

# Press Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Contact:** Frank Tursi, Cape Lookout Coastkeeper  
**Phone:** 252-393-8185; 252-241-3505 (cell)  
**Email:** [lookoutkeeper@nccoast.org](mailto:lookoutkeeper@nccoast.org)

## Go Native Plant Sale Set for Earth Day Weekend

**Ocean, NC** – Thousands of coastal native plants will once again take center stage at the N.C. Coastal Federation's Third Annual Go Native Plant Sale, set for Earth Day weekend, April 21 and 22 from 9am to 5pm.

Free gardening workshops and a free nature walk through the Croatan National Forest will also be featured at this year's sale, which will take place at NCCF headquarters in Ocean. There also will be free live music, live birds of prey presentations and environmental exhibits offered by several local organizations and agencies.

The plants will remain the stars of the show. Over 3,500, representing more than 80 species, will be on sale. They will range from stately live oaks to perennials. Many of last year's best sellers will return – coastal and swamp azalea, highbush blueberry, persimmon, sweet bay, Atlantic white cedar, swamp hibiscus, swamp rose, cardinal flowers and iris. Ten species of water plants, such as duck potato, arrow arum and lizard tail – will also be available. Most of the plants will sell for under \$12, and the proceeds from the sale will support the Federation's work to protect our coastal environment.

The purpose of the Go Native Plant Sale is to educate people about using natives for home landscaping and to raise a little money for the Federation, said Frank Tursi, NCCF's Cape Lookout COASTKEEPER® and one of the sale's organizers. Natives have adapted to the coastal environment, he explained. Once established, they need little water and no fertilizer or pesticides. "Landscaping with natives can save gardeners time and money," Tursi said. "They also benefit the environment by attracting birds, bees and other wildlife."

People can learn about those benefits and how to use natives in their gardens at one of six free workshops on Saturday beginning at 9am. Topics include environmental benefits and biology of native plants (9am), coastal native

trees (10am), coastal landscaping (11am), backyard landscaping (1pm), wetland landscaping (2pm), and wetland and coastal systems (3pm).

On Friday, Bart Kicklighter of Croatan National Forest will lead hikes through the Patsy Pond area of the forest and talk about longleaf pine habitat, a disappearing ecosystem throughout the Southeast. The hikes will start at 9:30am and 11am and are free. People also will be able to stop at exhibits manned by the Hammocks Beach State Park, the Izaak Walton League, the Carteret County Tree Awareness group, Big Sweep, Carteret County Crossroads, and the Master Gardeners. David Nash, a plant expert from the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service, will also be available Friday to identify that mysterious plant growing in your yard. Bring a leaf or a picture and try to stump the expert.

Frank Gaines, a resident of Swansboro, will roam through the crowd Saturday, playing music, while live hawks, owls and falcons will be featured during Birds of Prey presentations by the Outer Banks Wildlife Shelter from 9am to 12pm. Books on gardening with natives will also be available in the NCCF's nature shop.

New this year, NCCF will offer a special "Member's Sneak Preview" on Thursday April 20 from 4pm to 6pm. NCCF members will have the first opportunity to purchase plants before the sale opens to the public the following day. NCCF membership is required. Membership may be obtained prior to the plant sale by calling our headquarters office at (252) 393-8185 or joining at [www.nccoast.org](http://www.nccoast.org)

NCCF's headquarters office is located at 3609 Hwy 24 in Ocean, halfway between Morehead City and Swansboro. From Morehead City follow Hwy 24 west for 11.5 miles and the office is on the left. From Cape Carteret, follow Hwy 24 east for 7.5 miles and the office is on the right.

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### ***About the North Carolina Coastal Federation: "Citizens Working Together for a Healthy Coast"***

*The North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) is the state's largest nonprofit organization working to restore and protect the coast. NCCF headquarters are located at 3609 Highway 24 in Ocean between Morehead City and Swansboro and are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 5 pm. The headquarters include NCCF's main offices, the Cape Lookout Coastkeeper office, a gift shop, Nature Library, Weber Seashell Exhibit, ShoreKeeper Learning Center, and adjoining nature trail. The NCCF also operates field offices in Wilmington and Manteo. For more information call 252-393-8185 or check out NCCF's website at [www.nccoast.org](http://www.nccoast.org)*