

NATIVE PLANT POLICY

March 13, 2025

WHEREAS, the Village of Irvington believes that support of biodiversity and environmental sustainability within the Village is important to the quality of life of all residents, and

WHEREAS, Irvington's local ecology is suffering from the extirpation of local plants and animals and the loss of species and ecosystem biodiversity, which decreases watershed health and resilience, reduces habitat for native pollinators, reduces carbon sequestration, and reduces soil enrichment, and

WHEREAS, non-native plants have the potential to disrupt the ecology of natural ecosystems, degrade our biological resources, and

WHEREAS, invasive plants, both native and non-native, present a substantial threat to maintaining biodiverse habitats; and

WHEREAS, the effects of climate change endanger our infrastructure, economy, and livelihoods; increases risk from extreme weather, drought, and flooding; causes harm to our ecological communities; and poses health threats to our citizens with regard to water supplies and food resources; and

WHEREAS, pesticides have been found to be harmful to pollinators and to linger in the surrounding soil and leach into waterways, thereby disrupting native plant communities and reducing biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, excessive use of chemical fertilizers causes degradation of soil due to nutrient imbalance, loss of organic matter, change in soil pH, and release of greenhouse gas, thereby disrupting native plant communities and reducing biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Irvington can promote sustainable landscapes and biodiversity through the use of native plants, which maintain and restore biodiversity, provide habitat for native organisms, attract native pollinators and birds, and promote local ecosystems and environmental health; and

WHEREAS, planting native plants and re-establishing disrupted native plant communities and biodiverse habitats are important tools for supporting sustainability in face of the adverse effects of climate change, promoting sustainable habitat within our Village, creating public awareness and education regarding the importance of native plants and biodiversity, and acting responsibly for the future residents of the Village;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that, subject to the terms of this Policy as set forth below, Native Plants shall be used exclusively in designing, planting, maintaining and managing the landscape features of all Village-owned property, including Village roadsides, parks, public areas, plazas, and other Village properties and facilities unless no native plant fits the ecological niche, in which case, plants which are non-invasive and beneficial to wildlife shall be used in place of native plants; and

RESOLVED, site design and construction as well as plant selection by the Village with respect to Village-owned property shall incorporate consideration of the biological needs and character of plant communities at project sites, lowering maintenance and water usage, minimizing usage of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and preserving and/or replacing canopy coverage; and

RESOLVED, that all new plantings including trees, shrubs, sub-shrubs, perennials and ornamental grasses on all Village park property and facilities shall be 100% Native Plants; and

RESOLVED, that all Village Departments or Village supported groups planting annuals in planting beds, raised beds, or planters on Village-owned property are encouraged to do so consistent with this Village Native Plant Policy where practical and appropriate. In any event, no invasive species will be used in any such planting activities; and

RESOLVED, that proposals, plans and specifications for any Village of Irvington contract involving or requiring landscaping and/or plantings on Village-owned property shall, where practical and appropriate, require the use of Native Plants; and

RESOLVED, that decisions and/or recommendations made by the Village and/or Village Departments regarding Village-owned property shall reflect and be consistent with this Village Native Plant Policy; and

RESOLVED, that decisions and/or recommendations by the Tree Preservation Commission in all Replant Agreements for Tree Removal Permits shall reflect and be consistent with this Village Native Plant Policy where practical and appropriate; and

RESOLVED, that the planting and intentional introduction of all plant species listed as prohibited and/or regulated under New York State's regulations for Prohibited and Regulated Invasive Species, 6 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 575, shall be prohibited in all Village parks and on all Village lands; and

RESOLVED, the Village of Irvington Sustainability Director and the Green Policy Task Force shall investigate funding opportunities and possible pilot programs (1) to convert sections of open lawns and grassy areas into meadows using native grasses and/or create native plant riparian buffers on Village park property, and (2) to identify and remove invasive plants and species.

DEFINITIONS

Ecoregion - areas where ecosystems and the type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources are generally similar. The Village of Irvington is located in Level 1 Ecoregion 8 (Eastern Temperate Forests) and Level III Ecoregion 59 (Northeastern Coastal Zone) and Level IV Ecoregion 59c (Southern New England Coastal Plains and Hills).

Biodiversity - biodiversity is a measure of variation at the genetic, species, and ecosystem level. Variation at all three levels is critical to adaptability and ecological sustainability.

Chemical fertilizers – chemical fertilizers, also known as synthetic fertilizers or artificial fertilizers, are manufactured synthetically, as opposed to organic fertilizers which come from organic sources such as plant residues, compost, or animal waste.

Invasive plants – plants, native or non-native to an ecoregion, whose introduction may cause or are likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Native plants - in general native plants are plants that occur naturally in a particular region, ecosystem, or habitat without human introduction. These plants have evolved within the local ecosystem to provide maximum benefit to other plant and animal species. With regard to this Village of Irvington Native Plant Policy, Native Plants are defined as plants native to the Village of Irvington, the Northeast, the mid-Atlantic coast, and the local Ecoregion.

Non-native plants - plants from outside the ecoregion that have been introduced by human intervention.

Pesticides – pesticides are any substances or mixtures of substances intended for preventing, destroying, repelling or mitigating any pest, such as insects, rodents, nematodes, fungus or weed, and includes herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides.

Sustainability - the ability to meet current needs, whether ecological, environmental, social, or economic, without compromising the needs of future generations.