



July 22, 2025

Public Hearing for Bill 26-25, Vegetation – Invasive Plants

Dear Councilmember,

Conservation Montgomery supports Bill 26-25 of the Native Plant Protection Act. We offer the following comments to strengthen the proposal.

For Chapter 58-3 (b) we totally agree with adding native plants and grasses to the list of plants exempted from the weed removal requirements. We feel this is important because an increasing number of county residents are pursuing non-traditional native plant gardening for the benefit of pollinators and wildlife. They should not be penalized for contributing to ecological vitality.

Regarding invasive bamboo, Under Article II in Chapter 58-8 Definitions. We advise you to include the genus *Pleioblastus* and the species *Pseudosasa japonica* along with the *Phyllostachys* genus.

Like *Phyllostachys*, the *Pleioblastus* genus and *Pseudosasa japonica* (Arrow Bamboo) are running bamboos that aggressively choke out other plant life. We know of three species of *Pleioblastus* bamboo running rampant in local parks. These include the Greenstripe Bamboo (*P. viridistriatus*), Silverstripe Bamboo (*P. argenteostriatus*) and Dwarf Fern-leaf Bamboo (*P. fortunei*), also known as *Pleioblastus pygmaeus*. The parks we know to be impacted include the Rock Creek, Sligo Creek and Watts Branch Stream Valley Parks and Blockhouse Point Conservation Park. It is highly probable that many other parks have been invaded that we are not aware of, especially parks in the down-county area.

Arrow Bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*) is also widely established in our parklands. It is a very aggressive bamboo established in most down-county stream valley parks and is causing mass displacement of our native flora. This species and many other bamboos are easy to see when driving along Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park and along the Sligo Creek Parkway near Takoma Park.

Concerning *Phyllostachys*. We are aware of five species invading parklands and privately owned natural areas in our County. These include Golden Bamboo (*P. aurea*), Yellow Groove Bamboo (*P. aureosulcata*), Bisset Bamboo (*P. bissetii*), Black Bamboo (*P. nigra*) and Nude Sheath Bamboo (*P. nuda*). All five species take over large swaths of natural areas and are very difficult to eradicate. Yellow Groove Bamboo is the most common.

In most cases the running bamboos become established in parks due to the root systems spreading from an initial planting on private property and then invading public lands. They can also spread due to homeowners dumping bamboo root wastes into natural areas. Establishment due to seed dispersal is unlikely because of the long flowering intervals, which are usually many decades apart if not longer.

Our stream valley and conservation parklands are meant to provide a refuge for the native flora of our bioregion. Like other aggressive non-native invasive plants, the running bamboos need to be regulated and eradicated so our

native plant life can thrive. Banning the sale of invasive bamboo is an important first step to control their spread. We urge you to support and seek ways to strengthen Bill 26-25.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

John Parrish, Advocacy Committee Chair, Conservation Montgomery

**For documentation on the establishment of *Pleioblastus* in local parks see:**

B.W. Steury, J.K. Triplett, and J. Parrish. Noteworthy Plant Collections: Virginia, Maryland and District of Columbia. *Castanea* 78(2): 138-139. June 2013.

**For documentation of Arrow Bamboo (*Pseudosasa japonica*) establishment in our region see:**

The Maryland Plant Atlas at: <https://www.marylandplantatlas.org/species.php?species=4111>

The Digital Atlas of the Virginia Flora at: <https://vaplantatlas.org/index.php?do=plant&plant=1684>

**For information about *Phyllostachys* see:**

Field Guide to Identification of *Phyllostachys* Invasive Running Bamboo. Caryn Rickel, Institute of Invasive Bamboo Research. August 2013.

Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

July 21, 2025

Re: Bill 26-25, Vegetation - Invasive Plants and Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 25-10,  
Landscaping Requirements - Native Plants

**Position: Support with Amendments**

Dear President Stewart, Vice President Jawando, and Members of the Montgomery County Council,

We, the undersigned organizations, write in support of Council Bill 26-25 and ZTA 25-10, aimed at addressing the use and sale of invasive plant species in Montgomery County. This is a vital step forward in protecting our native ecosystems, strengthening climate resilience, and safeguarding the long-term health of the County's environment.

Invasive plant species pose serious ecological and economic threats by outcompeting native vegetation, degrading wildlife habitats, increasing the risk of wildfires, and imposing costly management burdens on public and private landowners. We commend the Council for recognizing the need to curb the proliferation of these harmful species through stronger regulation and public education. The undersigned organizations also support the following amendments to strengthen the legislation:

1. **Clarify the weed definition:** For the Bill language, we recommend using the [Maryland Invasive Species Council's](#) list for what constitutes a weed versus invasive plant. From the inclusion of the eight types of weeds in the Bill as currently written, we are assuming the use of the Maryland Department of Agriculture's list of noxious weeds, which is not regularly updated. Prior to 2020, the last time that list was amended was in 1987. Council Bill 26-25 and ZTA 25-10 should include both [terrestrial](#) and [aquatic](#) invasives, which can be found on the Invasive Species Council's list.
2. **Update the language to use the most up to date State Native Plant Law:** The [Maryland Native Plant Program](#) was signed into law by Governor Moore, and includes the [Maryland Plant Atlas](#). We would recommend using this definition for what is native to our region, rather than the broader Mid-Atlantic region. Most importantly, it establishes the [Maryland's Best Native Plant Program](#), which offers resources to residents about options for native plants, trees, and shrubs; provides retailers of native plants; and is vetted by the Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Extension, Maryland Native Plant Society, and the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

We appreciate your leadership on this critical issue and urge you to support Council Bill 26-25 with these amendments and ZTA 25-10. We look forward to working with you to create a more ecologically sound and sustainable future for Montgomery County.

Sincerely,

**Tree Friends United**

**Conservation Montgomery**

**Potomac Conservancy**

**Nature Forward**

**Friends of Sligo Creek**

**Friends of Ten Mile Creek and Little Seneca Reservoir (FOTMC)**

**Montgomery County Sierra Club**

**West Montgomery County Citizens Association**