



*Wes Moore, Governor*  
*Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor*  
*Josh Kurtz, Secretary*  
*David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary*

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March 17, 2026

**BILL NUMBER: HOUSE BILL 217 - FIRST READER**

**SHORT TITLE: GENERAL PROVISIONS - COMMEMORATIVE MONTH - MARYLAND NATIVE PLANT MONTH**

**DEPARTMENT'S POSITION: SUPPORT**

### **EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT'S POSITION**

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The Department supports HB 217 to establish a Native Plant Month here in Maryland.

Native plants provide significant ecosystem benefits. They are essential for biodiversity, supporting native pollinators, insects, birds, and other wildlife by providing crucial food and habitat. Native plants also help maintain healthy watersheds by reducing stormwater runoff, controlling erosion, and filtering pollutants. Furthermore, they are well-adapted to local climate and soil conditions, often requiring less water, fertilizer, and pesticides than non-native species.

Maryland's diverse ecosystems, from the Coastal Plain to the Appalachian Mountains are defined by native plant communities. Recognizing native plants helps to strengthen the public understanding of how these ecosystems function and how different plant communities support the state's natural resources. Increased awareness of native plants can also help residents identify and appreciate the plants that characterize Maryland's landscapes and contribute to the health of its forests, wetlands, meadows, and waterways.

A Native Plant Month would provide the Department with a special opportunity to highlight the ecological importance and historical significance of Maryland's native flora, and could be a useful tool for public outreach and communication materials.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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"Native plant" is a plant that occurs naturally in the State and surrounding region, ecosystem and habitat without direct or indirect human actions. This includes a plant that was present before colonial settlement or is listed as native to the State on the Maryland Plant Atlas website.

### **BILL EXPLANATION**

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This bill would require the Governor to annually proclaim the month of May as Maryland Native Plant Month. This would recognize the benefits that native plants have on Maryland's natural environment.

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