

TO: Chairwoman Alzate and Members of the House Special Legislation Committee
FROM: Kenda Swartz / Bristol
RE: Support for H7230
DATE: March 15, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Alzate and Honorable Members of the House Special Legislation Committee:

I am writing to urge you to support [H7230](#) (McGaw), which would declare the month of May as **Native Plant Month**.

Native plants are not just beautiful parts of our landscape; they are the foundation of healthy ecosystems. Many Rhode Islanders already think of themselves as conservation-minded people because they care deeply about wildlife and the environment. They want to help, but they may not know how their individual actions can make a difference. Native Plant Month helps turn that conservation mindset into action by showing that even small choices about what we plant can support wildlife and strengthen the resilience of our landscapes.

Small actions, when compounded across thousands of homes and neighborhoods, can have a real impact. Native plants provide food for pollinators and birds, shelter for insects and small wildlife, and are the ecological building blocks that support habitat and entire food chains. When native plants disappear, the entire web of life that relies on them begins to weaken.

Just as importantly, native plants help restore natural processes that make our landscapes more resilient. Native plants typically have deep root systems that improve soil structure and allow the ground to absorb and hold more water. In neighborhoods across Rhode Island, replacing lawns or ornamental plants with native species can help slow runoff, reduce localized flooding, and improve water infiltration during heavy rain events. Native plants are valuable in helping communities adapt to the increasingly intense storms and rainfall patterns we are experiencing.

This bill is not only helpful for wildlife and soil health, but it also benefits local businesses. Designating May as Native Plant Month supports Rhode Island nursery owners and garden centers that specialize in native plants, and it may inspire or incentivize others to expand their native plant offerings. As landscaping trends shift toward pollinator-friendly and ecologically beneficial gardens, increased awareness can encourage residents to purchase native plants locally. This creates opportunities for small businesses while helping restore wildlife habitat.

Designating May as Rhode Island Native Plant Month is a simple but meaningful step that can encourage education, community events, and public awareness. It can help people see that conservation does not only happen in parks and protected lands; it can happen in backyards, school gardens, church grounds, and small neighborhood plantings.

As you continue to protect Rhode Island's natural heritage, please pass this bill out of committee and to the House floor with a recommendation for passage.

Sincerely,

Kenda Swartz
Bristol, Rhode Island