

Newtown Conservation Commission Proposed Policy Governing Use of Native Plants on Town-Owned Properties

The Conservation Commission proposes the adoption and immediate implementation of the following policy by the Board of Selectmen:

Whereas Native Plants in this policy will include all trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses, they will exclude annuals – herbs, vegetables and flowers, as well as cool-season turf grasses for lawns and athletic fields;

Whereas Native Plants are adapted to local environmental conditions, once established, they need minimal irrigation beyond normal rainfall, thus saving time, money, and a precious natural resource – water;

Whereas Native Plants have developed their own defenses against many pests and diseases, pesticide use will be greatly reduced or eliminated, thus keeping garden toxins out of our streams and watersheds and protecting beneficial insects, especially pollinators;

Whereas Native Plants require significantly lower maintenance than non-native, exotic plants, utilizing Native Plants will reap savings for taxpayers;

Whereas there is a symbiotic relationship between native flora and native fauna, using Native Plants in landscaping provides vital habitat and food for birds, insects and other wildlife;

Whereas some non-native plants compete with Native Plant species, degrade soil, facilitate erosion and wildfire, and alter natural landscapes, the use of Native Plants will increase biodiversity and improve the overall health of Town-owned properties, especially parks and open space;

Whereas Native Plants, especially long-living trees like oaks and maples, are effective at storing the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, landscaping with Native Plants can reduce carbon pollution and help in combatting climate change;

Therefore the Town of Newtown commits to the use of Native Plants on all Town-owned properties and requires that Town agencies utilize them for all new landscaping and plantings.