



Landscape Services

Safety Standard Operating Procedure

(Revised 3/2023)

Native Corridor

Cutback of Perennials

This SSOP provides guidance on the safe cutback of perennials used in the Native Corridor. As with any equipment or tools, the most basic premise for safe operation is reading and adhering to the manufacturer's instructions and warnings. This SSOP is not a substitute for the owner's manual produced by the manufacturer.

Safety

PPE Required for Perennial Cutbacks:	Gloves, safety glasses, hearing protection and sturdy footwear
Scheduled:	Late February to early March
Tools needed:	Pruners, tarp, blower, and hedge trimmers
Safety Hazards:	Vehicle and pedestrian traffic, lifting, bending, noise, equipment malfunction, hot or cold temperatures, sharp objects and inclement weather.

Preparation to Cutback Perennials

1. Prior to cutting back perennials, assess if any of the perennials should be split to infill other spaces.
 - a. It is important to note this so that perennials can become too crowded, and splitting is a great way to minimize overcrowding.
2. Leaves are left around the base of plants in the Native Corridor **ONLY**.
3. One week prior to the scheduled cutback of the perennials in the Native Corridor, remove all leaves at the base of the plant and dispose of at composting.

Cutback of Perennials

This is a very general guide to cutback of perennials. Many perennials need different attention at cutback, but the premise is the same.

1. Identify the group of perennials that you are going to prune back first.
2. Once identified, determine the best tool to complete the task.
 - a. Hedge trimmers or pruners are going to be the most common methods for cutting back most perennials on campus.
 - i. General notes for cutting perennials with hedge trimmers include:
 1. Always cut away from yourself or and pedestrian traffic.
 2. Always observe your surrounding before cutting (pedestrians, post and chain or wiring)

- a. We do not want to hit objects or pedestrians when following through on a cut
 3. Ensure that the blades on the hedge trimmer are sharp and not dull. A dull blade will tear the plant material and can damage the overall health of the plant.
- ii. General notes for cutting perennials with pruners:
 1. Always wear gloves when pruning perennials with pruners.
 2. Pay close attention to what you are cutting as it is easy to get too close to the pruners with your fingers when you are cutting a large volume of plant material off in bundles.
 3. Make sure the blade is sharp and does not have any nicks or a broken/rolled edge on the blade.
 - a. Using a nicked or damaged cutting edge will result in a tearing action on the plant material and can damage the overall health of the plant.
 - b. It is important that when switching between plants that we are disinfecting the cutting edge of the hedge trimmers or pruners to prevent cross contamination of potential diseases or fungus between plants.
3. For most perennials, we will be cutting either to the ground or leaving six to eight inches of growth on the plant.
 - a. This will encourage new growth to either:
 - i. Be supported by the old growth.
 - ii. Sprout from the old growth but assist in controlling the final height at the end of the season.
 - iii. Allow the new growth on the old wood to be supported by a stronger/older stem growth.
4. Prune a small section of your perennial groupings and clean either as you go or once you finish a grouping.
5. Dispose of your pruned material on a tarp or in a bucket.
6. Repeat steps 4 – 5 until all perennials have been cutback.
7. Rake up any loose debris left onsite and dispose of in your tarp or bucket.
8. Blow off all hardscapes around your workspace.
9. Dispose of materials at compost or central disposal hub designated within campus.