



COLORADO NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Policy and Guidelines

For Use of Native Plants

The Colorado Native Plant Society (CONPS) encourages the use of Colorado and regional native plants for landscaping and for the rehabilitation or revegetation of disturbed lands within the state. CONPS recognizes the physiological and ecological adaptive advantages of our native plants, which have evolved over long periods of time in our soils and climate. As a result of such adaptation, native plants often are more energy and water efficient than introduced species.

CONPS discourages the horticultural and rehabilitational use of exotic plant species; such species often escape from cultivation to the detriment of natural vegetation. Adverse ecological effects of escaped exotics can occur either through replacement of native species or by alteration of the genetic composition of plant populations.

CONPS recognizes the present lack of commercial availability of many potentially useful native plants and offers the following guidelines on native plant collection and use.

1. Become informed about the Colorado plant species that are Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, or otherwise of special Concern. Such plants should **never** be collected unless special circumstances exist such that public recommendation for salvage is made.
2. Collect seeds or take cuttings; do not collect whole plants (unless salvage recommendations have been made). Keep good records of the geography and environment in which a collection is made and transfer this habitat information along with the plant materials. Consider preparing a voucher specimen for deposit in a recognized, publicly accessible herbarium (this provides the best possible record of your collection).
3. Avoid propagating species that have shown tendencies to overcompete with and possibly replace others.
4. In large-scale rehabilitation, revegetation and wildflower planting projects, use plant materials derived from nearby, similar habitats. CONPS stresses the importance of protecting the genetic integrity of the surrounding native species and natural vegetation. The introduction of non-local genetic material may irrevocably alter the native flora.
5. When special circumstances exist in which an area is to be disturbed such that plants inevitably will be destroyed, salvage collection of those plants (as whole plants) is encouraged. Collection should be made only when destruction of the plants clearly is imminent, not in anticipation of possible destruction months or years later. Keep records of the plants collected, habitats and circumstances leading to the salvage.

The Colorado native flora is one of our most valuable natural resources. We have the technology and knowledge to use it wisely, and the ethical responsibility to protect it.