

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2019

FILED SENATE  
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S.B. 709  
PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE BILL DRS35366-LGa-225A

Short Title: Adopt Rhododendron as State Shrub.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Hise (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ADOPT THE RHODODENDRON AS THE STATE SHRUB AND TO  
3 APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR PROMOTION.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

31 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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

34 **"§ 145-52. State shrub.**

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



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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.