

# SENATE, No. 83

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator CHRISTOPHER "KIP" BATEMAN**

**District 16 (Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex and Somerset)**

**Senator RICHARD J. CODEY**

**District 27 (Essex and Morris)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

**Senators Corrado and Greenstein**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes “Jersey Native Plants Program.”

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT establishing the “Jersey Native Plants Program” and  
2 supplementing Title 4 of the Revised Statutes.

3  
4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6  
7 1. a. The Secretary of Agriculture in conjunction with the State  
8 Board of Agriculture shall develop and implement a “Jersey Native  
9 Plants Program” to encourage and promote the sale of New Jersey  
10 native plants at retail garden centers and nurseries. The program shall  
11 increase consumer awareness of the important role of native plants in  
12 the ecosystem through advertising campaigns and marketing  
13 programs, provide for the dissemination of information about the  
14 variety and availability of New Jersey native plants, and create a  
15 labeling program to identify native plants as “Jersey Natives” for sale  
16 similar to the Jersey Fresh and Jersey Grown programs.

17 b. The Department of Agriculture shall adopt, pursuant to the  
18 “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.),  
19 rules and regulations to implement this act.

20  
21 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

22  
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24 STATEMENT

25  
26 This bill would establish the “Jersey Native Plants Program” in  
27 the Department of Agriculture. The bill requires the department to  
28 develop a program that would: (1) encourage and promote the sale of  
29 New Jersey native plants at retail garden centers and nurseries; (2)  
30 increase consumer awareness of the important role of native plants in  
31 the ecosystem through advertising campaigns and marketing  
32 programs; (3) provide for the dissemination of information about the  
33 variety and availability of New Jersey native plants; and (4) create a  
34 labeling program to identify native plants as “Jersey natives” similar  
35 to the Jersey Fresh and Jersey Grown programs.

36 Native plant species are a vital part of New Jersey’s heritage,  
37 providing valuable aesthetic, economic, and ecological benefits to  
38 State residents. New Jersey possesses approximately 2,100 native  
39 plant species, a number that is comparable to states that are three to  
40 four times larger. This diverse native flora includes hundreds of  
41 different wildflowers, like violets and orchids, as well as many  
42 different trees, shrubs, grasses, and ferns. Nineteen globally rare  
43 plants have their largest or most viable populations in New Jersey,  
44 and nine plants have been documented only in New Jersey and do  
45 not occur anywhere else on Earth.

46 New Jersey’s floristic diversity is due in large part to its  
47 geographical diversity, which includes the mountainous Highlands  
48 in the north, the sandy Pine Barrens in the south, the rich Delaware

1 River Valley in the west, and the salt marshes of the Atlantic Coast.  
2 Native fruits like the blueberry and the cranberry helped spur the  
3 development of the agricultural industry in New Jersey, and earned  
4 the State its official State slogan, the “Garden State.” New Jersey’s  
5 preserved open space and farmland, which make up close to a third  
6 of the State’s total acreage and contain most of the State’s native  
7 plant species, provide an estimated \$20 billion per year in  
8 ecosystem goods and services.

9 Native plants are vital to the State’s biodiversity, which provide  
10 inhabitants with food, maintenance of water and air quality, waste  
11 decomposition and soil generation, nutrient cycling, climate  
12 stabilization, flood and erosion control, and medicines and  
13 pharmaceuticals. Native plants also provide food and shelter for  
14 native wildlife and insects, which in turn, perform essential  
15 ecological and agricultural services such as seed dispersal,  
16 predation, and pollination.

17 Studies have shown that New Jersey is rapidly losing its native  
18 plants, with roughly one-third of those plants designated as  
19 endangered or of special concern by the State’s Natural Heritage  
20 Program. Threats to native plants include habitat destruction  
21 caused by development and urbanization, pollution, and harmful  
22 invasive plant species.