



Native Planting Policy

Approved: December 19, 2023

The Wakefield Conservation Commission is the statutory authority for administration of the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (WPA) and implementing regulations (310 CMR 10.00). The Conservation Commission is further authorized by MGL Chapter 40, Section 8C to adopt its own rules and regulations "to further regulate matters established by section 40 of Chapter 131" (the WPA).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the use of native vegetation within the Town of Wakefield. The Town recognizes the significant benefits of establishing and protecting native vegetation for species conservation, ecological restoration, and climate change mitigation. In addition, planting native vegetation has ancillary benefits including the conservation of water, stabilization of soils, and inherent low maintenance requirements.

Jurisdiction

The Commission has jurisdiction over the following areas:

- wetland resource areas, defined as 100-year zones, wetlands, streams, ponds and marshes;
- riverfront areas (land within 200 feet of a perennial stream);
- buffer zones (land within 100 feet of a wetland resource area); and
- Town-owned land under the care and custody of the Conservation Commission.

Intent

The landscape requirements included in this policy should be incorporated in all areas within the Commission's jurisdiction to mitigate negative impacts from climate change and land development, as well as to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents. In observing this policy, we acknowledge that:

- native plants promote healthy watersheds by filtering pollutants, stabilizing banks, and providing food native fauna;



- native trees are more efficient at sequestering carbon than introduced species creating healthy ecosystems essential for human health;
- native plants must be protected to preserve the genetic diversity of our region;
- native pollinators and many wildlife species rely on the native plants for survival;
- healthy pollinators and wildlife species have a role in maintaining healthy ecosystems;
- use of native plants in developed landscapes will help create connected and stable plant and animal populations;
- we must educate residents on native plants and their importance to native pollinators and other wildlife in our ecosystem; and
- we have a responsibility to future generations to support, maintain, and improve our natural environment.

Definitions

Native Plant

Native plants are those that live or grow naturally in a particular region (in this case, the northeastern United States) without direct or indirect human intervention. Over the course of evolutionary time, these plants have adapted to physical conditions and co-evolved with the other species in the system, becoming part of the balance of nature in that region. Through this co-evolution, native plants develop complex and essential relationships with pollinators, birds, and other wildlife species in a given ecological community.

Invasive Species

Invasive species are non-native plants whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Invasive plants are able to establish on many sites, grow quickly, and spread to the point of disrupting plant communities or ecosystems. In Massachusetts, non-native plants considered invasive are those listed on the Massachusetts (MA) Prohibited Plant List. The list, maintained by the MA Department of Agricultural Resources, prohibits the importation, sale, and trade of plants determined to be invasive and includes all cultivars, varieties and hybrids of the species listed.

Policy Requirements

All new plantings, including trees, shrubs, and other plants, as well as seeds used in lieu of plants, within areas under the jurisdiction of the Commission, **shall** adhere to this policy. The policy applies to any replacement plantings, including but not limited to trees, shrubs, and perennials felled by storms, disease, redevelopment/expansion, or other reasons.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply to:

- plants grown for food, lawns, green roofs, or other applications that have a clear reason to use non-native plants;
- annual plants since they complete their life cycle within one growing season; and
- existing trees and other plants. For any trees or plants replaced for damage or any other

reason, replacements must be native species as specified in policy requirements.

Invasive Species Prohibited

Invasive species pose one of the greatest threats to the biodiversity, natural landscapes, agricultural interests, recreational activities, quality of life, and scenic beauty of our town.

A list of prohibited plant species can be found here:

- [Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List](#)
[Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List | Mass.gov](#)

In addition, the Massachusetts Invasive Plants Advisory Group maintains a list of invasive, likely invasive, and/or potentially invasive species here:

- [Massachusetts Invasive Plants Advisory Group \(MIPAG\)](#)
- [MIPAG - Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group \(massnrc.org\)](#)