



Advocating for Native Plants

A TOOL KIT

The goal of public policy advocacy is to promote the use and conservation of plants native to the Southeast US.

How?

- **Educate decision-makers** about the ecological importance of native plants in supporting biodiversity, pollinators, ecosystem health, and climate resilience.
- **Influence public policy, municipal planning, and legislation** by advocating for native plant friendly policies, sustainable land management, restrictions on non-native invasive species, and conservation of ecosystems.

Join forces with like-minded allies

Your voice can be stronger when added to those of native plant allies, including Audubon, NC Wildlife Federation, Wild Ones Chapters, land trusts, garden clubs, and Master Gardeners. Meet with advocates and devise a strategy to communicate with elected officials.

Join the
NCNPS Advocacy Team
Tell us what's HAPPENING



If you know of policy actions advancing in your town OR if you'd like to join the NCNPS Advocacy Committee, email:

Advocacy@NCWildFlower.org

How YOU can help!

- **Communicate with your local and state elected officials** about the critical importance of native plants for wildlife and pollinator habitat, stormwater and flood management, and climate resiliency.
 - Ask for a meeting with your town/city councilor, County Commissioner or NC Legislator
 - Email or call them
 - Speak at a town/county meeting.
 - Remember, advocacy is about relationship building and diplomacy.
- **Recommend strategies for encouraging the use of native plants** and banning harmful invasive species in your town, county, and state-wide. **See policy recommendations on the next page.**
- **Urge local nurseries** to sell more native plants and stop selling invasive species.

Already making PROGRESS in NC

Many towns and counties in North Carolina have passed helpful policies, including:

Greensboro - Requires at least 50% native plants and no invasives on public property

Currituck County - Bans invasives and encourages native plants on public property

Cary and Raleigh - Have recommended native plant lists for developers

Chatham County - Requires all trees planted to be native

Steps for Taking **ACTION**

- **Join Forces with Like-Minded Allies!** Speaking up together makes your voice more powerful.
- **Identify Key Decision-makers and Set up a Meeting.**
 - **Local level:** Visit your town/city/county website. Find out who represents you, how to contact them, and when they hold public comment during public meetings to share your views. Set up a meeting to talk and ask for their help advancing a policy supporting native plants.
 - **State level:** Visit www.ncleg.gov/FindYourLegislators to find who represents you in the NC House of Representatives and NC Senate. Meet with or email them when legislation is being considered.
- **Decide What your “Ask” is:**

Policy options for municipalities recommended by the NC Native Plant Society:

 - **Prohibit planting of invasive species** on public property. Increase funding for removal of invasive non-native species.
 - Require planting **70% native plants on public property.**
 - Provide recommended native **tree and plant lists** to developers and residents.
 - Ask your municipality to use the **Green Growth Toolbox** offered by the NC Wildlife Resources Commission.
 - Sign on the **Mayors' Monarch Pledge** and implement recommendations.
 - **Provide public education** via events, website, and public gardens.

For state legislation:

In 2023, the NC General Assembly approved the **NC Native Plant Act**, but more can be done!

 - Require labeling of invasive species in retail nurseries.
 - Prohibit sale of Rank 1 invasive plants (ranked by the NC Invasive Plant Council)
 - Prevent HOAs from prohibiting native plants in home gardens.
- **Prepare Talking Points:**
 - Native plants are critical to pollinator and wildlife habitat and our food production.
 - Native plants help with stormwater management and climate resiliency. Deep roots prevent runoff and also sequester carbon.
 - Bee and bird populations have plummeted in recent years. We can make a difference locally by creating habitat for them!
 - Gardens ideally should be 70% native plants to support wildlife. Non-native invasive plants are problematic because they choke out beneficial plants and trees.
 - The NC General Assembly and other towns are already taking policy and budget action to support native plants (See QR Code below).
 - Ask: What has the municipality already done to support native plants and remove invasive species?
- **Follow up!** Circle back with elected officials to see what progress has been made. Offer to provide more information. Remind them of vehicles they can use to advance policy recommendations (resolution, amendments to development ordinance, budget items).

Follow the QR Code to see more
**North Carolina Native Plant
Policies** that we are tracking.
Consider asking your municipality
to take similar action!

