



Washington Association of Conservation Districts

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| To | Members of the Washington State Association of Conservation Districts |
| From | Heather Wendt, Deputy Director |
| Date | November 12, 2025 |
| Subject | Update on the Implementation of the Plant Materials Task Force Strategies |

Background

The Plant Materials Taskforce was formed from the adoption of Resolution 2023-11. The goal of the Plant Materials Taskforce was to explore ways of providing additional native plants to conservation districts. The Taskforce's recommended strategies were approved by the WACD Board at their November 18, 2024, meeting. Since then, staff have been working toward implementing various strategies outlined in the original briefing document. That document can be found here: <https://wadistricts.us/wacd/committees/pmc-task-force/#downloads>.

Focus for This Fiscal Year

The focus for WACD staff this fiscal year has been to further explore partnerships with private nurseries to help meet conservation district (CD) potted plant needs. Staff started with a survey of plant needs for Central and Eastern Washington CDs. 24 of 26 CDs responded to the survey. 10 of those indicated they needed assistance procuring potted plant materials for their projects. 6 indicated they did not need assistance. 6 CDs indicated they have a nursery or are developing a nursery to meet their plant needs.

The survey explored the size of desired materials and the geographic region where plant materials were needed. CD answers are summarized in Figures 1 - 4.

Figure 1 - What is your preferred container size for forbs?

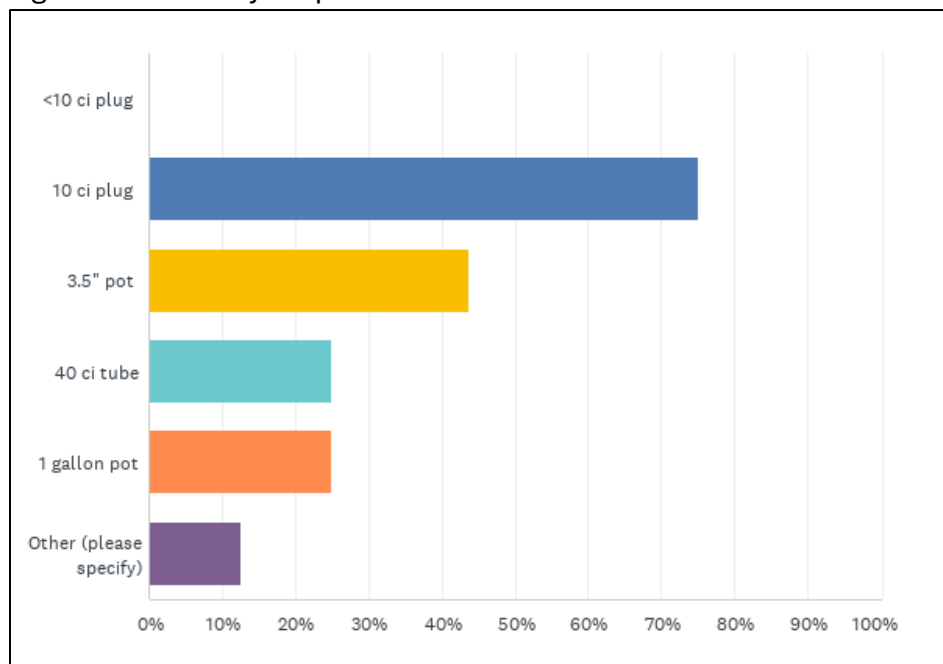


Figure 2 – What is your preferred container size for grasses?

