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Root Local to Host 2nd Annual Think Natives First™ Plant Conference

Event unites Civil Engineers, Landscape Architects, and Landscape Industry Professionals to Drive Native Plant Integration into Modern Landscaping

LAWRENCEVILLE, Ga. (May 27, 2026) – [Root Local's](https://www.rootlocal.org) 2nd Annual *Think Natives First*™ Plant Conference, presented by Native Forest Nursery returns Aug. 11 at Gwinnett Technical College with expanded focus on industry collaboration and practical solutions. This year's theme, "*Specify It Right. Native Plants from Plan to Performance*", is bringing together civil engineers, landscape architects, designers, growers, contractors and maintenance professionals to advance the use of native plants in landscape projects.

The conference, scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., builds on the inaugural 2025 event, which drew more than 90 attendees. This year's program will offer professional development hours (PDH) that focus on practical strategies for integrating native plants into high-performing, sustainable landscapes.

Organizers said the conference was created to address ongoing disconnects among professionals who specify, grow, install and maintain plants, which can contribute to overreliance on non-native species.

Studies cited by xeriscaping and water conservation programs show that landscapes incorporating native plants can reduce water use by up to 50% and maintenance labor

and costs by roughly 30%, compared with conventional landscapes. Sessions will cover learning the benefits of writing native-forward specifications, aligning plant selection with stormwater and site goals, reducing long-term maintenance costs, and navigating challenges like plant availability and value engineering.

“We are excited to be here, partnering with Root Local, for the second year in a row,” said Tyler Wayland of [Roundstone Native Seed](#), chair of the conference committee.

“For over 30 years, Roundstone has worked to provide regionally adapted seed across the Eastern U.S. One area that we continue to see a need is the southeast. Partnering with an Atlanta-based group to spread the word on the value of natives, how to get natives and how to properly use them is an exciting opportunity.”

The event will feature keynote presentations, breakout sessions, and a workshop focused on replacing common non-native plants with native alternatives. By fostering collaboration among industry professionals, Root Local aims to increase the implementation of urban landscapes that are not only beautiful but also ecologically and economically sustainable.

Root Local’s 2nd Annual *Think Natives First*™ Plant Conference, presented by Native Forest Nursery

Tuesday, August 11, 2026

8:30a - 5:30p

Gwinnett Technical College, 5150 Sugarloaf Parkway, Lawrenceville, GA 30043

General Admission \$125 (*early bird pricing through June 30*)

Student tickets are \$65.

Root Local is also seeking exhibitors and sponsors for the event. For tickets, exhibitor, and sponsorship information, visit [the *Think Natives First*™ conference page](#).

About Root Local

Root Local is a leading advocate for sustainable living in Metro Atlanta. With their Eco-Map of Metro Atlanta, or [EMMA](#), platform and through educational, collective impact events, they are providing opportunities to learn, grow, and lower the carbon footprint of all Atlantans and beyond.

For more information about Root Local, please visit www.rootlocal.org, [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

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