

BY: Senator HARCKHAM

MEMORIALIZING Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2023, as Native Plant Month in the State of New York

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body to set aside official months to recognize and pay tribute to those who seek to preserve and celebrate native plants in the State of New York, as well as their importance to the environment and for building sustainable ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2023, as Native Plant Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with National Native Plant Month; and

WHEREAS, Native plants are indigenous species that have evolved alongside native wildlife and occur naturally in a particular geographic region, ecosystem, and habitat; and

WHEREAS, Essential for healthy, diverse, and sustainable ecosystems, native plants are critical for cleaning air, filtering water, and stabilizing soils for the betterment of our environment; and

WHEREAS, Plants that are native to our State are well-adapted to New York's soils, temperatures, precipitation, and environmental conditions, making them the best option for conserving and protecting our environment, and adapting to its changes; and

WHEREAS, Native plants provide food including nectar, pollen, seeds, and foliage for native birds, caterpillars, butterflies, bees, and other wildlife in ways that non-native plants cannot; and

WHEREAS, New York State is home to approximately 2,000 native plant species, which include large shade trees, shrubs, perennials, vines, grasses, and wildflowers; and

WHEREAS, Unique to New York State, the plants thriving in our great State have evolved over thousands of years alongside native wildlife and have developed symbiotic relationships which can not be replaced with non-native plants that have been transported here from distant parts of the world; native insects, caterpillars, and other wildlife have not had time to evolve to be able to eat these strange and exotic foods; and

WHEREAS, Some of New York's rarest plants are federally listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973; according to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, there are approximately 340 plants in New York State listed as endangered by the United States Department of Interior; and

WHEREAS, There is a strong and growing movement to protect native plants and to educate the public about their benefits to pollinators and other wildlife, to our economy, and to the health and sustainability of New York's fragile ecosystems; and

WHEREAS, The observation of the month of April as Native Plant Month encourages New York's citizens to participate by removing non-native invasive plants in our yards and communities, planting native trees, shrubs, and flowers, hosting native plant hikes, creating pollinator gardens, and educating our citizens about the many benefits of native plants; and

WHEREAS, Native Plant Month in New York State is meant to call for awareness of and recognition of the importance of native plants to New York's rich biological heritage, and as a source of food for pollinators and native wildlife, and for those who work tirelessly on behalf of researching and protecting our natural surroundings for the benefit of present and future generations of New Yorkers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim April 2023, as Native Plant Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with National Native Plant Month; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and The Garden Club of America.