



P.O. Box 191, Castalia, OH 44824

20 January, 2019

To: The Honorable Legislators of the 133rd General Assembly
From: Associated Green Industries Board of Directors
Re: Ohio Native Plant Month

The Associated Green Industries of Northeast Ohio is a trade organization serving the educational needs of the green industries in the region—nursery, greenhouse, landscape, lawncare, garden centers and others. We provide broad educational outreach to a wide variety of horticultural professionals and serve as a forum for representatives of the various disciplines. As such, our Board of Directors is providing this testimony in support of the proposal to designate April as Ohio Native Plant Month.

The green industries of Ohio provides the material goods and services to residents of this, and surrounding states. Landscape designers and garden centers counsel home and business owners on plant selection, landscape service companies maintain the selected material and nurseries and greenhouses provide the plant material. Each step in this chain creates a multi-billion dollar industry, significant to local and state economies. But, the choices of the home and business owners ultimately drive this economic engine.

Native plants have long been recognized as adapted to local conditions, climate and pest issues. Though not foolproof plants, they tend to be better suited to deal with our regional soils and climate. Ecosystems depend on native plants to provide shelter, food and habitat to migrating birds, and resident mammals—both predator and prey. Species of native insects (prey for birds and mammals) may depend on specific native plants for food.

For centuries people have moved plant material and introduced non-natives for their crop or ornamental value. At times this has created significant problems. But, well-adapted, selected and placed non-natives will continue to fill needs in landscapes and crop production. Careful analysis prior to new introductions will help avoid future invasive introductions.

Designation of April as Ohio Native Plant Month will increase public and industry awareness of native plants and their use. The designation will provide a marketing platform for businesses and garden writers from which they can increase public awareness of native plants. The month of April tends to find consumers concentrating on landscape cleanup and new plant installation—a perfect time for educational outreach.

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In summary, the Associated Green Industries Board of Directors supports the initiative to designate April as Ohio Native Plant Month. It will provide a platform from which to educate consumers, businesses and producers on the benefits of having properly selected, planted, and maintained native plant materials in the landscape. This supports regional ecosystems, educational outreach as well as the green industry businesses across the state.

Sincerely,

Associated Green Industries
Board of Directors, 2019