

## **Plant purchases and delivery**

By Brad Lancaster and the Dunbar/Spring Neighborhood Foresters

To make it more convenient for stewards of the neighborhood forest, an experienced neighborhood forester will often offer to purchase and deliver plants from a local native plant nursery to replace plants that have died, or fill in areas that were never planted. The other foresters then reimburse for the purchase and delivery of the plants they receive. The experienced forester will make recommendations on what plants could be planted, and have alternates in case the first choice is not available at the nursery.

This is done for Work & Learn planting parties and our annual Rain & Planting Workshop.

### **Rain must be planted before plant purchase**

To improve the chances of plant success, we primarily offer this service during either the winter or summer rainy season, dramatically lessening the chance of the plants dying from dehydration.

We also get the plants only for areas that are already set up with [passive water-harvesting earthworks](#) to make the most of the rain. This way we further incentivize the best practices we advocate.

### **Save money**

It saves money and time, because local nursery Desert Survivors will give us a neighborhood project discount. It's even better when we align the plant purchases during one of their four big sales each year. What's more, they are a non-profit and don't charge sales tax. We in turn promote the nursery at our plantings.

If Desert Survivors does not have what we need, we then check Spadefoot Nursery. If they don't have what we need, we then check with Nighthawk Nursery.

And sometimes we can't get everything we want so we always have "alternate plants" on our plant list, just in case.

### **On seed too**

We also buy a 1-pound bag each of *Wildland Restoration's*) *Bosque del Bac Habitat Restoration seed mix* and *Old Town Tucson Wildflower seed mix*. We buy this volume direct from Wildland Restoration (520-882-0969 so we get the wholesale rate. This usually provides us enough seed for all the planting events throughout the year. And we use the seed to lure more volunteers. Show up to an event, and you get some native wildflower seed to take home and plant in

your section of the neighborhood.

At the annual Rain & Tree Planting event we plant the wildflower seed in shallow (1-inch deep) trenches around the perimeter of the basin and in its planting terraces, while the Habitat Restoration seed mix (larger plants) is placed in shallow trenches in the bottom of the basins and the planting terraces.



*Kids planting native wildflower seed in seed trench on the perimeter of a street-runoff harvesting basin. Photo credit: Brad Lancaster*

### **Smaller plants save money, require less digging, and grow faster**

We get 1-gallon size plants for all understory plantings, and 5-gallon size trees. This saves us a lot of money and time by not getting larger plants. We can dig smaller planting holes. And the smaller plants will grow faster and within three to five years surpass the size of larger plants planted.

### **Neighborhood nurseries & even greater convenience**

Neighbor and forester Sky Jacobs is another great source for plants as he has a backyard nursery of natives he grows from seed.

Neighbor and forester Brad Lancaster also has a backyard nursery, but of native plants he grows from cuttings and transplants.

The plants are grown out in planting pots recycled from neighborhood plantings.

A wonderful thing about these backyard nurseries is how convenient it is to get the plants without ever leaving the neighborhood!