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Testimony: April for Native Plant Month May 22, 2019

HB 59 submitted to Senator Hoagland, the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, and the Ohio Senate

Climate Change... bet you weren't expecting that beginning.

What is the connection? Climate Change is huge; global. Planting and honoring our native plants is relatively small and local. If you will bear with me for a moment: I have been involved with the creation of gardens since the early 90's. I am a teacher of those who create landscapes. I am an ecologically-conscious worker of the Earth. And, because of this, I am constantly aware of how climate and consequently, weather, is changing.

I cannot crusade like Leo DeCaprio and other front-and-center climate change evangelists for dealing with climate change, but what I can do is share the wonder of our native plants and their essential place in our world's ecosystems. Reducing a carbon footprint is a nice exercise, but until you understand, honor and love nature and the Earth, there really is no motivation to care for, and save it.

Not taking that trip in a jet will not save the Earth, but making our Earth more resilient; able to deal with climate change, is something a single person can do.

The gateway to "saving the world" is through pretty or cute. Some of us may be full up to here with the Monarch-milkweed campaign. But there are still people who are unaware that there is a monarch crisis. There has been an upswing in the monarch populations in some places, but what would happen if we stopped caring, and stopped creating monarch-friendly habitat?

While there are people who do not know, we have a job to do.

Our next campaign to raise awareness: native plant month. Tagging onto the successful call-to-arms of Earth Day, we can promote the planting and care of native plants and their habitats during the month of April. Ohio can be the leader in this effort. We have a deep horticultural history rich in impressive private and public gardens, farms, plant nurseries and centers of learning. Because of this, we have a strong contingent of individuals who live for spreading the word.

If we make April native plant month, I will have one more way to get people to listen and care.

Thank you for listening.