

BEYOND THE BINARY



RECALIBRATION

XI

Native plants are rightly beloved. They've shaped and been shaped by the creatures around them for millennia. And their celebration is a wonderful way for people to engage with their local landscapes.

Categories are useful. They help us communicate, set policy, and allocate resources. The problem is when they harden into ideology.

Environmental conditions are changing faster than any conventional restoration plan can keep up with.



The U.S. Dept. of Interior spent \$143 million on anti-invasive measures in 2020, much of it on toxic herbicides.

Most of these measures are destined to fail.

The plants return the moment the intervention stops.

FLIP 

How else might that money be used?

Research on
climate adaptation

Research
on assi
migrat
tion

Developing
renewable
energy

Planting
urban tree
canopies

Superfund
site cleanup

Stormwater
management

Environmental
education.

Composting
infrastructure

Green
roofs

In many Indige-
nous cultures,
relationships with
land are based
in reciprocity and
a sense of respons-
ibility, rather
than ownership or
extraction. This
ethic is worth
learning from.

But learning from
it means practicing
reciprocity with
whatever plants
are growing near
you, not freezing
the botanical
inventory in time.

This is not an
argument against
native plants,
or for introduced
plants at all
costs.

This
is
an
argument
for
nuance.



What's
growing in
your
neighborhood
right
now?



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SOURCES