



Maryland Native Plant Month Act

Sponsors Delegate Dana Stein and Senator Benjamin Brooks

HB 0217 SB 0229

Permanently designating every May as Maryland Native Plant Month is an **economic driver** for local businesses and an **environmental win** for biodiversity and our declining ecosystems. Encouraging communities and home owners to plant native trees and plants turns a simple idea into big impact - at **zero cost** to taxpayers. Here's how it works:

Maryland Jobs, Economic Growth & Volunteer Engagement

- **Boosts Local Economy:** Raising awareness of the benefits and importance of native plants will drive demand at wholesale & retail nurseries and garden centers and directly supports the **Dept of Agriculture's Maryland's Best Native Plant Certified Growers Program**;
- **Businesses Certainty:** Predictability of a permanent, recurring month - at the height of planting season - gives growers, retail nurseries, landscapers, design firms & related businesses the confidence needed to hire staff, invest in inventory, and plan promotions to meet growing demand;
- **Promotes Green Jobs & Workforce Development:** supports Maryland's Green Economy and environmental stewardship initiatives - encouraging careers in horticulture, ecological restoration, Green Stormwater Infrastructure & Best Management Practices (nature-based climate solution tools).
Examples: **Maryland Climate Crew Network, MarylandCorps Service Year Options, & Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps initiatives**;
- **Leverages Value of State-Volunteer Partnerships:** MD volunteers contribute an average value of \$35.53/hr* in labor. Peak season planting window amplifies the impact of this volunteer workforce saving our state millions of dollars every year. Examples: **DNR's Tree-Mendous Maryland, MD Environmental Trust Land Stewards, & Roots for Resilience** - an Eastern Shore climate adaptation initiative;
- **Community Action:** provides lead time needed to plan engaging, fun & educational activities. Encourages private & community groups to plant pollinator & rain gardens, stream tree buffers, invasive removal projects, community stream cleanups and more.

Agriculture, Tourism, Clean Waters & Thriving Ecosystems

- **Pollinators & Agriculture:** native bees & pollinators need MD native plants for their food, shelter and habitat. Pollinators are essential to the production of many food crops and loss of native plant habitat is contributing to significant pollinator decline. Planting more natives is the only way to reverse this trend.
- **Maryland waterways & Chesapeake Bay:** the deep & massive fibrous root systems of natives filter excess nutrient & sediment runoff before it enters our waters. Run-off is the biggest source of pollution and threat to our Bay heritage; it can fuel toxic algae blooms & dead zones that smother underwater seagrasses, habitat, fish, blue crabs & all aquatic life. These conditions also **limit recreational water activities**, increase beach closings and necessitate **Unsafe Water Advisories**. To preserve our iconic **\$600M Seafood & \$21B tourism sector**, we need to educate the public. **Awareness** is the first step to changing public behavior;
- **Nature-based modern tools:** natives are foundational to evolving **Best Management Practices (BMPs) & Green Stormwater Infrastructure**. These nature based practices control erosion, improve soil health, absorb stormwater, reduce costly flood damage, recharge groundwater, & capture CO2 and other air pollutants that harm human health.



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National Momentum: launched in 2022, a program to establish a **Native Plant Awareness Month** in every state and the District of Columbia was initiated by The Garden Club of America. As of 2025, 44 states and DC observed a native plant month proclamation with **11 states converting it to a permanent law.**

We ask that Maryland join these states.

The Superpowers of Native Plants

