

MOTION

The City has prioritized the protection of biodiversity for most of the last decade through the recruitment of a Biodiversity Expert Panel, made up of scientists, researchers, professors and practitioners from the various world-class universities and organizations around Los Angeles.

The Bureau of Sanitation has led the Expert Panel in the creation of an LA City Biodiversity Index to count and account for the plants, animals and insects that inhabit the region, and to better prioritize their protection, especially from City-related activities.

Yet, the Los Angeles region faces a biodiversity crisis wherein over 90% of local butterflies, songbirds, and other pollinators have disappeared in the last century, driven by the heretofore unconscious replacement of local native flora with non-native plant and tree species.

The City is aware that addressing our local biodiversity crisis is necessary as part of any larger effort to address climate change risks to human health and the long term habitability of our city.

Now through the work of the Biodiversity Experts, the City more fully understands the impacts of its choices, particularly landscaping choices, on the region's future biological health.

As many Angelenos experienced during the COVID lockdown, such nature-based activities as seeing butterflies and hearing songbirds have been linked to human health benefits such as lower blood pressure and an increased sense of well-being and overall happiness.

California native landscaping plants and trees can thrive in our urban environment and furnish all the benefits non-native plants and trees can offer in terms of canopy shade to offset the heat island effect, beauty, and shade comfort for humans, while being low in maintenance costs, yet native plant and tree species provide the only true path to regional climate resilience for biodiversity, water and energy savings, and the elimination of soil amendment runoff pollution.

There are abundant and sufficient California native plant and tree options for every ornamental landscaping application in Los Angeles, including more than 30 California native tree species already on the City of Los Angeles Approved Street Tree List and over 500 California native drought tolerant plants that have been adopted into horticulture trade to fill every landscaping niche for size, shape, color, fragrance, bloom season, and beauty.

California native plant and tree species present an underutilized opportunity to foster local identity, embrace the Indigenous, geographical and cultural heritage of Los Angeles, and continue the City's trajectory of biodiversity leadership in a time of mass extinctions..

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I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council direct all relevant municipal government agencies who install landscaping, including Urban Forestry in the Bureau of Street Services, the Recreation and Parks Department, the Bureau of Engineering, the General Services Department, as well as the proprietaries, Los Angeles World Airports, the Department of Water and Power and the Port of Los Angeles, to discontinue the practice of planting non-native landscaping plants and trees and, using the ecotope map created in the LA City Index as a guide, plant only appropriate native plants and trees, except in situations where plants and trees are designed to produce food for human consumption or provide a designated recreational playing field.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Attorney, in partnership with the Department of City Planning, be requested to draft in 120 days a land use and permitting ordinance requiring that citywide only 100% California native plants and trees be planted for all uses, governmental, commercial and residential.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Bureau of Sanitation and Environment work with the Biodiversity Expert Council on a pollinator-friendly landscaping plan that prioritizes planting the appropriate milkweed to promote the continued recovery of our beloved Monarch butterfly population.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council request the City Attorney draft an ordinance banning citywide by 2025 the sale of non-native plants and trees in stores, nurseries, wholesalers, and from other entities that sell landscaping plants.

PRESENTED BY:



PAUL KORETZ

Councilmember, 5th District

SECONDED BY:



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