-Impact Development Guidance Manual](#).

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Office of Sustainability and Conservation shall review the effectiveness of this procedure with its practitioners every two years, and serve as a clearing house for questions.