



## IMPORTANT UPDATE:

We regret to inform you that as of this past Friday (2/14/25), the initial grant that was funding most of the Native Plant Producer Program (NPPN) was terminated. While the future may look different for NPPN, our mission remains unchanged. We will continue working with our partners, schools, and local communities to meet the growing demand for coastal restoration, one native plant at a time!

We are immensely proud of the progress we've made and the positive impact the program has had so far. The need for local, readily-available native plants for coastal restoration remains as urgent as ever, and we are committed to continuing our work toward streamlining the process from seed collection to restoration.

Since the start of 2024, NPPN has been dedicated to building a network of native plant producers to support living shoreline restoration projects. Along the way, we've reached some exciting milestones, including:

- Starting a network of people like you interested in this type of work
- Partnered with 8 schools, reaching around 500 students
- Hosted 2 workshops
- Helped start 7 at-home growers
- Developed 3 demonstration sites across the MS coast
- Expanded our capacity to accommodate a growing inventory of native plants

*-The NPPN Team*



## NATIVE PLANT PRODUCER NETWORK

# HELLO PLANT PEOPLE!

Welcome to the first Quarterly newsletter for the Native Plant Producer Network!



## WHO ARE WE?

We focus on building a network of native plant producers for local living shoreline restoration projects. Currently, the demand for plants used in shoreline restoration exceeds the capacity of local Mississippi growers to supply them. Our project aims to address this gap between supply and demand.

## OUR PROJECT GOALS

Our program hosts workshops for producers, students, and community members to learn about our local wetlands. Demonstration sites are being constructed at the Coastal Research and Extension Center and local Gulf Coast high schools. Our Extension personnel work closely with participants to mentor the propagation and growth of wetland plants before placing them in restoration projects.

# MEET OUR TEAM

## NATIVE PLANT PRODUCER NETWORK



### TEAM LEADERS

Our Team Leads help guide the project forward through decision making and program development to provide connections and resources for our team members and volunteers.



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### TEAM MEMBERS

Our Team Members assist our team leads on various daily tasks for the project, such as plant care and maintenance.



# CURRENT PROJECTS

## SCHOOL DEMONSTRATIONS

In the summer of 2024, we worked diligently to set up outdoor spaces at local high schools across coastal Mississippi and Alabama. These sites are managed by volunteer students and teachers, with guidance provided by the NPPN team. Students are encouraged to design experiments and collect data, gaining valuable experience that will help prepare them for careers in STEM.



## BAYS AND BAYOUS

In November 2024, NPPN sponsored students and teachers to attend the Bays and Bayous Symposium. Two students had the opportunity to present a poster on their experimental design using marsh plants provided by NPPN.



## PARTNER PROGRAM: GLASS ROOTS

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Glass Roots is launching its pilot program this spring, partnering with three schools, Biloxi Junior High School, Colmer Junior High, and Crossroads Elementary, and four dedicated teachers. This innovative project engages students across the Gulf in hands-on environmental research by cultivating *Distichlis spicata*, commonly known as saltgrass, in varying environments, promoting sustainability and coastal resilience through experiential learning.

In addition to the planting initiative, the team is developing a comprehensive plant guide and supplementary educational modules designed to align with state standards, ensuring an enriching and curriculum-integrated learning experience.

**Looking ahead,** Glass Roots is preparing for its next phase, a teacher workshop on June 26-27. At this workshop, 10-12 educators from across the Gulf will be recruited to expand the program's reach and impact. If you would like to be involved in the next phase of the project, please contact Jolie Griffey.



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LEARN MORE AT  
[msucoastal.com/glassroots/](https://msucoastal.com/glassroots/)





## GROWING NATIVE WETLAND PLANTS for coastal restoration

# WORKSHOP

Workshops have been hosted at the Coastal Research and Extension Center (CREC) and The Crosby Arboretum. Topics have included conservation methods for living shorelines, the process of growing plants from seed to restoration, wetlands, and strategies for recruiting participants to join our program.

[MSUCOASTAL.COM/NPPN/](https://msucoastal.com/nppn/)

## SEED COLLECTION

In the fall of 2024, the NPPN team dedicated time to collect seeds from Smooth Cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) at several local locations. The team also prepared seed trays of Black Needlerush (*Juncus roemerianus*). These seeds will be used to cultivate new plants for future research and restoration efforts.

