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Keep Ohio Beautiful Planting Day – 2014: Butterfly Garden and Native Trees

Before I begin, I would like to extend my thanks to Tamra Ansel and her great staff here at the Statehouse; their hard work and enthusiasm have helped to make these Keep Ohio Beautiful plantings such a great success. I'd also like to recognize my Davey colleague Ken Christensen, the true brains behind the operation who did all of the heavy lifting!

Like in 2012 and 2013, this year's Keep Ohio Beautiful planting uses native species. The trees, shrubs, and flowers that you see here today can be found in the forests and fields across Ohio's eighty-eight counties. While last year we focused on a woodland planting, the goal this year is to provide food and habitat for butterflies, with a specific focus on the Monarch butterfly.

The Monarch is an amazing insect; its beautiful orange and black stained-glass wings flutter over Ohio during the summer months before the butterfly starts its annual migration to a small forest in Mexico, thousands of miles away, where it overwinters. Sadly, we have seen the population of monarchs decline rapidly over the past two decades, primarily due to habitat loss. However, butterfly gardens like this one

help to counteract this loss. The buttonbush, coneflower, geranium, and false sunflower all provide nectar for hungry adult butterflies. The garden also includes large numbers of several native milkweeds; the only plants where monarchs lay eggs and the only thing eaten by its caterpillars!

In addition to supporting our insects and wildlife, native plants give us so many other amazing benefits. Trees, including the pagoda dogwood installed as part of the planting, and the existing honeylocust and red maple near the butterfly garden, provide important economic, social, and environmental functions:

- They remove pollution from the air, resulting in improved air quality.
- Trees absorb large amounts of water during storms, reducing run-off and flooding in our streams and rivers.
- They provide connectivity to nature and support emotional health and healing.
- Trees help reduce erosion from storms and wind thereby protecting our land and farms.
- They improve property values at our homes and businesses.

I think President Theodore Roosevelt really hit the nail on the head when he said, *“To exist as a nation, to prosper as a state, and to live as*

a people, we must have trees". Native trees, shrubs, and flowers, like those planted today and in past years here at the Statehouse, will continue to remind visitors to this great facility of the importance of Ohio's fields and forests, and the critical roles played by the plants that form the backbones of those ecosystems.

I would like take this time to acknowledge two other project partners that donated plants to today's event: Dayton Nursery in Summit County, Ohio, who graciously provided many perennial flowers, including the purple coneflower and butterfly weed, and Arcola Creek Nursery in Lake County, Ohio, who donated the beautiful buttonbush shrubs. Without their assistance, today's planting would not have been a success.

On behalf of Davey and in celebration of Keep America Beautiful's National Planting Day, please enjoy today's event and thank you all for your participation!