SAVE PLANTS   SAVE the PLANET   SAVE OURSELVES

Look at a natural landscape, and what do you see? Native plants! Along our coasts, rivers, deserts, plains and mountains, wildflowers, trees, cacti, grasses and shrubs perfume the air and delight the eye throughout the year. But native plants give us more than just beautiful places.

NATIVE PLANT CONSERVATION CAMPAIGN

Native Plants Provide Ecosystem Services

Native plant communities produce goods and services that are vital to our economies and wellbeing. They turn sunlight into food, produce the oxygen we breathe, filter and store the water we drink, and fertilize the soils which sustain us. Healthy native plant communities defend us against storms, floods, droughts, and landslides and are reservoirs of genetic diversity that protect our food supply from pests, disease and climate change.

Native Plants are Food and Shelter for Pollinators and Other Wildlife

Native plants and animals evolved together over millennia to exploit site-specific local conditions and sustain each other. We cannot protect bees, hummingbirds, bears, wolves, hawks, salmon or any wildlife without conserving the local native plants that are their homes and sustenance.

Native Plants Protect Our Climate

Native plants are in the front lines of the fight against climate change. Not only do they remove greenhouse gases from the air, they also buffer rising temperatures through shade and water cycling.

The U.S. Forest Service estimates that forests capture about 27 million tons of carbon per year. Vegetated areas may be up to 20° C cooler than bare soil or pavement.

Plants are Imperiled

We are in the midst of the Earth's sixth mass extinction, and plants are full participants. As of 2016, worldwide at least 21% of plant species are threatened with extinction. Climate change, invasive species, resource extraction, habitat loss, and mismanagement destroy species and ecosystems. These threats are

Mendocino Indian Paintbrush in the California Coastal Prairie, a rare and imperiled plant community.
© Emily B. Roberson

Native plants stabilize the food supply. Wild relatives of food plants offer resistance to devastating diseases like the Irish Potato Famine and 1970s U.S. Corn Blight. Native plant communities also provide essential habitat for pollinators of food crops.

worsening. Since 2000, plant habitat has declined by up to 25% globally, and the planet recorded the warmest 10 years on record.

Plant Blindness

Although plants are the primary basis for life on earth, we do not protect them as we do animals. Few people realize that in almost every area of law and policy, plants receive inferior protection, attention and funding. Scientists refer to this phenomenon as Plant Blindness—*the inability to recognize the importance of plants in the biosphere and in human affairs.*

Florida coast. Mangrove ecosystem services include providing nurseries for young fish, birds and other wildlife, supporting fisheries, recreation and other industries, and protecting coastal communities from storms.   © Shirley Denton

Plants are Second Class Conservation Citizens

The Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) is the most powerful legal tool to protect imperiled ecosystems and species in the U.S. However, while the FESA protects imperiled animals

Studies estimate that natural coastal wetlands prevented more than $600 million in damage to Northeastern communities during Hurricane Sandy.

wherever they live, it allows nearly unlimited destruction of most imperiled plants outside of federal lands. Although more than 50% of species listed under FESA are plants, less than 5% of FESA funding goes to plants. Without full protection and funding protection for plants under the FESA, the law's promise to prevent extinction fails, and plant communities and the ecosystem services they supply remain at risk.

Holy Ghost Ipomopsis, New Mexico. This plant was listed as endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1994. © Steve O'Kane

Nearly 3 million acres of protected forests in New York State purify and deliver 1.2 billion gallons of water to 9 million people in New York City each day, saving more than $10 billion in water treatment costs, providing wildlife habitat and sequestering greenhouse gases.

The Native Plant Conservation Campaign (NPCC) combats these problems

Our Network of Affiliates is the core of the NPCC. More than 45 native plant societies, botanic gardens and other native plant conservation organizations with more than 150,000 individual members work together to share information and expertise and to educate each other, the public, and policymakers about the importance of native plants.

Rainbow Cactus, Texas
© Michael Weatherford

Key NPCC Initiatives include:

■ *The Important Plant Areas Project* collects data and images of botanically significant natural areas of the U.S. The IPA databse will prioritize wildlands for protection, and be a tool for research and education.

■ *The Equal Protection for Plants Project* uses research and public outreach to combat the inferiority of legal protections for imperiled plants, and the underfunding and understaffing of plant science and conservation programs

■ The *Right Plant, Right Place Project* promotes the use of locally appropriate native plants in gardening and land management.

Pollination of Pine Barrens Gentian, New Jersey. Native plants provide food and habitat for the insects that pollinate our crops and that support songbirds and other wildlife.
© hoganphoto.com

■ *The Speak out for Plants Project* provides tools to help people speak out for native plant science and conservation. The project spotlights the Ecosystem Services provided by native plants and works to maintain the funding, integrity, independence and transparency of botanical and other scientific programs.

Learn more at www.plantsocieties.org

To get involved, click Action Center on www.plantsocieties.org

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For the sources for information in this brochure, see the online version at www.plantsocieties.org

Butler Cirque, CO. Forests and meadows capture greenhouse gases, buffer local climates, purify and store water, and protect soils from erosion while providing specialized wildlife habitat. © Bayard Ewing