



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Media Note:** Photos to accompany this article, a copy of the Proclamation, and a MS Word version of this press release are available for download at

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1J2MBJvtKEBaRLmvfHwuY3rCoqQz2k\\_N4?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1J2MBJvtKEBaRLmvfHwuY3rCoqQz2k_N4?usp=sharing)

## **GOVERNOR KEMP PROCLAIMS SEPTEMBER AS GEORGIA NATIVE PLANTS MONTH**

**(Atlanta, Ga.) August 29, 2023** – Governor Brian Kemp recently signed a proclamation designating the month of September as **Georgia Native Plants Month**. A collaborative effort between Georgia Audubon and Georgia Native Plant Society, Georgia Native Plants Month is designed to highlight the importance of using native plants in our landscape and the key role that native plants play for birds and other wildlife. Georgia Audubon and Georgia Native Plant Society are hosting a number of collaborative events in September to help Georgians learn more about gardening for birds and other wildlife using native plants.

“Native plants have evolved over thousands of years to grow in harmony with their local environment, including the soil type and the availability of water,” says Nikki Belmonte, Georgia Native Plant Society executive director. “Native plants require little to no fertilizer, watering, and chemical applications and, if used properly in the landscape, they can mitigate water runoff, improve air quality, and create a stunning display throughout the year”

Incorporating native plants into landscapes also creates high quality wildlife habitat. A 2019 study published in the journal *Science* by researchers at seven institutions (<https://www.3billionbirds.org/>) revealed that North America has lost nearly three billion, or one in four birds, since 1970.

“One of the easiest ways that we can help birds and other wildlife is to use native plants in our landscapes,” says Jared Teutsch, Georgia Audubon executive director. “Native plants are built to thrive in their environment, and these plants are important hosts for protein-rich native insects, like caterpillars, which nesting birds need to feed their growing chicks. More than 96 percent of land birds feed insects to their chicks, and native plants host many more insects than non-native plants. For example, a native oak supports more than 550 kinds of butterflies and moths, whereas a non-native Ginkgo tree supports only five.”

This year, Georgia Audubon is delighted to partner with the Georgia Native Plant Society (GNPS) to bring an amazing lineup of events designed to help Georgians transform their landscapes with native plants for birds and other wildlife.

Our signature event will take place on Saturday September 9, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at Georgia Audubon's new home at the Trees Atlanta Kendeda Treehouse. Join fellow plant and bird enthusiasts for a Round Robin on **Transforming your Greenspace**. Hear from experts from Georgia Audubon, the Georgia Native Plant Society, and Trees Atlanta to learn how to build a wildlife sanctuary in your own landscape, including information on propagating plants, controlling invasive plants, and building and managing native landscapes for birds and other pollinators. Each of these three organizations offers habitat certifications and their presentations will cover specifics on how to become certified. The Round Robin will feature exhibitors, tours of the newly certified garden at Trees Atlanta, and an optional early morning bird walk prior to the event. There will also be an optional native plant and bird tour at nearby Lionel Hampton Park in the afternoon.

In addition to this signature event, Georgia Audubon and Georgia Native Plant Society will be hosting a number of virtual and in-person events to educate the public about the importance of native plants to birds, including:

- Wednesday, September 7, at 7:00 PM — **Webinar: Insects and Their Importance to Birds**
- Saturday, September 9, at 9:00 AM — **Georgia Grows Native for Birds Round Robin, with Georgia Audubon, Georgia Native Plant Society, and Trees Atlanta (Fulton County)**
- Monday, September 11, at 9:00 AM — **Native Plant Workshop at Island Ford CRNRA (Fulton County)**
- Monday, September 11, at 1:00 PM — **Field Trip at Island Ford CRNRA (Fulton County)**
- Thursday, September 14, at 7:00 PM — **Webinar: Building Better Backyards for Birds**
- Saturday, September 16, at 9:00 AM — **Working Forests for Birds Field Day with Georgia Forestry Foundation and Georgia Audubon (Monticello, GA)**
- Tuesday, September 19, at 5:30 PM — **Plant ID Workshop at Henderson Park (DeKalb County)**
- Thursday, September 21, at 9:00 AM — **Volunteer Workday at Campbellton Park (Fulton County)**
- Thursday, September 21, at 7:00 PM — **Webinar: Gardening for Bats**
- Saturday, September 30, at 9:00 AM — **Habitat Restoration Field Day at Panola Mountain State Park (Stockbridge, GA)**
- Saturday, September 30, at 10:00 AM — **Native Garden Tour, hosted by the Intown Atlanta Chapter of Georgia Native Plant Society (Atlanta, GA)**
- Saturday, September 30, time TBD — **GNPS Athens-East Piedmont Chapter Invasive Plant Workshop (Clarke County)**

In addition, Georgia Native Plant Society chapters across Georgia will be hosting Fall Native Plant Sales throughout the month. More information and registration for all events is now available at [www.georgiaaudubon.org/georgia-grows-native-for-birds-month](http://www.georgiaaudubon.org/georgia-grows-native-for-birds-month).

*Georgia Audubon is building places where birds and people thrive. We create bird-friendly communities through conservation, education, and community engagement. Learn more at <https://www.georgiaaudubon.org>.*

*The Georgia Native Plant Society (GNPS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the stewardship and conservation of Georgia's native plants and their habitats. Learn more at <https://gnps.org/>*

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