# JANUARY SNOW STORM

## CHILL OUT

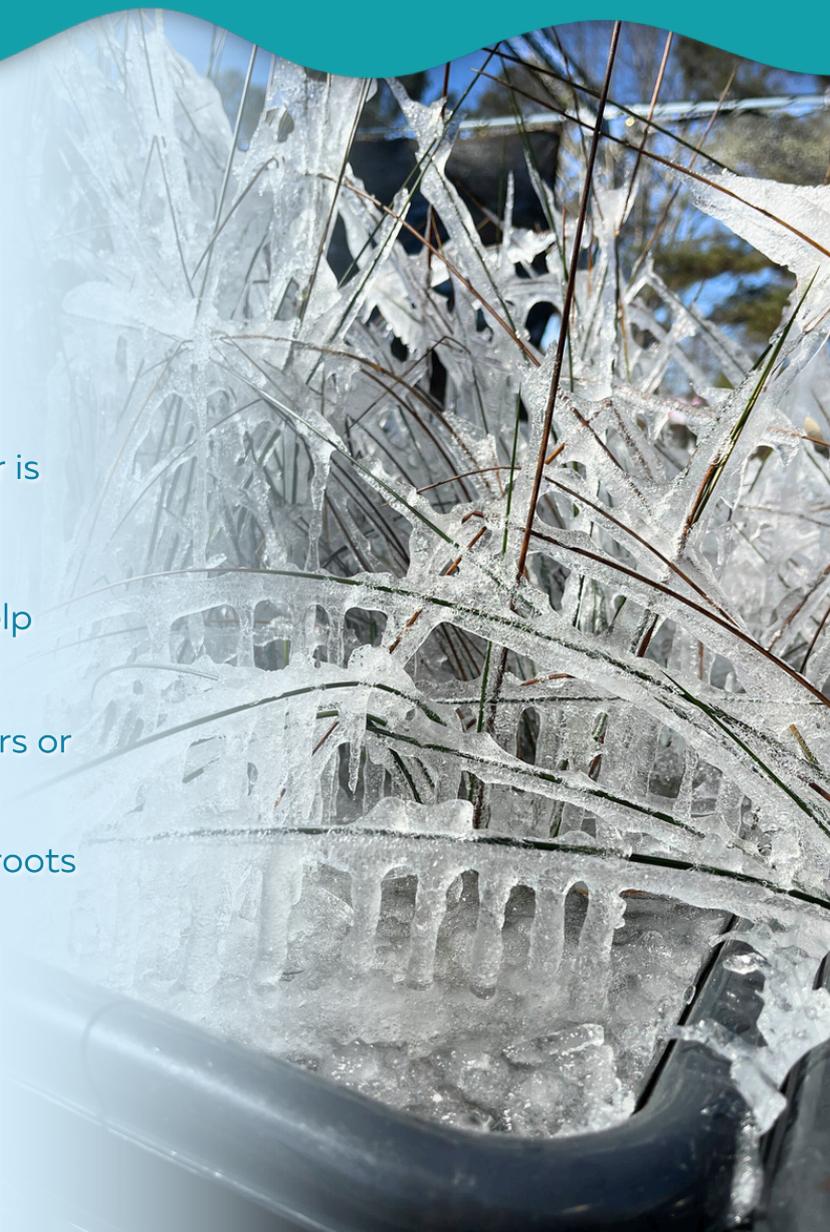
January is typically one of the coldest months of the year in Mississippi, and this January was especially cold, with a surprise snowstorm. From the 21st to the 23rd, the entire CREC campus was covered in ice and snow, including all of our NPPN plants!



## PROTECTING NATIVE PLANTS

Preparing native plants for cold weather is simple! Most require no extra care or attention, but if you'd like to be extra cautious, you can follow these tips to help protect your plants:

- Temporarily move your plants indoors or into a protected area.
- Overfill water bins to insulate plant roots from harsh temperature swings.
- Set a sprinkler to water your plants during the coldest part of the day (usually very early morning).





# GET INVOLVED

## INTEREST FORM

Are you interested in learning more about our program or getting involved with our Native Plant Producer Network? If so, please fill out this form with your respective interests and we will be in touch soon!

[INTEREST FORM](#)

Visit [msucoastal.com/nppn/](https://msucoastal.com/nppn/) for more information.



**JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP:**  
[Native Plant Producer Network](#)



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