

# Native Plant Ordinance



November 4, 2025  
Joint Environmental Commission  
and UFAC Meeting



# Introductions

## City of Encinitas

- Sara Cadona, Project Manager
- Patty Anders, Planning Manager
- Meagan Openshaw, Asst. Director



## Consultant Team

- Lindsay Teunis, SWCA, Restoration Ecologist
- Shirley Innecken, SWCA, Senior Biologist
- Jennifer Montgomery, Schmidt Design Group, Landscape Architect
- Patrick Montgomery, Native West, Nursery Professional

# Purpose of Meeting

**Staff is seeking comments and feedback from the Environmental Commission and Urban Forest Advisory Committee (UFAC) on the draft native plant ordinance.**

# Background

- 2022, City Council created a Native Plant Ordinance (NPO) subcommittee (Hinze and Lyndes. Ehlers later replaced Hinze).
- March 31, 2022, May 31, 2022, and August 3, 2022, Subcommittee, PC, Environmental Commission, and Urban Forest Advisory Committee (UFAC) held 3 joint meetings. Direction all groups was to **exclude** SFR from NPO.
- January 2023, City Council initiate preparation of NPO.
- March 2024, City Council provided direction on scope of work and budget.
- June 2024, City Council approved a \$150,000 budget for simplified NPO and hire a consultant.
- July 2024, request for proposal (RFP) was released to hire a consultant.
- October 2024, City Council approved professional services agreement with SWCA Environmental.

# Background - Public Outreach and Engagement

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January 21, 2025-  
Stakeholder Meeting with  
Native Plants for Encinitas  
Group



2

March 24, 2025- Community  
Workshop 1



3

June 23, 2025- Community  
Workshop 2

# Draft Ordinance- Selected Data Resource

Based off community input and professional expertise, Calscape was the selected “list” better known as data resource to reference in the Native Plant Ordinance (NPO).



A California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Updated/Maintained Web-Based Publication



Searchable database of native plants to California. Adopts the taxonomy of the Jepson eFlora; uses CCH (California Consortium of Herbaria) distributional information to model potential plant ranges. Calscape is a partnership of home gardeners, volunteers, industry professionals, universities, and funders.



User-friendly search and filtering options: nursery availability, plant type, sun and water needs, special uses, soil drainage, ease of care, wildlife suitability, size, flowering season, seasonality, cultivars and plant communities. Searchable by scientific and common names. Can save lists to personal account.

# Calscape by CNPS

CNPS and City collaborated to develop and launch a new website filter feature that improves navigation and helps users identify plants in compliance with the native plant ordinance.



The screenshot displays the Calscape website interface. At the top, the logo for Calscape (California Native Plant Society) is visible. Below the logo, there are navigation links: "Find native plants", "Design & inspiration", "Find nurseries", "Care for your garden", "Find landscape professionals", and "About us".

The main search area includes a search bar with the text "I'm searching for" followed by "e.g. Lupinus, Oak, Black sage" and a "near" field with "address, city, or zip". A "Search" button is located to the right of the search bar.

Below the search bar, there is a "Filter by" section with a "Reset all" button. The filters include:

