

April Ohio Native Plant Month

Introduction:

The Ohio Green Industry made up of growers, Landscape installers and retailers. Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association (ONLA) have members in all of these categories.

Economic impact:

\$4.13 billion dollar industry.

Greenhouse and Nursery are among the top five crop categories in the state.

Industry awareness: The industry recognizes the strength of this trend and has devoted significant effort to educate the members of their trade associations.

Steve Foltz and I as well as many other professionals have done abundant talks to call attention to natives to Green Industry professionals, Master Gardeners and Garden Clubs.

Public awareness of natives: People are getting the message

The message that native plants and their cultivars are good for the environment is a message that has been delivered for quite some time and positively received by the public.

Examples of programs in Ohio:

ODOT has a pollinator project based around native plants.
and a preference for the use of native plants along highways.

ODNR Go Native! program

LEAP - Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership – Already promotes 3 native plants each year.

Park Systems and Natural Areas have many programs.

Pollinator projects integrating native plants are promoted and supported by many groups and the public.

Wetland mitigation projects are built around the use of native plants.

Professional organizations supporting Native Plant Month:

Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association (ONLA)

Ohio Landscape Association (OLA)

Nursery Growers of Lake County (NGLCO)

Associated Green Industry of Northeast Ohio (AGI)

Ohio Chapter American Society of Landscape Architects

Private organization support:

Garden Clubs

Native Plant Society

Ohio Invasive Plant Council

Prior actions by the Ohio Legislature:

State Tree: Ohio Buckeye (1953)

State Wild Flower: Trillium (1986)

State Native Fruit: Paw Paw (2007)

Legislating April as Native Plant Month will help create awareness of the importance of native plants benefiting the environment, the green industry and the citizens of Ohio.

Increasing public awareness of natives and their cultivars is a positive message when dealing with the invasive issue through promoting native alternatives.

Keeping natives thoroughly integrated into the landscape bolsters species diversity and helps the landscapes/region/area hold up better to extreme weather events such as flooding, drought, heat, and cold.