

Public Sector Native Plant Nurseries and their Role in Conservation

The Greenbelt Native Plant Center (GNPC) is owned and operated by the City of New York, Department of Parks. It is one of the only municipal native plant nurseries in the US and is in its 26th year of production. Operated in support of the conservation, management and restoration of the City's natural resources, the GNPC has five operational areas: seed collection and banking, propagation and greenhouse production, container nursery yard production, a foundation seed development program and a regional seed collection and banking program (the Mid Atlantic Regional Seed Bank or MARSB). On average, the Nursery produces in excess of a half million plants a year and is proficient in the germination and production of over 500 species native to NYC. Beyond its role as a traditional native plant nursery, the GNPC/MARSB seeks an expanded role in the long term health and conservation of the City's and the regions native plant populations through use of its seed bank and production facilities in support of plant population augmentation and assisted gene flow. In addition, we hope to initiate a permanent network of regional common garden sites to monitor the shift in plant populations in response to climate change and to inform production and outplanting decisions.