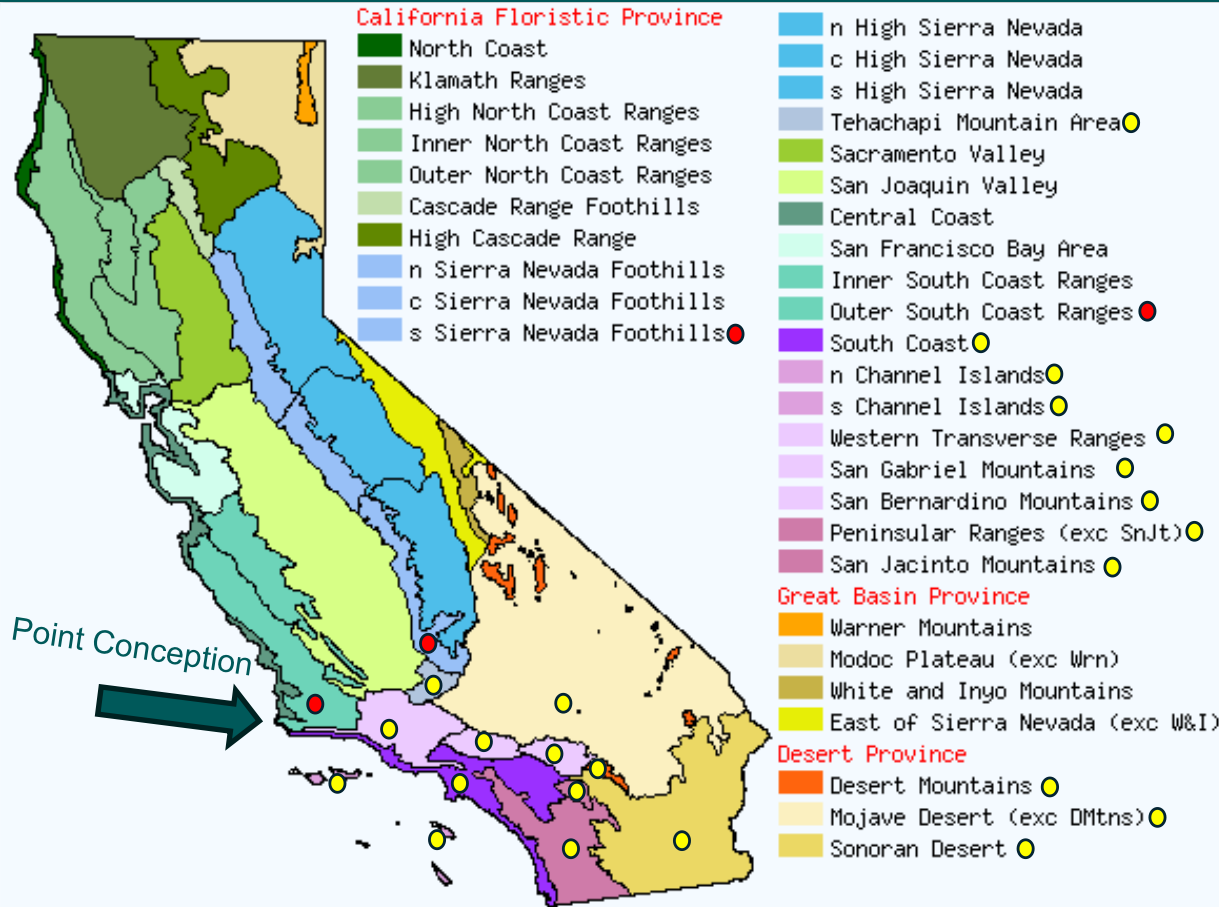
- Open all | Close all
- Nursery Availability
- Select Specific Nurseries
- Plant Type
- Sun
- Water
- Special Uses
- Soil Drainage
- Ease of Care
- Attracts Wildlife
- Size
- Flower Color
- Flowering Season
- Seasonality
- Cultivars
- Plant Communities
- Ecoregion

The "Ecoregion" filter is expanded, showing a search box "Filter ecoregions by name" and a "Clear all" button. Below this, there are checkboxes for "Cascade Range Foothills", "Central Coast", and "Central High Sierra Nevada".

On the right side of the page, it says "8540 total results" and "Sort by Botanical Name". Below this, there is a grid of plant images with their names and botanical names:

- Pacific Silver Fir (*Abies amabilis*)
- Santa Lucia Fir (*Abies bracteata*)
- Balsam Fir (*Abies concolor*)
- Grand Fir (*Abies grandis*)
- Subalpine Fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*)
- Subalpine Fir (*Abies lasiocarpa* var. *lasiocarpa*)
- Balsam Fir (*Abies magnifica*)
- California Red Fir (*Abies magnifica* var. *magnifica*)
- Shasta Red Fir (*Abies magnifica* var. *shastensis*)
- Noble Fir (*Abies procera*)
- Ramshaw Meadows Abr... (*Abronia alpina*)
- Sand Verbena (*Abronia latifolia*)
- Red Sand Verbena (*Abronia maritima*)
- Dwarf Sand Verbena (*Abronia nana*)
- Coville's Dwarf Abronia (*Abronia nana* var. *covillei*)
- Mojave Sand-verbena (*Abronia pagonantha*)
- Transmontane Sand-ve... (*Abronia turbinata*)
- Pink Sand Verbena (*Abronia umbellata*)
- Pink Sand-verbena (*Abronia umbellata* var. *breviflora*)
- Pink Sand Verbena (*Abronia umbellata* var. *umbellata*)

