



December 28, 2018

To: The Honorable Legislators of the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly  
From: The 2019 OLA Board of Directors  
RE: Ohio Native Plant Month

The mission of the Ohio Landscape Association (OLA) is to elevate the landscape profession through advocacy and education. Thus, we - members of the Board of Directors of the OLA - write to advocate support for Mrs. Hope Taft's proposal to designate April as Ohio Native Plant Month.

The Green Industry is vital to Ohio's economy. As stewards of this industry, OLA's members play a significant role in helping the citizens of Ohio determine how they can improve the environment in which their homes and businesses reside. We work hard to enhance landscapes by providing educated choices in plant materials - suited for the site - and provide several educational opportunities to our members to better understand the impact each plant species has on its ecosystem.

We believe that designating April as Ohio Native Plant Month will help the general public recognize the many benefits of utilizing plant materials that are adapted to local environments. Native plant materials, having adapted to their local environments for centuries, offer many unique benefits to these habitats. Migratory, as well as year-round, resident bird species depend on many of the fruits and seeds offered by native plant materials, as do native pollinators and hundreds of species of moth and butterflies. In this regard, native plants are a key part of the complex food web supporting the very ecosystem which surrounds them.

The OLA does not discredit the benefit of well-suited, non-native plant materials in the landscape, as we often find urban conditions that do not match the ecosystem native to Ohio. These non-native plants play an equally-vital role in supporting our robust urban ecosystems, as many are specifically adapted to difficult planting conditions.

We support the Ohio Invasive Plant Council (OIPC) and their method of scientific study used to determine if a plant should be included on Ohio's invasive plant list. We work hard to keep our members aware of changes made to this list, which may impact our industry, to ensure we are not using plants on this list.

In closing, we believe that a combination of appropriate, non-invasive, plant materials - installed correctly - will help Ohio reduce the negative impacts of global climate change. Through initiatives encouraged by embracing Ohio Native Plant Month, we can work together to educate our citizens in discovering the benefits of well-planned landscapes. We can also teach our youth about the positive impacts that being outside and working with plants can have on their lives.

We ask that you support the initiative to designate April as Ohio Native Plant Month, in effort to help encourage our citizens to be outside, plant more plants, and beautify our great state.

Sincerely,

The Ohio Landscape Association  
2018 Board of Directors

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