

SWWD Stewardship Grant Eligible Expenses Guide

Updated Spring 2026

The South Washington Watershed District Stewardship Grant program has requirements on the types of purchases that are eligible for reimbursement. Refer to the guide below when purchasing native plants and materials for your project. South Washington Watershed District may change eligibility guidelines. If you have any questions about whether a purchase is reimbursable, please email Abby Tekiela, Water Resources Program Manager at Abby.Tekiela@swwdmn.gov.

Native Plants and Seeds

To make the biggest difference for pollinators, Minnesota native plants and seeds should make up the largest portion of your project. ***Only Minnesota native plants are eligible for reimbursement.***

Eligible Minnesota Native Plants and Seeds Include:

- Flowers and forbs
- Bare root plants
- Grasses, sedges, and ferns
- Trees and shrubs
- Seeds or seed mixes

<i>Eligible Expenses</i>	<i>Ineligible Expenses</i>
<i>Plants</i>	
Minnesota native flowers, forbs, bare root plants, grasses, sedges, ferns, trees, shrubs, seeds or seed mixes	Non-native, hybrid, cultivar, “nativar”, or invasive to MN plants – See Cultivars and Non-Natives Exceptions

Source Plants and Seeds Locally

If possible, opt for native plants and seeds that have been grown within 200 miles of the project location, or otherwise within the Minnesota/Wisconsin region. While many retailers offer Minnesota native varieties, those plants grown outside the region are less likely to adapt and thrive.

Avoid Neonicotinoids/Systemic Pesticides

Neonicotinoids or “neonics” are a class of systemic neuro-active insecticides that act as a neurotoxin to insects. They have been recognized as a harmful substance that harm insects like bees, butterflies, and other vital organisms. Before purchasing plants, check the label and confirm with your vendor that the plants are neonicotinoid-free.

Project Materials

Depending on your project's specific needs, the following list of eligible materials can help make your project more successful.

Eligible	Ineligible
Project Materials	
Wood mulch, non-dyed and locally sourced preferred.	Rubber mulch
Biodegradable weed suppression materials including cardboard, paper-based landscaping fabric, erosion control blankets, germination blankets, straw, and stakes for blankets.	Plastic or synthetic materials used as weed barrier commonly sold as fabric weed barrier, plastic sheet weed barrier, or landscape fabric
Plastic sheeting/tarps for solarization and occultation	Products used to kill animals
Herbivore barriers like chicken wire and stakes, mesh baskets, tree guards, etc.	Equipment purchased to keep, such as lawn mowers, wheel burrows, shovels, or gloves
Equipment rental fees, such as renting a sod kicker to remove turf	Edging materials
Delivery fees for eligible expenses	

Low-Cost Ways to Source Materials

Mulch: Services such as Chip Drop will drop mulch at your residence for free. Check online marketplaces such as Facebook Marketplace, Chip Drop often drops more chips than are needed, and individuals will advertise their excess pile for free. You can also contact tree trimming companies directly, many will provide mulch at low or no cost.

Cardboard: Check online marketplaces such as Facebook Marketplace for free cardboard, many businesses will advertise excess cardboard. However, be aware of what the cardboard was used for, as cardboard contaminated with paint, gasoline, or other hazardous chemicals should be avoided.

Soil: Due to the risk of Jumping Worm, it is generally safer to purchase soil from a retailer. Community compost stations cannot monitor closely enough to prevent jumping worms from entering.

Ineligible Expenses

Non-native, cultivars, and hybrids should be avoided. ***These varieties are not native plants and are not eligible for reimbursement.***

Cultivars and Non-Native Exceptions

Non-native, cultivars, or “nativars” hybrids and annuals are not eligible for reimbursement, except if listed below.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Reason for Exception
Fescue grasses	All <i>Festuca</i> species	Pollinator lawn species
Self-heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Pollinator lawn species
Yaak yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> var. ‘yaak’	Pollinator lawn species
White clover (Dutch White Clover, micro-clover)	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	Pollinator lawn species
Serviceberry Tree	All <i>Amelanchier</i> species	Beneficial for pollinators
Hawthorn Tree	All <i>Crataegus</i> species	Beneficial for pollinators
Black Chokeberry	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Beneficial for pollinators
Prairie Crabapple	<i>Malus ioensis</i>	Beneficial for pollinators



All Eligible and Ineligibles Expenses

Eligible Expenses	Ineligible Expenses
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Delivery fees for eligible expenses	Applicants own labor cost