

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2019

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SENATE BILL 709

Short Title: Adopt Rhododendron as State Shrub. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Hise (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

May 5, 2020

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO ADOPT THE RHODODENDRON AS THE STATE SHRUB AND TO
APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR PROMOTION.

Whereas, the name "rhododendron" refers to a large group of flowering evergreen shrubs and derives from the Greek words "rhodos" meaning "rose" and "dendron" meaning "tree;" and

Whereas, rhododendron is native to North Carolina, thriving mainly on hillsides and slopes from the mountains to the Piedmont; and

Whereas, two popular types of rhododendron found in North Carolina are Catawba or Purple Laurel and Rosebay or Great Laurel; and

Whereas, depending on the variety, rhododendron can grow from three to over 20 feet in height with flowers ranging in an assortment of colors including white, pink, red, and purple; and

Whereas, most rhododendron in North Carolina bloom from late spring to late summer; and

Whereas, rhododendron is not only a popular landscaping plant but also provides nectar for hummingbirds and pollinating insects such as bees; and

Whereas, many North Carolinians and tourists visit the Blue Ridge Mountains in early summer to see the spectacular show of rhododendron along the Parkway and Roan Mountain, which has 600 acres of naturally occurring Catawba rhododendron making it the largest rhododendron garden in the world; and

Whereas, since 1952, the Town of Bakersville, located at the base of Roan Mountain, has held the North Carolina Rhododendron Festival, during which time a Rhododendron Pageant is held to award scholarships; and

Whereas, because of its exceptional beauty and contributions to the flowering landscape of our State, the rhododendron should be adopted as the official shrub of the State of North Carolina; and

Whereas, adoption of the rhododendron as North Carolina's official State shrub was suggested by Ms. Sarah Woody's fourth-grade class at Gouge Elementary School in Bakersville; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 145 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 145-52. State shrub.

The rhododendron is adopted as the official shrub of the State of North Carolina."



1 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Department of
2 Natural and Cultural Resources the sum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) in nonrecurring funds
3 for the 2020-2021 fiscal year to promote the rhododendron as the official State shrub as
4 established in Section 1 of this act.

5 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2020.