# Map of “southern California native plant” definition



Proposed boundary of “southern California” **based on Jepson bioregions (a.k.a. ecoregions in Calscape)** divides California into 35 ecologically distinct areas for the purpose of indicating where plant taxa grow.

## Definition:

*The following EcoRegions shall qualify: Desert Mountains, Mojave Desert, North Channel Islands, Peninsular Ranges, San Bernardino Mountains, San Gabriel Mountains, San Jacinto Mountains, Sonoran Desert, South Channel Islands, South Coast, Tehachapi Mountain Area, and Western Transverse Ranges.*

- Bioregion considered and included
- Bioregion considered and removed

# Applicability

- **Policy direction came from 2022 joint scoping meetings with City Council subcommittee, Planning Commission, Environmental Commission, and UFAC.**
  - ✓ Single family residences, accessory dwelling units (ADU), and junior accessory dwelling units (JADU) are exempt.
- **Ordinance is applicable to the following types of discretionary projects that propose a landscaping plan:**
  - ✓ Design Review permit pursuant to EMC Section 23.08.030.A.
  - ✓ Major Use Permit pursuant to EMC Section 30.74.040.A, regulating the Ecological Resource/Open Space/Parks (ER/OS/PK) zone.
  - ✓ All City owned properties.
- **Reviewed during entitlement/discretionary permit application.**

# General Requirements

- **The total of all landscaped areas on the project site shall consist of a minimum fifty (50) percent southern California native plants, and shall be calculated as follows:**
  - The fifty (50) percent requirement shall be measured by the plant species size at maturity, excluding trees and tree canopies, and
  - Native trees shall be a minimum of fifty (50) percent of the total proposed tree quantity. Any fraction shall be rounded up to the highest whole number.
- **Proposed landscaped areas within fifty (50) feet of any environmentally sensitive area, open space, and/or in a required setback established from an environmentally sensitive area, shall be planted with one hundred (100) percent southern California native plants.**

# Installation Requirements and Recommendations

- **Installed to industry standards, best practices, and most current technical guidance available at the discretion of the licensed landscape architect.**
- **Tailored to the specific native plant species, location and/or gradient of the area of placement, and broader vegetation communities included in the design to ensure long-term health and ecological sustainability.**
- **Factors to consider: soil condition, irrigation method and frequency, and proper planting techniques.**

# Maintenance Requirements

- **Approved native landscape areas shall be perpetually maintained.**
- **Pruning shall be limited to what is needed for appropriate native plant health and to maximize habitat value and pollinator use.**
- **Trimming is permitted when necessary for public safety and fire management requirements.**
- **Native landscapes shall minimize weeds. Weeding methods shall prioritize non-chemical treatments including hand-pulling in smaller areas and mulching or solarizing in larger areas.**

# Removal and Replacement Requirements

- **To the extent feasible, development projects shall preserve existing onsite native vegetation.**
- **Applicants shall remove and destroy areas containing invasive plants.**
- **Dead and missing native plants shall be removed and replaced to be in compliance with the ordinance and approved landscape plan.**

# Development Application Requirements and Enforcement

- **Submit a landscape plan that is prepared by a licensed landscape architect, during discretionary application.**
- **Prior to certificate of occupancy of building permit or issuance of grading permit, a *Landscape Certificate of Completion* form shall be stamped by the licensed landscape architect and submitted to City.**
- **A project's landscaping may receive a notice of violation, weed abatement, or stop work order until the landscaping has been installed/restored back to the stamped approved landscape plans.**

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