



Governor Shapiro Announces the Grand Opening of Laurel Caverns State Park, Pennsylvania's First Underground State Park

By DCNR

HARRISBURG - Bright lights appear on the cave walls at Laurel Caverns State Park. As the first state park designation since 2022, Laurel Caverns State Park is now Pennsylvania's 125th state park. The park was donated to the Commonwealth by the Cale family, who opened the park in 1964 and created the Laurel Caverns Conservancy in 1986 to manage its operations. The park will reopen to the public on Earth Day (April 22).

Replace Invasive Plants with Native Species for Free

By DCNR

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) announced it will cover the costs for Pennsylvanians to remove invasive trees and shrubs and replace them with native species for the second year in a row. Through the Pennsylvania Invasive Replace-ive Program, Pennsylvania residents who remove up to three invasive plants can receive native replacements at designated events in May.

"Invasive plants disrupt natural habitats and make it harder for wildlife to flourish," said DCNR Secretary Cindy Adams Dunn. "Last year's program drew tremendous interest, and it is inspiring to see so many Pennsylvanians eager to plant native species. Replacing invasive trees and shrubs with native plants helps restore healthy landscapes and supports

the birds, pollinators, and other wildlife that depend on them. With more than 2,000 native species in Pennsylvania, there are plenty of great options for yards and community spaces."

This initiative aims to curb the spread of invasive species, which threaten Pennsylvania's farms, forests, and natural ecosystems. Events will take place across the state, with native trees and shrubs distributed on a first-come, first-served basis.

"Invasive plants don't stop at the edge of a backyard - they spread into farm fields and forests, pushing out native species and creating opportunities for pests like the spotted lanternfly," said Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. "Pennsylvanians can be part of the solution by choosing native plants that support pollinators and healthier ecosystems. At the same time, the Shapiro Administration is investing in research, agricultural innovation, and initiatives like the Center for Plant Excellence to give farmers and communities the tools they need to stay ahead of invasive threats."

In 2025, the Invasive Replace-ive Program distributed 1,313 plants across the state. Past participants say the program has helped them better understand invasive species and take action at home.

"I just learned that butterfly bush is invasive, so I nipped it right out. I only learned that through the program's education," said Leah Santos, 2025 Invasive Replace-ive participant. "I'm really excited about the native plants. You don't see them as often, and I probably wouldn't have been able to find or afford them otherwise."

How to Participate in Invasive Replace-ive: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/newsroom/shapiro-administration-helps-pennsylvanians-replace-invasive-pla>



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2026

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