

GKP Planting Plan Request Tips

The following document is a collection of resources to assist GKP stewards in planning a native plant materials request. It is intended to point you toward the resources you may need to plan a single plant order.

GKP strives to create planting plans that incorporate:

- Site conditions based on a site assessment
- Target Plant Communities or other Restoration goals
- Onsite conditions, challenges and opportunities

Three Steps to Help Determine your Plant Request

1. Use your Goals and Site Conditions to create a general palette of possible plants
2. Measure your Site
3. Calculate Plant Quantities and Select Species

QUICK LINKS TO USEFUL RESOURCES

[GKP Steward Field Guide](#) (pages 20 -26)

Target Ecosystem & Plant Communities in Kirkland ([See Steward Resource Page](#))

Basic Site Assessment Questionnaire ([See Steward Resource Page](#))

Online Plant Calculator by [Sound Native Plants](#)

Plant species information:

- [King County Native Plant Guides](#)
- Sound Native Plants: [Species Selection Guide](#)
- Fourth Corner Nursery: [Catalog](#) and [Plant Lists](#)
- Washington Native Plant Society: [Landscaping Resources](#) & [Plant Directory](#)

1. USE GOALS AND SITE CONDITIONS TO CREATE A GENERAL PALETTE OF POSSIBLE PLANTS

A. Site Conditions:

For each potential planting area determine:

Canopy Cover	Open or Closed (Sun, Shade or Part Shade)
Soil texture	Fine or Coarse ; do one of the following stand out: Sand, Silt, Clay Do you think the soil will be well-drained or will it pool water ?
Soil moisture	Is it saturated, damp or dry in summer?
Existing Vegetation	List the most common trees, shrubs and groundcovers
Tree Regeneration	List any native sapling trees in the understory: How far apart are they spaced for each other (in general): >25 feet, 15 feet, or <10 feet apart
Other Features	Indicated any other conditions that might be relevant: Slope, Aspect (N, E, S, W), disturbance, built features, Streams/hydrology, Past and Current Land-use

See the [Steward Resource Page](#) for a **rapid assessment worksheet**.

B. Target Ecosystem & Plant Communities Info:

There are seven basic ecosystems that you might use as reference in Kirkland. GKP staff can point you toward the most useful ecosystem type. Consider these plant communities as a potential palette of plants for your site.

For a list of ecosystems common to the Kirkland area visit the [Steward Resource Page](#).

These three are relevant to most Steward sites:

- Moist to Dry Conifer-Deciduous Forest
- **Moist to Wet Conifer-Deciduous Forest**
- Forested Conifer-Deciduous Swamp or Novel Ecosystem

C. Other Goals:

Your planting palette and site goals may also be influenced by other opportunities and constraints or you might utilize other sites as potential references to develop your plant palette. We suggest a **diversity of plants, consider trails and human use** and using **any monitoring results** from past plantings to help guide you as well.

Use the steps above to generate a **simple planting palette (15-20 plants)** that you can narrow down to select appropriate species to meet your goals.

2. MEASURE YOUR SITE

Break your site into distinct **planting areas**. Then calculate the square footage of these areas – examples for calculating area are in your Steward Field Guide. Each planting area will have different planting plans.

Ideas for separating your site into **planting areas**:

- **By Site Conditions (canopy, soil, and drainage):**

Ex: Calculate the area for all your sunny, wet sites separately from shaded, dry areas as these will require different species.

- **Type of Planting Needed:**

Ex: You may also want to separate planting areas by the type of planting needed – for example measure NEW or BARE areas separate from areas where you are IN-FILL planting around existing plants.

- **By Existing Vegetation**

Ex: You may want to separate out areas that will still have dense weed cover or those that have thick existing native cover.

- **By Other Site Conditions (human-use, natural features)**

Ex: You can separate out areas adjacent to paths/trails as they require specific plants or by natural features such as slopes or minor topography changes which may result in specific plant requirements.

See Steward Handbook: Pages 20 – 22

Pacing Worksheet – Determine your Pace on the [Steward Resource Page](#).

See Green Seattle Partnership Steward Resource Page for video on measuring by pace

3. CALCULATE PLANT QUANTITIES AND SELECT SPECIES

Using your **Planting Areas** you can now calculate the quantity of each species needed per area.

See [Online Plant Calculator by Sound Native Plants](#) (also a in your Steward Handbook) which uses **spacing on-center** of plants based on your area (sq. ft).

Tips:

- Remove existing vegetation from your calculation by either reducing the total area (ex: 50% of the area is already full) or by increasing the spacing between your plants.
- Plant calculators will give you an extremely high number of groundcover plants. We recommend scaling down these counts in years 1 – 3 and/or consider any woody species and ferns as “low-shrubs” in your planning.
- Consider **how many plants you can actually plant** in a given season and **given site conditions**.
 - <50 is appropriate if you are solo and plan no events
 - 80 – 100 is appropriate for small event sites (< 20 volunteers per event).
 - 100 – 200 is appropriate for medium events (45 volunteers) or multiple small events.
 - 200+ for large events (>50 volunteers) and/or multiple events.
- If you are adding browse protection – i.e. cages of fencing around plants this usually takes ~10 minutes per plant.

See **Steward handbook pages 20-24 for further directions.**

Selecting Species:

Use your potential plant palette generated in early steps to begin selecting species for your current years planting.

Tips:

- Use the **site conditions** (right plant, right place) and **goals** to help select plants.
- **You won't plant all your desired species in one year**, maintenance and other requirements might restrict your selection in year 1 but in years 2-4 you can in-fill with new plants. You will also adapt each year based on any monitoring results from the previous year.
- Determine rough % of each species at each layer (tree, shrub, groundcover) and apply to each planting area calculation. Ex: Western Redcedar (50%), W. Hemlock (25%), Douglas Fir (25%).

For species specific information checkout:

- [King County Native Plant Guides](#)
- **Sound Native Plants: [Species Selection Guide](#)**
- **Fourth Corner Nursery: [Catalog](#) and [Plant Lists](#)**
- **Washington Native Plant Society: [Landscaping Resources](#) & [Plant Directory](#)**
- **Steward Field Guide page 42: Appendix C**
- [EarthCorps Pollinator Planting Guide](#)

After calculating the plants needed per area and per layer (tree, shrub, groundcover) you can fill out the Plant Request Form for the current year.