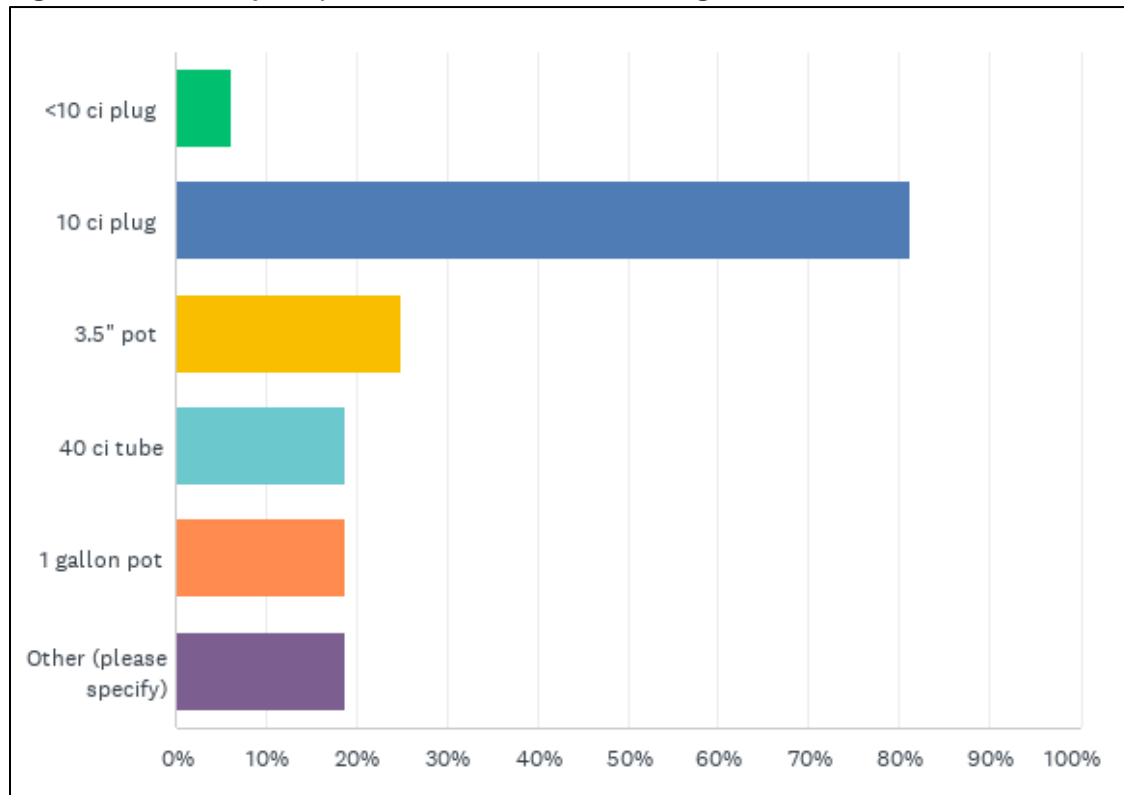
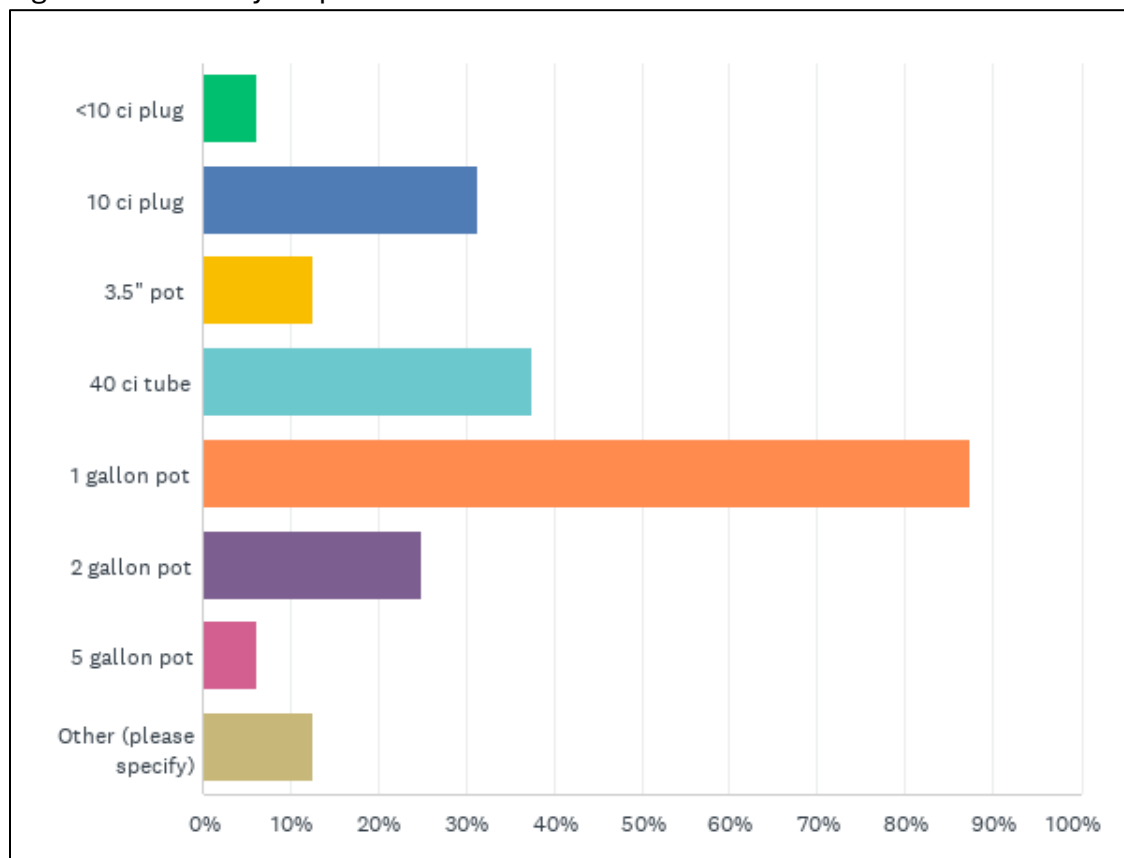


