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## Spruce up the garden with plants from Go Native

GENEVA MILLER For The World Apr 17, 2017



At the Go Native nursery, seventh grade Harbor Lights Middle School students Trevor Angove, and Hunter Angove repot Port Orford cedar trees.

Photo by Geneva Miller

Bandon's Go Native greenhouse and nursery are abuzz this spring. Students and volunteers are tending native trees, shrubs and pollinator-friendly plants, bound for gardens and habitat restoration sites around the South Coast.

Local gardeners can shop Go Native and learn instructor Darcy Grahek's "zero-scaping" landscape philosophy. Grahek emphasizes native and non-invasive plants for gardens that are beautiful, good for the environment and low maintenance— with zero watering and zero fertilizing. Trees and shrubs are available at wholesale prices at the Go Native nursery during the school year, Monday through

Thursday, from 3 to 5 p.m. Or, find Go Native through the summer at the Bandon farmers market in the Old Town Marketplace.

Popular Go Native selections are Port Orford cedar with rot resistant roots, evergreen huckleberry, vine and big leaf maple, redwoods, red-flowering currant, ferns, twinberry, Douglas spirea, and beach strawberry.

### **Working classrooms**

The Bandon School District Go Native program, led by Darcy Grahek, is a project and place-based learning initiative. Students learn through instruction in courses such as Trent Hatfield's science class, nicknamed "Go Native class." Then, they grab gardening gloves, trowels and watering cans and apply their knowledge to hands-on work in the nursery and greenhouse. Go Native plants make their way to homes and forests around the region.

"Place-based learning really brings a sense of connection," said Grahek.

Students cultivate living labs in or near the school grounds where they work and play almost every day.

There's a new butterfly garden underway at Harbor Lights Middle school. Students also work to maintain and restore native plants along Gross Creek, which crosses school district grounds, just north of Harbor Lights and south of Ocean Crest Elementary.

"Gross Creek is a great laboratory for us," said Grahek.

Grahek's childhood fascination with native flora and fauna blossomed into an adult career path. She's owned gardening businesses in Bandon and the Rogue Valley and continued her education with master gardener and wildlife steward training with Oregon State University Extension. Her work as Indian

Education Coordinator and classroom assistant for the Bandon schools featured herb and vegetable garden projects at Ocean Crest Elementary School.

Go Native now has 28 community partners supporting the program through grants, contracts and in-kind contributions. The network helps Go Native reach out and find partners to collaborate on long-term or themed projects, said Grahek.

Recent visitors to the Go Native nursery probably noted an impressive collection of 1,000 newly potted red alder trees. Go Native cultivated the native deciduous trees for a contract with the Nature Conservancy and Fish and Wildlife department. The young alders are destined for a salmon watershed restoration project.

The Bandon School District received a \$5,400 grant from the Oregon Arts Commission's 2017 Arts Builds Communities program. Grahek will work with teachers, local artists and students on community arts programs for the Wild Rivers Pollinators Project, a multi-disciplinary approach to gorse eradication and habitat restoration.

Common gorse, also known as Irish furze, is an invasive, non-native plant that crowds out native plants and impairs native insect populations, including the seaside hoary elfin and greenish blue butterflies. Bandon High School art teacher Jen Ells said she looks forward to learning about pollinators, such as butterflies and bees and their essential plants, then sharing that knowledge through art. Students will participate in community art installations, including the 2017 Port of Bandon Boardwalk Art Show and summer art show at the Southern Coos Hospital and Health Center.

### **Dig in**

Go Native welcomes volunteers. Bandon students grades seven through twelve are invited to drop in at the nursery after school.

Nursery and greenhouse work may include watering, transplanting or potting plants, and weeding. Gardening tools are supplied.

Adults interested in volunteering should contact Darcy Grahek at Bandon High School, 541-347-4413.