

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate use

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Northern rattlesnake-master named 2016 North Carolina Wildflower of the Year

Chapel Hill – Northern rattlesnake-master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*), an unusual prairie species native to the eastern and central United States, has been named the 2016 North Carolina Wildflower of the Year by the North Carolina Botanical Garden (NCBG) and the Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc.

With a basal clump of leathery strap-like, blueish green leaves and a single upright flowering stalk, this distinctive species more closely resembles a yucca plant than its closest relatives in the carrot family (Apiaceae). Northern rattlesnake-master attracts a steady abundance of diverse pollinators, and its interesting form and texture make it a great garden plant.

Perhaps the earliest known use of Northern rattlesnake-master dates back 8,000 years, when prehistoric North Americans used the fiber from its thick leaves to make shoes and sandals. The common name of this species comes from early 18th century accounts of Native Americans applying a root preparation to their hands and arms to protect them while handling rattlesnakes and also brewing a root tea to use as rattlesnake antivenin.

For a Wildflower of the Year brochure and packet of Northern rattlesnake-master seeds, send a stamped, self-addressed, business envelope with attention to NCWFOY 2016 to North Carolina Botanical Garden, UNC–Chapel Hill, CB 3375, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3375. The brochures and seeds will be available in February.

The NCBG and the Garden Club of North Carolina work together to promote the use of native plants in home gardens. Each year since 1982, a showy, native perennial has been chosen and seeds of that wildflower are distributed to interested gardeners. To view a list of the past 34 North Carolina Wildflowers of the Year, visit the Garden's website: ncbg.unc.edu/north-carolina-wildflower-of-the-year

The NCBG, part of the University of North Carolina, is a 1,000-acre assemblage of display gardens and natural areas. Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2016, the Garden is nationally

known as a center for the study, display, interpretation and conservation of plants. Through its educational, recreational, therapeutic horticulture and research programs, it extends opportunities for connection with nature to people of all abilities and backgrounds. The Garden is open seven days a week and admission is free. Information at <http://ncbg.unc.edu>.

The Garden Club of North Carolina includes approximately 265 garden clubs with over 6,500 individual members throughout North Carolina. As a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc., this organization is active at national, state, and local levels in promoting gardening and horticulture, environmental improvements in urban areas, and protection of natural resources.

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An illustration and photos of Northern rattlesnake-master are available upon request.