



# ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR LANDSCAPING PRODUCTS, EQUIPMENT, & SERVICES

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals. Compliance with specification guidance is sufficient to meet PPRA Section 1101(a) environmentally preferable procurement requirements. Additional contextual information is provided here to assist in the implementation of the specification. To access solicitation documents with full contract language, [click here](#).



## BENEFITS

Native plants are adapted to local conditions and **require less pesticides, fertilizer, and water**, which saves money and minimizes the introduction of harmful chemicals into the environment. Native plants also require less maintenance, which saves money and reduces fossil fuels use and air pollution.

Integrated Pest Management can **reduce the use of pesticides** while reducing pest management costs and maintaining plant health.

### SOURCES

<https://archive.epa.gov/greenacres/web/html/index.html>

Agricultural Pesticides: Management Improvements needed to Further Promote Integrated Pest Management. U.S. General Accounting Office. [www.gao.gov/assets/240/232048.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/assets/240/232048.pdf)

## Scope

The environmental specification addresses landscaping services for planted or landscaped beds; natural and habitat restoration areas; bioretention and low impact development sites; and street, roadway, and park areas.

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### EPPS Requirements

Landscaping services shall meet the environmental criteria defined below.

#### **Plant Material:**

Invasive plants, as [listed](#) in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's [Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas](#), shall not be purchased or planted. All plant material shall be locally sourced and grown (i.e., from DC, PA, OH, MD, VA, WV, DE, or NJ).

Site-specific requirements for plant materials are as follows:

- a) **Plants for planted and landscaped beds:** A minimum of 80% of plants shall be native plants, as listed in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's [Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#).
- b) **Plants for natural areas and habitat restoration:** All plants shall be native plants, as listed in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's [Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#).
- c) **Bioretention and low impact development sites:** All plants shall be native plants, as listed in either Prince George's County [Bioretention Manual](#) or the District Department of Transportation's [Green Infrastructure Standards](#).
- d) **Plants for street, roadway, and park areas:** Native plants, as listed in the District Department of Transportation's [Green Infrastructure Standards](#), shall be prioritized.

#### **Fertilizers:**

All contracts shall fully comply with the requirements of the [Anacostia River Clean Up and Protection Fertilizer Act of 2012](#). In addition, contractors shall prioritize the use of compost and organic fertilizers when possible.



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**(EPPS Requirements Continued)**

**Landscaping materials and equipment:**

- a) Wood shall be [Forest Stewardship Council \(FSC\) certified](#).
- b) Irrigation controllers and sprinklers shall be certified by EPA's [WaterSense Program](#).
- c) Hoses, hydraulic mulch, lawn and garden edging, and plastic lumber shall follow EPA's [Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for landscaping products](#):

**Debris removal:**

All landscaping debris shall be mulched and/or composted.

**Integrated pest management:**

Contractors shall comply with the District's [Pesticide Education and Control Amendment Act of 2012](#). Only pesticides found on the [San Francisco Reduced-Risk Pesticide List](#) shall be used.

**Engine idling:**

Contractors shall comply with [DCMR 20-900](#), which prohibits motor vehicle engines from idling for three minutes or more when a vehicle is parked, stopped, or standing.

PRODUCT	MATERIAL	POST-CONSUMER CONTENT	TOTAL RECOVERED MATERIALS CONTENT
Garden hose	Rubber and/or plastic	60% to 65%	--
Soaker hose	Rubber and/or plastic	60% to 70%	--
Paper-Based Hydraulic Mulch	Paper	100%	100%
Wood-Based Hydraulic Mulch	Wood and Paper	--	100%
Lawn and Garden Edging	Plastic and/or Rubber	30% to 100%	30% to 100%
Plastic Lumber Landscaping Timbers and Posts	HDPE	25% to 100%	75% to 100%
	Mixed plastics/Sawdust	50%	100%
	HDPE/Fiberglass	75%	95%
	Other mixed resins	50% to 100%	95% to 100%

**Additional Information**

**Native plants** are plant species that occur naturally in a particular region, are adapted to local conditions and require less pesticides, fertilizers, and water than non-native plants. Areas that are landscaped with native plants benefit other wildlife, and improves retention of stormwater, thereby reducing pollutants entering local rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. Native plant lists utilized in the specification language vary depending on the type of planting service provided. Reference texts cited in the requirements for one or more landscaping types include:

- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's [Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#)
- Prince George's [County Bioretention Manual](#)
- District Department of Transportation's [Green Infrastructure Standards](#)

**Invasive plants** are non-native plants that cause economic harm, environmental harm, or harm to human health. Invasive plants often have traits such as high seed production, rapid growth, and the ability to thrive in disturbed areas. With these advantages, invasive species outcompete native plants and negatively affect native plants and wildlife. For the purposes of the District's environmental specification guidance, invasive plants include any plant species that appears in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's [Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas](#), and/or any other plant species that the District deems [invasive](#).



## Additional Information (continued)

**Locally sourced seeds or plant material** refers to the origins of the seeds or plant material for a grown plant being purchased. The location of the source of seeds or plant material may differ from the location of the grown tree that is procured. This is particularly true for trees. For this specification, locally sourced seeds or plant material is defined as any plant material grown from plant or seeds sourced from DC, PA, OH, MD, VA, WV, DE, or NJ. Specifying plants, including trees, grown from locally-sourced seeds and plant material ensures they are adapted to the local climate, making them hardier and creating better habitat for local wildlife. For more information on the habitat and conservation benefits of planting plants grown from locally sourced seeds or plant material, please see U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's [Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping Chesapeake Bay Watershed](#).

