

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

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## USDA Offers Grant for SITES Initiative

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The National Green Centre has received a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant to provide education on the Sustainable Sites Initiative to plant growers looking to meet SITES requirements and provide plants for SITES-certified projects. Missouri growers will be able to attend this portion of the education free of charge thanks to the funds provided by the grant.

The SITES education will kick off with a panel discussion looking at the Business Impact of SITES for Missouri growers. These eight sessions will address each of the SITES requirements within the “Support Sustainable Practices in Plant Production” section, including:

- Use sustainable soil amendments
- Reduce runoff from irrigation
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Reduce energy consumption
- Use integrated pest management
- Reduce use of potable water or other natural surface or subsurface water resources
- Reduce waste
- Recycle organic matter

According to the SITES website, “The Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) is an interdisciplinary effort by the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin and the United States Botanic Garden to create voluntary national guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction and maintenance practices.”

SITES will be formally released to the marketplace in 2013, making this an opportune time for growers to find out more about SITES requirements. **GT**