

Didn't we already answer this one?

Because of the nature of the subject, I fear that this topic may well stray into already explored territory. Namely, it might infringe upon what we covered in the "why protect biodiversity" slide. If you wish you can consider this an extended add-on to that slide, but I will personally do my best to ensure this thing can stand on its own two legs.

As with all things, we must consider both sides of the argument. To consider the "We should protect the native plants" side, I will go hunting through the jungles of the internet and dig up any points for it I can find. I will then do my best to rebut them. If I fail, I will consider the points, and therefore the view, correct. If I succeed, well, I will be forced to award the opposition a victory.

Now, after a bit of research, lots of what I can find (1, 2, 3) is centered around the correct idea that protecting native plants is important to maintaining biodiversity. They (1, 2, 3) argue that native plants and animals are better suited to the local conditions, and are cheaper to maintain. They also argue that the beauty of native plants is unmatched (1, 2, 3), that they require low maintenance, and that they should be conserved for these reasons. Furthermore, native animals can be a source of national pride and identity (the kiwi is symbolic of New Zealand, for instance), as well as being used in genetic modification (Some native animals might have favorable genes that we could put in other animals). Not only this, but the political benefits of maintaining a native species must not be understated, and native species may well increase tourism.

However, as we are looking at this from a scientific point of view, I shall disregard that political benefits point - scientist shouldn't care about politics (4).

Pictured: An adorable kiwi bird. Ironically, the RNZAF (Royal New Zealand Air Force) used the Kiwi on its roundels, despite the fact that the kiwi itself is flightless.



Credit: ecobirdy.com

Now, to play the devil's advocate and argue the opposite. In the interest of fair debate, it must be done.

Now, to address the claim that protecting native species protects biodiversity, I would like to point out that we established earlier that biodiversity isn't as important as some may claim, and it's not like the ecosystem is being destroyed, rather, a new one is being put in its place. This new ecosystem is clearly not less-well adapted to the land it grows on: if it were, it wouldn't be outcompeting the native species. This fact also destroys another one of the affirmative's arguments: While native plants are expensive to plant, establish, and protect, invasive species require little aid and are perfectly capable of dominating the local ecosystem without assistance.

I will not argue that many native animals are sources of national pride, however, I will argue that not only is this a political point but also that countries can definitely take pride in any invasive species that exists within their borders too. Not only that, but no invasive species will completely wipe out the native ecosystem, and while a few species might go extinct and a few countries might lose the animal they hold dearest, the majority of nation states will be fine.



Pictured: a beautiful invasive plant. Natives aren't the only flora with aesthetic value.

Credit: John D Byrd.

Tourism is indeed a factor we must consider, however, as seen above, not all invasive plants are ugly. Furthermore, plants don't need to be planted and maintained throughout a county in order to have them on display: just take a few of them and put them in a museum!

So-called invasive species are all-too-often proving themselves to be more resilient and more durable than their native counterparts, repeatedly winning the evolutionary battle despite human intervention. These plants and animals are far better equipped to handle the changing world we live in and must be allowed to spread. Not only would it free up a large pool of manpower, but it would also save millions of dollars that could be better spent elsewhere. Some may argue what right we have to let these species die, I ask instead "What right do we have to interfere in evolution?" Natural selection has worked brilliantly since the inception of life itself, and even humanity, as mighty, intelligent, and dominating as we are, should not go around picking sides. Rather, with the recent advent of CRISPR, we can harness evolutionary powers for our own gain.

That, however, is a far more interesting topic in a far more interesting slide. In case you missed my brief rebuttal of common genetic modification, then you should go back into this playlist. If you want to learn more about genetic modification itself, then I recommend that you go to Wikipedia's article on the subject. It's incredible what we are doing in this day and age.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genetic_engineering - about genetic engineering.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Introduction_to_genetics - about genetics in general.

VERDICT: The opposition simply has too many good, undeniable points. I can't declare this matter settled forever, but for now it appears as if the shunned negative side to this argument has won.

I know it may seem suspect that the side I personally agreed before with has won the debate I staged, but having done the research I must say I can't find anything that goes against it.