**Locally grown plants** refers to plants sourced or purchased from nurseries in DC, PA, OH, MD, VA, WV, DE, or NJ. Sourcing plants helps keep pests from other parts of the country from coming to the region and reduces the environmental impact associated with long distance shipping.

The **Anacostia River Clean Up and Protection Fertilizer Act of 2012** is a subtitle of the Sustainable DC Amendment Act of 2012. The [Act](#) is intended to reduce fertilizer runoff and subsequent harm to aquatic ecosystems, fisheries, and water quality. Section 203 of the Act outlines the fertilizer application requirements reproduced in this specification. The Act is a legal requirement that applies to all individuals and entities paid to apply fertilizer in the District.

**Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** is a method of managing pests that minimizes harm to the environment by using comprehensive information on the lifecycle of pests and their interaction with the environment. IPM considers a range of pest control methods, including cultural, mechanical, and biological practices, as well as judicious use of chemical pesticides. As part of the [Pesticide Education and Control Amendment Act of 2012 \(PECA\)](#), District agencies are required to implement an IPM policy which has been approved by the District Department of Energy and Environment. IPM methods stress that pesticides should be used as the last report. This specification references the [San Francisco Reduced-Risk Pesticide List](#), which points to pesticides that reduce human and environmental exposure.



**FSC certification** signifies that the [Forest Stewardship Council](#), an independent, third-party standard setting organization, has certified that a wood or paper product meets or exceeds FSC's criteria for sustainable forestry and supply chain management. FSC certification requires that forest managers meet FSC's principles and criteria, including promoting biodiversity, protecting indigenous peoples' rights, and eliminating toxic chemical use. In addition, certification requires that each company in the supply chain retain and document FSC-certified content during the processing, manufacturing, and distribution process. FSC certification is highly regarded.



**EPA WaterSense certification** signifies that products are backed by independent, third-party certification and meet EPA's specifications for water efficiency and performance. WaterSense-labeled products and services are certified to use at least 20 percent less water, save energy, and perform as well as or better than regular models.

The **Onroad Engine Idling and Nonroad Diesel Engine Idling Act (DCMR 20-900)** prohibits motor vehicle engines from idling for three minutes or more when a vehicle is parked, stopped, or standing. The Act is intended improve air quality by reducing unnecessary air pollution.

**EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG)** program is part of EPA's Sustainable Materials Management initiative that promotes a system approach to reducing materials use, associated greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change, and the other environmental impacts over the materials' entire life cycle. [CPG](#) continues the effort to promote the use of materials recovered from the municipal solid waste stream. Buying products made with recovered materials ensures that the materials collected in recycling programs will be used again in the manufacture of new products.



**Environmental Hotspots** The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

<b>ENERGY CONSUMPTION</b>	Locally grown plants dramatically reduce energy consumption and resulting greenhouse gas emissions associated with long distance shipping. Native plants require less mechanical maintenance than non-native plants, therefore requiring less energy.
<b>WATER CONSUMPTION</b>	Native plants are adapted to local climate and require less water than non-native plants. EPA WaterSense certified products use less water than their market counterparts.
<b>RECYCLED CONTENT</b>	FSC-certified wood and products that use recycled content reduces the demand for virgin wood and other natural resources.
<b>POLLUTANTS/TOXICITY/ HEAVY METALS</b>	Integrated pest management reduces the use of pesticides. Fertilizer requirements ensure fertilizer is applied in ways that reduce runoff and limit the use of phosphorous and nitrogen containing fertilizers that pollute waterways. Engine idling restrictions and battery operated equipment limits on-site emissions.
<b>END-OF-LIFE DISPOSAL</b>	This specification requires plant waste to be mulched or composted. Mulching and composting reduces the amount of material that ends up in landfills and produces a usable end product.

**Significance to the District**

<b>SUSTAINABLE DC PLAN</b>	This specification’s native plant, fertilizer, and integrated pest management requirements; and invasive plant and engine idling restrictions help to meet the goals outlined in the <a href="#">Sustainable DC 2.0 Plan</a> .
<b>LEGISLATION</b>	<a href="#">Anacostia River Clean Up and Protection Fertilizer Act of 2012</a> <a href="#">Pesticide Education and Control Amendment Act of 2012</a> <a href="#">Engine Idling, DCMR 20-900</a>
<b>LEED FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS: O&amp;M</b>	<p>This specification meets a number of the requirements of <a href="#">LEED v4</a>.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Sustainable Sites “Site management policy” prerequisite</a> requires the creation and implementation of a policy to reduce chemicals, pollution, and waste. This policy should address a number of areas, including organic waste management, invasive and exotic plant species management, and fertilizer use. Organic waste should be returned to the site or diverted from landfills, invasive and exotic plant species should be managed through monitoring and education, and soils should be tested before using fertilizer to prevent overapplication of nutrients.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Sustainable Sites: “Site development – protect or restore habitat” credit</a> requires either native or adapted vegetation on 30% of all portions of the site, or financial support to a land trust or conservation organization equivalent to at least \$0.40 per square foot of the site area. This credit is worth two points.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Indoor Environmental Quality “Integrated pest management” credit</a> requires an IPM plan meeting a list of specific criteria to be in place for the building and grounds. The plan must be evaluated annually. This credit is worth two points.</p> <p>This specification <i>varies</i> from LEED’s requirements on fertilizers. The <a href="#">Sustainable Sites “Site management” credit</a> prohibits ammonia-based fertilizers, biosolid-based fertilizers (for continuous application), synthetic quick-release fertilizers, or “weed and feed” formulations.</p>

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District’s Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: <https://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing-program> or call the OCP Procurement Center of Excellence at: [202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477) or email [sppdc@dc.gov](mailto:sppdc@dc.gov).