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HB0368
March 13, 2025
Health and Government Operations
Favorable

As a Baltimore County Master Gardener (BCMG), a Garden Club of America (GCA) Conservation Co-Chair, Immediate Past GCA Zone VI (MD and DC) Conservation and National Affairs and Legislation Representative, member of Federated Garden Clubs of MD and lifelong gardener, I strongly urge you to vote Favorably for HB0368.

HB0368 is important both because it would designate every May as MD Native Plant month, which will put continual and repeated focus on the use of Native Plants in our landscape and it is good for our economy- the money generated by sales and recreational benefits as well as the costs saved by using natives (ecological services benefits).

If we make every May “MD Native Plant Month” we give nurseries the reliability to prepare each year when growing and ordering plants, to be ready with enough stock and signage for consumers. Furthermore, the public is just starting to learn about Native Plants and, in my opinion, would benefit from this annual ‘reminder’ as they come to fully understand, appreciate and choose native plants as much as possible.

For the past few years dedicated Marylanders have worked hard to file a Proclamation with Governor Wes Moore to make a Native Plant Month. So, by making this an annual public service announcement, we save ourselves a lot of work and may now build from this next step. Several other states already have a Native Plant Month; it costs Maryland taxpayers nothing to support HB0368.

The need to focus on Native Plants is urgent. Native Plants support native wildlife, which is critical not only to food production (pollination) but to resiliency from climate change’s new norms such as extended drought and storm water management. For example, native grasses have roots that extend up to several feet below ground to anchor soil in flood conditions. During drought in my gardens, it was the native plants that fared well. Wildlife depends on native food sources; they literally cannot digest much of the exotic vegetation that abounds.

Homeowners/privately owned land is where our citizens may choose to make a difference for the future. If everyone planted native species, we could possibly make a dent in lost and fragmented habitat and feel like we are doing something to save Nature. When I volunteer for MG and meet young families with children, I see this heartache for a dismal future and the urge to enthusiastically do right by our environment.

Thank you for a favorable vote and for your service to Maryland and its future.

Meredith McDonagh