

## Grow Native! Strategic Plan 2016-2020

### PROGRAMMATIC GOALS

#### **Goal 1: Increased visibility and acceptance of Grow Native! as the go-to native plant authority in the Lower Midwest.**

*Strategy 1: Expand interaction and collaboration with organizations, groups and individuals.*

Action Item 1: Promote and support a “Grow Native! Communities” program by December 2017, perhaps with technical brochures and awards to encourage and recognize towns and institutions that promote native plants.

Action Item 2: Increase Grow Native! participation at five trade association events per year such as the Western Nursery & Landscape Association, Missouri Cattlemen’s Association, the Missouri Green Industry Conference, landscape and nursery associations of the Lower Midwest, organizations for counties/municipalities, and other relevant conferences/festivals/etc.

Action Item 3: Review the feasibility of and, if feasible, prepare a recommendation by 2020—in cooperation with relevant partners—for the use of native plants in the biofuel industry.

Action Item 4: Share information by summer 2016 for homeowners and garden centers to emphasize how limited and selective spraying of chemicals, in addition to integrated pest management, promotes a more healthy and productive environment.

Action Item 5: In cooperation with partners, participate in the development of a Missouri Monarch and Pollinator Conservation Plan.

Action Item 6: Participate and coordinate annually with the Monarch Joint Venture partnership and local, regional, and national monarch and pollinator conservation efforts.

Action Item 7: Encourage research on the cover crop potential of natives, and if feasible, develop by 2020 recommendations for the use of native plants as cover crops.

Action Item 8: Advocate for the use of native plants in federal cost-share programs. By July 2017.

Action Item 9: Continue serving as administrative home for the Missouri Invasive and Exotic Plant Species Task Force and provide the leadership to develop Task Force into a statewide Council by 2020 with broader representation from plant-related organizations, academic institutions, and associations.

Action Item 10: Develop by July 2018 a strategy for interaction and native plant promotion with turf and lawn associations including the Missouri Green Industry Conference, Turf and Grass Council and Federal Golf Association, and special agricultural industry groups such as organic growers, beekeepers, and orchardists.

Action Item 11: Develop or disseminate by July 2020 educational content that promotes the climate change resiliency of native plants.

Action Item 12: By 2018, engage with the University of Missouri Extension to include a native plant component in the training curricula of the Missouri Master Gardeners, Missouri Master Naturalists and other pertinent programs. Collaborate with others to achieve this, such as Lincoln University Native Plants Program.

Action Item 13: Continue annual Grow Native! Ambassador Award and promote its bestowal via news releases, social media, etc.

Action Item 14: Continue annual Grow Native! Native Plant Pioneer award program and promote its bestowal via news releases, social media, etc.

Action Item 15: Continue annual Grow Native! professional member conference, to maintain learning opportunities (from the “go to” native plant authority) to members.

Action Item 16: Analyze the feasibility, by 2017, of a new subcategory of Grow Native! “ambassadors” or “partners” and help promote their native plant events through the Grow Native! website, publications and staff. Subcategory should complement and enhance overall program.

Action Item 17: Continue development and annual upkeep of Grow Native! demonstration gardens, for example, at Missouri State Fairgrounds.

Action Item 18: Continue to provide funding and involvement for the Native Landscape Challenge.

Action Item 19: Develop and disseminate seed packets and/or other promotional materials to promote the program. Annual activity.

*Strategy 2: Improve, expand, and update the Grow Native! website and expand Grow Native! use of other electronic media options.*

Action Item 1: By July 2016, develop recommendations for new database and software options to improve the online resource guide, online native plant database, and internal updates for the membership directory. Analyze partnership opportunities with other groups.

Action Item 2: Include an upgraded calendar of Grow Native! events and partner events (and other events as appropriate) on the website by July 2016.

Action Item 3: Develop by July 2016 and maintain Grow Native! presence with Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia and other modern media platforms, emphasizing visual tools.

Action Item 4: Produce three Grow Native! educational and promotional videos annually, as well as a plan for online outlets for dissemination of them, perhaps in partnership with publications like *Gateway Gardener*, Missouri Master Naturalists, or other groups.

Action Item 5: Post regular (at least 8 per year) Grow Native! updates of current research on the use of native plants for landscaping, agricultural production and other uses.

Action Item 6: Analyze feasibility of an “ask the expert” native gardening/design/ planting interactive consumer tool by August 2016.

*Strategy 3: Continue organizing Grow Native! workshops to the general public and professionals, and continue serving as partner to related endeavors such as the Shaw Professional Series*

*Strategy 4: Continue native plant gardening/design/forage/maintenance articles for a variety of publications and audiences.*

*Strategy 5: Demonstrate economic impact of the native industry, perhaps by enacting a measurable survey or partnering with the Missouri Department of Agriculture on such a survey. By December 2017*

**Goal 2: Increased consumer education of native plants, their benefits, uses, and maintenance.**

*Strategy 1. Provide native plant educational content and opportunities for use by students.*

Action Item 1: In cooperation with environmental education organizations, help support a native plant educational module for schools and/or home school associations by July 2018.

Action Item 2: Explore opportunities to promote or augment native outdoor classrooms by September 2016.

Action Item 3: By 2020 review the horticultural curricula and programs of at least two institutions of higher learning and provide recommendations to promote and support an enhanced native plant curriculum.

Action Item 4: Make native plant information and/or workshops available by 2019 to FFA and 4-H Youth Groups to develop and promote native plant projects at local, county, and State Fair levels.

Action Item 5: Investigate the promotion of native plants as a component of outdoor scout badges, by June 1, 2016.

Action Item 6: Develop by 2018 a school-based competition for native plant and insect promotion.

