

Submitter: Linda Hardison

Committee: Senate Committee on Rules

Measure: SB 547 SUPPORT

As director of OregonFlora, I support establishing April as Oregon's Native Plant Appreciation Month.

Native plants have many positive impacts on our lives and livelihoods, and the State's declaration of April as Native Plant Appreciation Month will help Oregonians better understand the value of native species.

The OregonFlora program (<https://oregonflora.org>) tracks all the vascular plants within our state, and of the 4,866 unique species, subspecies, and varieties ("taxa") we have documented, 3,441—70%—are native. There are 120 species that grow only in Oregon—e.g., the [Cascade strawberry](#) and the [Siskiyou kalmiopsis](#). Additionally, 891 of Oregon's native taxa are listed as sensitive, rare, threatened, or endangered.

The diversity of Oregon's landscape is created in part by the diverse plant communities that grow across our state. Our data analysis illustrates this: Did you know that

- Senate District 3, in the heart of the biodiverse Siskiyou ecoregion, has 25 taxa that are only found within District boundaries.
- Within the densely developed Senate District 24, there are 212 unique species growing outside of cultivation, many of which are natives.
- Senate District 26 is home to 10 species found only within this District, and 3 of those are classified by the State of Oregon as candidates for listing as rare or endangered.

There are profound economic benefits coming from the ecosystem services that native species-rich plant communities provide: by being optimally adapted to this place, native plants are resilient to climate change, they conserve water in landscaping settings, they provide habitat for wildlife, they support native pollinators needed for Oregon's many agricultural crops, and they are the backbone of the timber industry.

Importantly, native plants provide us with a sense of place. Whether admiring the colors of balsamroot, lupines, and lewisia brightening the Columbia River Gorge, or wandering through the Willamette Valley's remnant oak savannas that were maintained by Indigenous Peoples for millenia, these plant communities let us know we are in Oregon, and nowhere else.

I strongly recommend your support of SB547 as a way to help Oregonians and people across the nation increase their awareness and appreciation of the rich and unique botanical life of our state.