

Preamble:

The Silva Creek Botanical Garden (SCBG) is a garden of native plants. The Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) is not native and is described as a class C noxious weed by the NM Department of Agriculture (<https://pubs.nmsu.edu/circulars/CR698/>). This species thrives in our hot, dry climate; seeds germinate at very high rates and the resulting seedlings readily outcompete native seedlings for resources. Such plants are targeted for management or control by the State of New Mexico because they have been determined to be injurious to the environment, as studies show conclusively that native plant species support native wildlife species/biodiversity at a rate many times greater than do nonnative species. "Recent research provides new evidence that the displacement of native plant communities is a key cause of a collapse in insect populations and is affecting birds as well." (<https://e360.yale.edu/features/how-non-native-plants-are-contributing-to-a-global-insect-decline>)

The Gila Native Plant Society mission speaks to both education regarding native flora and conservation through the use of native plants in landscaping. A vital avenue for this education is the SCBG. As such, the garden needs to function as a "best practices" example of how to landscape with native plants and as a tool to teach the public what native plants are and what their importance is in the ecology.

Silva Creek Botanical Garden Siberian elm (*Ulmus pumila*) policy:

Silva Creek Botanical Garden management and volunteers will remove all Siberian elm seedlings as they are discovered.

The larger elms in the garden will continue to be steadily reduced in stages over several years. The manner of this reduction will result in standing dead trunks up to 7' in height. In this form, surrounded by the native trees that have replaced them, they will provide a valuable, long-lasting habitat for insects and other wildlife. A reduction that is gradual and steady is best for the wildlife that are already using them, the neighborhood, and the native plants currently accustomed to (while also fleeing from) their shade. The timeframe for this process will be determined by the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee will choose native replacement trees that are consistent with the long-range plan.