

RESOLUTION # 42

USE OF NATIVE PLANTS

1 **WHEREAS**, New Jersey’s nursery industry is a leader in the Northeast in production,
2 and the state’s nursery industry distributes plants far beyond the borders of New Jersey; and

3 **WHEREAS**, native plants, their cultivars and varieties are a growing segment of
4 nursery products produced each year, and the demand for these plants continues to grow as
5 consumers develop awareness of their ecological benefits; and

6 **WHEREAS**, non-native, non-invasive plants also provide a variety of environmental,
7 health, aesthetic, and economic benefits to the homeowners, businesses and communities
8 where they are planted; and

9 **WHEREAS**, recent legislative and regulatory proposals have threatened to restrict
10 planting decisions of growers and plant choices for consumers, which could have the effect
11 of lessening the nursery industry’s competitiveness in the region; and

12 **WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Department of Agriculture, in consultation with its
13 partners at Rutgers University, is best equipped, when compared to other state agencies, to
14 make determinations about the use and definitions of native and non-native plants, as a
15 result of its collective knowledge, experience and exposure to the nursery, greenhouse,
16 landscape, and horticulture industries in New Jersey; and

17 **WHEREAS**, non-native, non-invasive plant materials grown by New Jersey nurseries
18 are equally as desirable in planting for public projects as native plants, as both contribute to
19 the overall health of New Jersey’s nursery industry and the state’s environment, and

20 **WHEREAS**, interest has been shared with the Secretary of Agriculture that
21 producers of native plants believe a specific designation within the “Jersey Grown”
22 promotional program, to be titled “Jersey Natives,” would greatly benefit their sector of the
23 industry.

24 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 103rd State
25 Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey on February 7-8, 2018, do

26 hereby urge the Department to educate legislators and regulators as to the importance of
27 maintaining diversity and selection in the plants grown by New Jersey's nurseries, including
28 but not limited to native plants.

29 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that native plants, and all their ecological and
30 economic benefits, shall be promoted to the greatest extent possible through existing
31 platforms such as the *Jersey Grown* branding program, but not to the exclusion of non-
32 native, non-invasive nursery crops.

33 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we oppose legislation that effectively prohibits
34 the sale of "invasive plants" (as New Jersey has no one, agreed-upon list of plants
35 considered "invasive" in the state) and for which no scientific research proving any plant
36 "native" or "non-native" has been established to label it "invasive."

37 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge the Department to continue working to
38 create a "Jersey Natives" promotional brand, mirroring the efforts of "Jersey Fresh," "Jersey
39 Grown," and "Jersey Seafood" (among others) to build consumer awareness of and interest
40 in plant materials that are native to New Jersey.