

Presentation Abstract

An ecological framework for using native plants in restoring landscapes

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Ecological restoration is generally considered to be the active, directed effort to re-establish the structure and function of a given ecosystem following its degradation. Therefore, targets of restoration focus upon species and processes, such as seedling recruitment or nutrient cycling. While these are necessary aspects in a framework for restoration, they alone are not sufficient in engaging all the aspects necessary to result in net gains of healthy, native ecosystems on local or global scales. A framework for utilizing native plants in landscape restoration must focus on species and processes but also on relationships--relationships among humans and between humans and the land.

Therefore, this presentation will explore five aspects of restoring landscapes from both scientific and cultural perspectives:

- 1) Ecosystems and ecology,
- 2) Processes of land degradation,
- 3) Processes of restoration,
- 4) Targets for restoration, and
- 5) Gauging success of restoration.

Efforts will be made to suggest productive activities that anyone from the weekend gardener to the restoration ecologist may be able to take in order to advance the restoration of native landscapes and the cultural values that will be required for the long term success of landscape restoration.