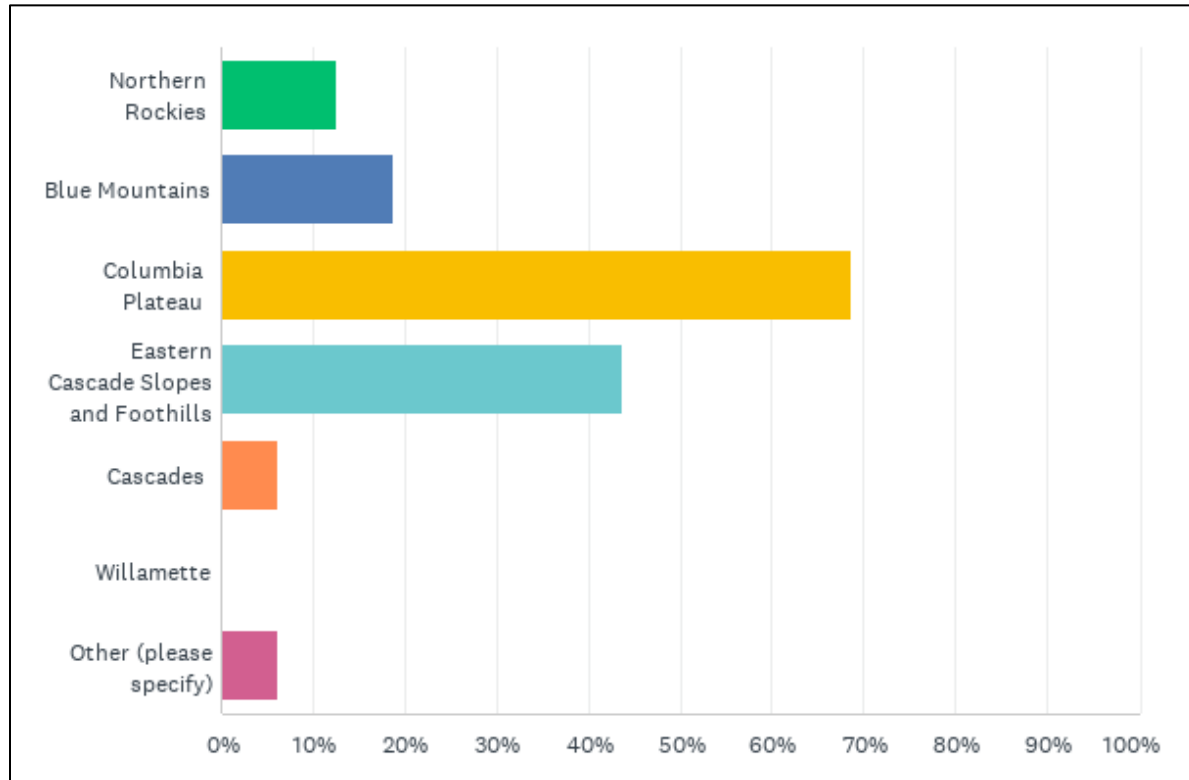
Figure 3 – What is your preferred container size for shrubs and trees?





