

YOUR Name

Address  
Address

Contact Name  
Nursery/Garden Center Name  
Nursery Address  
Nursery Address

DATE

Dear Owner/Contact Name,

As more and more people have been learning more about the importance of native trees and supporting habitats for wildlife in our community this past year, I see a great opportunity for your nursery to support habitats for our native birds and pollinators.

Would your nursery be able to create plant lists or designated tags for native plants? This could be as simple as posting a flyer near the entrance, or placing a table or row in an ideal location that has only Illinois native plants.

While I'm sure you know this, "nativars" are different than native plants. Some native cultivars, such as those within the Echinacea genus are selected for their double blossoms through a breeding process which removes the reproductive parts of the plant that create pollen to feed our pollinators. These plants should not be marketed with the native plants, as they are not able to provide the same benefits to native wildlife. Similarly, "wildflower" seed mixes sold should be labeled to inform customers whether they contain Illinois Native Wildflowers or a colorful, albeit non-native, perennial mix.

In addition, we encourage the sale of heat-treated birdseed, to prevent the introduction of non-native and weedy species to our sites. Thistle and common teasel are a favorite of goldfinches, but they can then carry the seeds into our natural areas, forest preserves and garden beds. Pre-treating the seeds can sterilize the seed, preventing this issue.

If your nursery is able to provide an adequate selection of native plants, you can be added to a number of databases and resources that send customers your way. [National Wildlife Federation](#), [Homegrown National Park](#), [Chicago Living Corridors](#) and [West Cook Wild Ones](#) all maintain lists of nurseries and garden centers that sell native plants. Personally, I want to be able to source native plants from local, family-owned sources instead of going to the "Big Box" stores. I know that a growing number of people share this preference.

I hope that you will implement these practices in your store this season.

Warm Regards,

YOUR NAME

Your Phone Number | Your Email Address