

RESOLUTION # 35

USE OF NATIVE PLANTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 **WHEREAS**, interest has been shared with the Secretary of Agriculture that
23 producers of native plants believe a specific designation within the “Jersey Grown”

24 promotional program, to be titled “Jersey Natives,” would greatly benefit their sector of
25 the industry.

26 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 101st
27 State Agricultural Convention, assembled in Atlantic City, New Jersey on February 10-
28 11, 2016, do hereby urge the Department to educate legislators and regulators as to the
29 importance of maintaining diversity and selection in the plants grown by New Jersey’s
30 nurseries, including but not limited to native plants

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

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

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