

Landscape Committee Policy: Use of Native Plants on the Church Campus  
Created by the Landscape Committee: May 2016

Policy:

From June 2016 on, it is the goal of the Landscape Committee to use only native plants on our campus. However, the Committee recognizes there may be special circumstances in which non-native plants would be appropriate. For example, there are RE programs that include planting a vegetable garden. If the staff or church volunteers wish to plant non-native plants, they must consult with and gain approval of the Landscape Committee.

The Landscape Committee will have the final decision except in the following cases: 1) the RE director will consult with the Landscape Committee, but will have the final decision on planting in the 2 playground areas, 2) the area to the far south of the RE play ground is under the direction of the Sr. Minister who will also consult with the Landscape Committee, 3) the south parking lot and its boundaries **must have approval of the staff**. 4) compliance with city ordinances on planting will override this landscape policy, and 5) all of the church landscape must follow the regulations of the Green Sanctuary. 6) **pesticides and herbicides upset the natural balance of the landscape and their use must first be approved by the Landscape Committee**. None of these exceptions preclude a member of the Landscape Committee working **in all areas of the church landscape**.

Justification:

All areas of our church campus should reflect the congregation's environmental values as represented in the UUA's Seventh Principle. Native plants have evolved with other living things such as insects, pollinators and birds, etc. Thus they compliment each other by offering the requirements of life: food, shelter, and a place to raise young and sometimes furnish water. Native plants are best adapted to the local growing season, climate, and soils. They usually require less water than non-natives. "Non-native plants do not provide the range of seasonal habitat benefits that an appropriate locally native species will provide." (NWF Backyard Wildlife Habitat) A native plants' landscape will provide a natural balance between native insects and birds and native plants. Nonnative plants sometimes allow pests, especially non-native pests, to spread out-of-control. They also often do not provide the nourishment needed by native insects, birds and mammals. Since they have no natural enemies, they can get out of control.

Because the RE Director may use the 2 RE playground areas and the area to the far south of the RE playgrounds for projects that are part of the RE curriculum, the RE Director or Sr. Minister, after consultation with the Landscape Committee, will have the final decision on what to plant in those areas.

Often, our members wish to plant a tree or bush in memory of a loved one. They also often want to add a commemorative plaque. When such a request arises, it must be referred it to the Committee for approval of the type of plant/tree, the plaque and an appropriate location. **The landscape Committee will facilitate the installation of the connection to the irrigation system for the plant or tree.**

The Committee has copies of Central New Mexico Gardens: A Native Plant Selection Guide, a publication of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, that are available to staff and volunteers. Contact the Chair of the Landscape Committee for this publication to see a list of native plants appropriate to our church campus.

