



Maryland Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary

Wes Moore, Governor

Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Kevin Atticks, Secretary

Steven A. Connelly, Deputy Secretary

Agriculture | Maryland's Leading Industry

The Wayne A. Cawley, Jr. Building

50 Harry S Truman Parkway

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

mda.maryland.gov

410.841.5885 Baltimore/Washington

410.841.5846 Fax

Maryland Department of Agriculture

Legislative Comment

DATE: March 12, 2025

BILL NUMBER: HB 368

SHORT TITLE: General Provisions - Commemorative Month - Maryland Native Plant Month

MDA POSITION: FAVORABLE

This legislation designates the month of May as Maryland Native Plant Month in recognition of the benefits that native plants have on Maryland's natural environment. It will urge educational and environmental organizations and businesses to observe Maryland Native Plant Month properly with appropriate programs, events, and activities. While there are many existing State designations, the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) recognizes that this particular designation would bring much needed attention to plants that are essential to food production and the biodiversity of our environment.

Over the past decade, this legislature has passed multiple bills pertaining to the protection of pollinators and promotion of native plants over invasive species. In addition to the restriction of pesticide use on pollinators and proper irrigation, the planting of native plants supports pollinators like bees, birds, and butterflies. Worldwide, bees, butterflies, and other important insect pollinators are in decline due to many factors, but mainly loss of habitat. Maryland farmers understand the importance of pollinators to our food supply. They are planting wildflower habitats on their farms that support pollinators. Marylanders can help by planting a pollinator garden that supplies food, shelter, and water for adult insects and their offspring, which by default will support the agricultural ecosystem.

Plants native to Maryland include elderberry, wild geraniums, sunflowers, and our beloved State flower, the Black Eyed Susan. Approximately one third of our food supply relies on pollinating birds, animals, and insects. Many of the fruits and vegetables grown by backyard gardeners need pollinators to set fruit and seeds. Examples include squash, cucumbers, apples, strawberries, eggplant, cabbage, and broccoli.

MDA supports HB 368 and respectfully requests a favorable report.

If you have additional questions, please contact Rachel Jones, Director of Government Relations, at rachel.jones2@maryland.gov or 410-841-5886.