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Figure 4 – What Ecoregions do you need plants for?



Trends and Data Insights

The container size most preferred for forbs and grasses is 10 ci plugs. The container size most preferred for trees and shrubs is 1 gallon. The largest ecoregion for which plants are needed is the Columbia Plateau and the eastern Cascade Slopes and Foothills. In addition to containerized stock, several respondents also expressed a need for native seed sources.

Brokering Considerations

Order Timing and Quantities – The more advance notice CDs can provide when ordering, the more effectively the PMC can help ensure plant availability. Larger collective orders may also qualify for bulk discounts when multiple CDs are interested in the same species and container size.

Direct Purchase versus Brokering – For CDs primarily focused on minimizing costs, direct purchasing from vendors may be more economical. To support this, the PMC Users Guide will be updated with links to sites listing native plant nurseries and seed distributors.

Shipping Costs – For plants in 1-gallon containers or larger, proximity to the project site is a major cost factor. Partnering with regional nurseries will help reduce shipping costs and improve logistics.

Proposed Next Steps

1. WACD staff will reach out to the CDs who requested assistance.
2. PMC staff will update the PMC Users Guide to include links to sites that have listings of native plant nurseries and seed distributors so that CDs who find it more economical to purchase directly can do so.
3. WACD will continue to provide education and outreach to CDs on the services the PMC provides to reduce the knowledge barrier for new CD staff.



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A table outlining the status of what has been accomplished to date is below.

Implementation Status of Recommendations from the Plant Materials Taskforce- 11/1/25

| Strategy | Activity | Tasks | Initial Required Investment | Timeline / Status |
|--|--|---|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 - Education | Conduct CD / Customer Education and Outreach & Listening Sessions | Develop a PMC Open House Program – alternating between CDs and the Private Sector | Low | CD Open House took place in August 2024, and additional tours are planned in 2025 |
| | | Develop a PMC User's Manual with Periodic Review | Low | Completed / Ongoing |
| | | Provide Access to Planting Tutorials/Videos/Virtual Tour | Low | Provided input on SCC's Bareroot Planting Guide |
| 2 – Increased PMC Opportunities | Increase Standing Orders and Contracting Opportunities | WACD will work with WSCC and the legislature to extend grant funding timelines beyond two years | Medium | The SCC decided at their March 2025 meeting to trial this with the Riparian Grant Program |
| | Increase Brokering Opportunities | | | |
| | CD input into Species Selection for New Plantings at the PMC | Create guidelines in the PMC User Manual for new species requests. | Low | Completed |
| 3 – WACD Satellite Nurseries | Support WACD Satellite Nurseries at CDs and/or Create an East Side PMC | Phase 1 - Conduct an east-side assessment and based on the results conduct a feasibility study or pilot project | Medium | TBD |
| 4 – Partnerships with Private Nurseries | Support WACD Partnership with other private nurseries. | Phase 1 – Conduct an assessment and based on the results conduct a feasibility study or pilot project | Medium | An eastern and central WA potted plant needs survey was conducted in the late September / early October. |
| 5 – Support Funding Requests for CD Nurseries and/or other Plant Material Initiatives | Support funding opportunities that provide additional plant materials / CD plant propagation opportunities | WACD will support CD and SCC funding requests for initiatives that provide additional plant resources to CDs (RPPP, shrub-steppe, etc.) | Low | WACD supported the SCC's FY26/27 Budget Request. To date, PMC staff have provided 5 CDs with technical assistance to create gravel beds. |