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CONTACT: *John Aydlett, marketing specialist
NCDA&CS Marketing Division
(252) 331-4773*

Flowers and ornamentals brighten landscape May proclaimed Floriculture Month by governor

RALEIGH – With longer, warmer days and ample rainfall, many homeowners are anxious to get outside to repair some of the damage done to their landscapes by last year's drought. With a little planning, landscapes can be revived and filled with plants that are beautiful, drought tolerant and locally grown.

"More than 1,000 varieties of flowers and ornamentals are raised in the state," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "North Carolina ranks sixth nationally in floriculture production and we're in the top 10 for production of many high-demand plants."

Gov. Mike Easley recently recognized May as Floriculture Month, based on the industry's economic impact of more than \$202 million.

There are many resources available to provide homeowners information about how to select appropriate plants, such as the Water-Wise Works! tips available at TarHeelGardening.com. Retail nurseries and garden centers are also stocking more drought tolerant plants and are prepared to help homeowners select plants to suit their needs.

Gardeners can find North Carolina-grown plants at retail nurseries and garden centers and at the state-run farmers markets in Asheville, Charlotte, Colfax, Lumberton and Raleigh. Many smaller farmers markets also have plant vendors on-site during the spring season.

Additional information on the North Carolina floriculture industry is available at the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' Web site, www.ncagr.com, or the N.C. Commercial Flower Growers Association Web site, www.nccfga.org.

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NCDA&CS Public Affairs Division, Brian Long, Director
Mailing Address: 1001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh NC 27699-1001
Physical Address: 2 West Edenton Street, Raleigh NC 27601
Phone: (919) 733-4216; **FAX:** (919) 733-5047

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Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture