

TRANSPLANTING NATIVE PLANTS FROM THE WILD POLICY

(Note: this policy was established by the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) in November, 1988, and subsequently approved and endorsed by AFNN. AFNN members and the general public are advised to follow this policy.)

By promoting the use of native plants in landscaping, the Florida Native Plant Society (FNPS) has helped create a demand for native plants. This has prompted some individuals and companies to offer for sale native plants dug from the wild. Selling harvested plants avoids the time and expense of growing the plants under nursery conditions, but this harvest of native plants is in most cases not sustainable in the long run, and damages land that has potential for preservation.

FNPS does not approve of transplanting native plants from natural areas for landscaping, mitigation, or restoration purposes. Such transplanting is in direct conflict with the society's goal of preservation and conservation of native plants in their natural habitats.

From the beginning, the society has promoted the preservation of existing native plants in their natural habitats, while encouraging the planting of additional native plants grown under nursery conditions from seeds or cuttings. This position should result in a net gain of native plants. Transplanting from the wild merely transfers native plants from natural to manmade habitats and results in a net loss of native plants, as a good percentage of transplanted plants fail to survive the transplanting process.

The society recognizes that there should be an exception to this policy to allow for the salvage of native plants from areas where land clearing activities are both imminent and assured. This type of transplanting saves plants that would otherwise be lost. It is expected, however, that salvage activities not take place until all planning approvals for the site have been obtained and all possibilities for preservation have been exhausted. Salvage and plant rescue operations should be undertaken only in compliance with all state and local native plant protection laws.

Members of the society are asked to abide by this policy as a matter of ethics. Specifically, members are asked to inquire about the origins of plant material and not buy plants that have been transplanted from the wild. Landscape architects and designers are asked, when writing plant material specifications, to specify only nursery-grown plants. Government agencies with jurisdiction over landscaping, mitigation and restoration projects are asked to require these projects use only nursery-grown native plants or those from on-site or nearby salvage operations.

While it is unrealistic to think that FNPS can totally stop the practice of transplanting from the wild, it can supply needed leadership on this issue, and, with the support of its members, help dry up the market for such plants. It is critical that native plant communities remain as undisturbed and undamaged as possible so that potential sites for preservation remain intact.