RESOLUTION # 35

USE OF NATIVE PLANTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the delegates to the 101st
State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey on February 10-
11, 2016, do hereby urge the Department to educate legislators and regulators as to the
importance of maintaining diversity and selection in the plants grown by New Jersey’s
nurseries, including but not limited to native plants

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we oppose legislation that effectively
prohibits the use of non-native, non-invasive plants in certain public planting projects or
bans outright the sale of “invasive plants” (as New Jersey has no one, agreed-upon list
of plants considered “invasive” in the state.)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we urge the Department to create a “Jersey
Natives” promotional brand, mirroring the efforts of “Jersey Fresh,” “Jersey Grown,” and
“Jersey Seafood” (among others) to build consumer awareness of and interest in plant
materials that are native to New Jersey.