Native plants are the most visible elements of our landscapes. Up and down our coasts, valleys, deserts and mountains, thousands of wildflowers, trees, shrubs and other native plants perfume the air and delight the eye throughout the year. Wild plants and animals have evolved together through the millennia. Hummingbirds, salmon, deer, eagles and other wildlife depend on native plants for food, shelter and survival. Native plant communities are economic powerhouses. Beautiful, diverse, healthy native wildlands attract business and tourists. Each year, millions of people take time — and spend billions of dollars — to marvel at the glorious landscapes and astounding variety of native plants and animals in national parks, forests and other wild areas around the nation.

**Valuable commodities, including food and medicines, flow from native species. The life-saving cancer drug taxol was developed from the Pacific yew; a native of the moist stream canyons of western ancient forests.**

Native plant habitats are economically important in other ways. One third of human food crops are pollinated by wild pollinators that live primarily in native plant communities. In the United States alone, insects and birds that live in native wildlands pollinate $4-6 billion of crops each year.

Native plant habitats are full participants in the extinction crisis that has sparked outcry from the world’s scientists. The World Conservation Union reports that 33 percent of plant species in the U.S. are either extinct or at risk of extinction.

**Plants are Second Class Citizens in Conservation Law and Policy**

Few people realize that in almost every area of U.S. law and policy, plants receive inferior protection, attention and funding.

The federal Endangered Species Act is the single most powerful legal tool available to protect imperiled landscapes and species. However, while the Act protects imperiled animals wherever they live, it allows nearly unlimited destruction of most imperiled plants and their habitat outside of federal lands. Without full protection for plants under the federal Act, its promise of a safety net to prevent extinction goes unfulfilled.

**Extinction of a single plant species may result in the disappearance of up to 30 other species of plants and wildlife — U.S. Forest Service**

**Unlike other global ecological problems, [extinction] is completely irreversible — Peter Raven, 1993**

Plants are full participants in the extinction crisis that has sparked outcry from the world’s scientists. The World Conservation Union reports that 33 percent of plant species in the U.S. are either extinct or at risk of extinction.

**Why Protect Plants?**

Native plants are full participants in the extinction crisis that has sparked outcry from the world’s scientists. The World Conservation Union reports that 33 percent of plant species in the U.S. are either extinct or at risk of extinction.

The federal Endangered Species Act gives limited protection from the federal lands where they receive federal recovery funding. These trends are taking their toll.

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**Budgeting is just as dire. Funding for rare species conservation is pathetically low, and what little funding exists is heavily weighted toward charismatic animal species.**

**Did you know?**

- According to a 2001 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report, 82 million U.S. outdoor recreationists (wildlife watchers, hunters, anglers) generated more than $108 billion in economic activity. Wildlife watching alone generated $38.4 billion and supported 1 million jobs nationwide.
- Nearly 60 percent of the 1,300 U.S. species on the federal endangered species list are plants. However, listed plants receive less than 6 percent of federal recovery funding.
- More than 70 percent of our imperiled plants live outside federal lands where they receive only limited protection from the federal Endangered Species Act.
- Despite the staggering economic value of native ecosystems, U.S. taxpayers spend on average less than 48 cents per year on endangered species conservation, only 9 cents more than the price of a postage stamp.
- Studies show that native species and ecosystems worldwide provide economic goods and services worth $33 trillion annually!
- Studies show that most ecosystem restoration efforts fail. Once we lose native wildlands, they are gone forever.
- Scientists estimate that approximately 33 percent of U.S. plant species are either known to be extinct or are currently vulnerable to extinction.

Did you know?
What Can Be Done?

The Native Plant Conservation Campaign was established in 2002 to fight for effective protection of native plants for this and future generations. Our programs include:

The **NPCC Network** is a national network of affiliate native plant societies, botanical gardens, arboreta and other native plant science and conservation organizations. We exchange information and create a strong national voice for plants. As of June 2006, the NPCC has 35 affiliate organizations representing more than 75,000 individual scientists and conservationists throughout the U.S.

The **Equal Protection for Plants Initiative** promotes broader awareness of the “second-class” status of native plants in staffing, funding and law. Our Equal Protection Statement has been signed by 62 groups representing hundreds of thousands of individuals, including the Society for Conservation Biology, the Botanical Society of America, the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, and Defenders of Wildlife.

The **Conservation Economics Program** seeks to counter the widely held belief that protection of the environment must come at the expense of the economy. We develop presentations, literature reviews and fact sheets to publicize the growing body of evidence that ecosystem health and conservation of biological diversity are essential for economic health.

**International Initiatives.** NPCC worked with PlantEuropa, a European native plant conservation organization, to secure the 2002 adoption of a Global Strategy for Plant Conservation by the Global Convention on Biological Diversity.

**The Federal Advocacy Program** works for better legal protection for imperiled plants and their habitat, increased funding and staffing of botany programs, and greater scientific input in land and species management. With our support, the Forest Service increased botany staffing 30 percent over three years, and federal agencies have spent more than $10 million to grow seed from local native plants for projects such as roadside stabilization and stream restoration.

![Urban squirrel into native oak woodland](image1)

**The Native Plant Conservation Campaign**

www.plantsocieties.org

Native Plant Conservation Campaign

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Wild plants and the wild places they live — will they be here for our children?