*Strategy 2: Expand Grow Native! educational opportunities to underserved locations and demographic groups.*

Action Item 1: Provide by 2018 native plant information for Spanish speakers and/or create a workshop for members of this community and participate in one landscaping or gardening event annually for this demographic.

Action Item 2: By 2020 develop a strategy and action plan for promoting native plants, via Grow Native!, in the Missouri Bootheel and other underserved areas.

Action Item 3: Participate annually in at least one neighborhood event or festival in an underserved area, such as East or North Metro St. Louis, rural areas, the Missouri Bootheel, exurban and core-city Kansas City and northern Missouri.

*Strategy 3: Develop information about native plants for commercial plant sellers, the forage-producing and livestock industries, landscaping professionals, and consumers.*

Action Item 1: By 2018 offer Internet links and informational items on native plants for the state Federation of Garden Clubs website.

Action Item 2: Update Grow Native! Toolkit for use by garden clubs and other consumer groups. (appropriate subcommittee to set date)

Action Item 3: Provide by 2020 educational content to help consumers understand the multiple benefits of landscapes that incorporate native plants and encourage them, in landscaping projects, to embrace this new aesthetic.

Action Item 4: Promote and support national prairie day and pollinator month, June 2016-2021.

Action Item 5: By July 2020, contact five city or county park or forestry departments along with appropriate elected officials to promote the use and maintenance of native plants and to determine the impact of local ordinances on native plant installations or planting. Recognize statewide communities that are adopting native plants in their medians and other public plantings.

Action Item 6: Develop or disseminate by 2019 educational content on the monarch butterfly, host milkweed plants, and nectar plants and monarch biology in relation to Monarch Café, Pollinator Buffet, and other potential new specialty tag programs.

Action Item 7: If deemed desirable to purchase by members eligible to purchase tags, develop by 2017 “Bird Bistro” tags and other specialty tags for commercial nurseries. Consider potential new lines of specialty tags, with input from all members eligible to purchase tags, and explore collaborative efforts with appropriate groups and individuals such as Doug Tallamy, Audubon, and National Wildlife Federation. Continue administration of tag program.

Action Item 8: Produce annual Resource Guide (print) and maintain Resource Guide on-line guide

Action Item 9: Promote and disseminate by 2020 informational materials describing native plants that best support diverse native pollinators and honey bees.

Action Item 10: Compile and disseminate by 2020 information/guides for professional landscape architects, project leaders, and/or project managers that emphasize native plants and offer a workshop on designing native plant landscaping projects and stormwater projects using evidence-based metrics. Provide education on writing specs to include experience with native plant selection, design, and maintenance.

Action Item 11: Promote education materials by 2018 that help consumers match native plant characteristics with landscaping and gardening applications.

**Goal 3: Increased training and/or certification of Grow Native! professional members.**

*Strategy 1: Increase the training and educational materials provided by Grow Native! for professional members of the program.*

Action Item 1: By July 2016, develop a report on processes and procedures that other organizations and associations similar to the Grow Native! program provide for members on training and technical support.

Action Item 2: With input from professional Grow Native! members, identify by April 2017 the most needed native plant propagation, management, and promotional training elements.

Action Item 3: Develop a recommendation and process by July 2016 for providing continuing education units or certification for professional members, and for administering such a program.

**OPERATIONAL GOALS**

*Grow Native! program leadership, in concert with Missouri Prairie Foundation administrators, will ensure that adequate staffing carries out day-to-day activities of the program.*

**Goal 4: Expanded existing staff to achieve program and administrative goals.**

*Strategy 1: Increase Grow Native! staff.*

Action Item 1: Add equivalent of 1.5 full-time additional staff to coordinate Grow Native! programming, lead implementation of the Strategic Plan, carry out daily program administration, and increase native plant horticultural training, education opportunities for professional and consumers. Analyze feasibility of job sharing with another entity, such as a Grow Native! professional member October 2016.

Action Item 2: Consider working with existing volunteer programs to help promote native plants by December 2016.

**Goal 5: Developed secure and diversified revenue stream to fund programs and operations, ensure prudent administration of program.**

*Strategy 1: Analyze the cost of each programmatic goal, strategy, and action item and assure that adequate staffing/revenue is available to carry out each one. Amend plan accordingly.*

Action Item 1: Grow and sustain professional memberships and sponsors to at least 150 businesses/individuals/organizations by 2018. This may include expanding the number of professional member categories. Create new membership brochure/materials (print and/or electronic) for 2017 to support goal. Carry out annual supporting tasks (i.e., fulfillment of member benefits (signs, certificates, business info. on website). Recruit new members at trade shows, etc.

Action Item 3: Continue profit-sharing opportunities for organizing workshops and other events. Review in April 2017.

Action Item 4: Pursue annual corporate and/or agency support for the program. By April 2017.

Action Item 5: Explore other revenue-enhancement ideas, such as garden tours or merchandise, and individual event sponsorships. By April 2017.

Action Item 6: Analyze feasibility of native garden tours to be run by another entity to benefit Grow Native! By April 2017.

Action Item 7: Pursue grant opportunities. By April 2017.

Action Item 8: Investigate, by July 2016, pros/cons for a general supporter category of members.

*Strategy 2: Dedicate resources annually to the administration of the Grow Native! Committee and program. Conduct timely meetings, keep committee and subcommittee member information up to date; record meeting minutes; record history and leadership, record annual work plan/Strategic Plan accomplishments. Process and document all program expenses; produce timely financial reports, budgets.*

*Strategy 3: Maintain Grow Native! registration—renewal with U.S. Department of Treasury, Trademark Assistance Center. Renewal due in 2022. Explore protecting other Grow Native! intellectual property via copyright, trademarks, etc. By October 2016.*