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New York State Assembly Recognizes April as Native Plant Month

Assemblywoman Dana Levenberg sponsors resolution promoted by Philipstown resident Carol McPeek and New York members of local Garden Club of America affiliates

ALBANY, NY: On Tuesday, the New York State Assembly passed a resolution recognizing April as Native Plant Month, making New York State the most recent state to officially participate in the Garden Club of America's (GCA) [National Native Plant Month Initiative](#). The initiative is intended to amplify the importance of native plants and biodiversity, a key component of environmental health and sustainability.

The resolution was sponsored by Assemblywoman **Dana Levenberg** (D-Ossining), representative for the 95th Assembly District. "I am so pleased to be able to sponsor this resolution to designate April as Native Plant Month in the State of New York," said Levenberg in her remarks preceding the vote. "I have long been a proponent of native plants after learning of their importance to maintaining biodiversity."

Levenberg is in her first term in the Assembly after serving for seven years as Ossining Town Supervisor, during which time she spearheaded numerous efforts to improve the Town's environmental sustainability, including making it more pollinator-friendly. Under her leadership, Ossining began planting native species in its parks to help revive dwindling local populations of bees, birds and butterflies, and started a Habitat Stewards program in which volunteers were trained to identify and remove invasive plants in local parks and open spaces and replace them with native plants. Levenberg currently serves as a member of the Environmental Conservation committee in the Assembly and is a co-sponsor of the Birds and Bees Protection Act which also passed the Assembly on Tuesday. The bill aims to ban certain types of pesticides in the state. Like planting native plants, it is a move intended to promote the well-being of pollinators and our ecosystem as a whole.

Philipstown resident **Carol McPeek** is responsible for bringing the National Native Plant Month Initiative to Levenberg's attention. McPeek is Conservation Chair of the Philipstown Garden Club and one of the New York State Co-Coordinator for the initiative, which aims to have a Native Plant Month recognized in every U.S. state and the District of Columbia. In her remarks on the resolution, Levenberg thanked McPeek for her advocacy, and McPeek was recognized on the floor of the Assembly Tuesday for her role in the effort.

"Propagating and planting native plants in our landscapes and gardens is a small action each of us can take - yet is powerful when taken as a whole. It is so important to send the message that each of us can make a difference right here at home," said McPeek. "Thank you, Assemblywoman Levenberg, for championing this GCA initiative and bringing it to such a fantastic conclusion. This will help us to educate, raise awareness, and bring focus on the importance of native plants in building healthy and productive ecosystems for the benefit of all New Yorkers."



In its position paper on native plants, the GCA notes that native plants are particularly important because “they have evolved over thousands of years alongside native bees, birds, and wildlife. Their complex relationship with fauna is extremely specialized and it cannot be substituted with exotic, non-native plants.” The GCA joins a growing movement of environmentalists who are concerned about native wildlife being put at risk of extinction because they cannot eat non-native plants, on top of the risks posed by habitat loss, the use of invasive species, climate change, and pesticide use. They argue that “it is vital that existing laws and regulations protecting native plant species be strengthened and administered using current peer-reviewed science.”

For her part, Levenberg’s [Assembly web page](#) will soon host a new page dedicated to sharing information for District 95 residents interested in learning more about supporting native plants and local biodiversity. The page will be maintained as a year-round resource, and the community is invited to share relevant resources for inclusion. The Philipstown Garden Club will also be hosting a plant sale at the Philipstown Rec Center on Route 9D in Garrison, from 10 AM - 2 PM on Sunday, May 21, 2023. Visitors can ask questions and acquire native plants for their home gardens.

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