Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

Did you know that garden plants treated with **neonicotinoid pesticides (neonics)** can harm our native pollinators? A third of the food we consume is pollinated by bees, and these vital insects are already facing steep and dangerous declines in their populations.

As your customer, I am respectfully asking for your help in selling plants that have not been treated with neonics and removing products from your shelves that contain these chemicals.

Exposure to neonics can impair bee larval development, increase their vulnerability to disease, and damage the insect’s immune and nervous systems that can lead to their death.

In 2022, legislation was passed in Rhode Island to restrict the use of these pesticides for untrained home and community use [R.I. Gen. Laws §23-25-40, effective Jan 1st, 2024]. However, many ornamentals and vegetable plants are pretreated with these pesticides by the grower before they reach local nurseries. Unfortunately, these plants do not come with warning labels and customers who intend to plant gardens that support native pollinators may be unknowingly buying plants that harm these valuable insects.

**Some common names for commercially available neonics are Acetamiprid, Clothianidin, Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid, Nitenpyram, Thiacloprid, and Thiamethoxam.**

**I am asking your help to protect bees and other pollinators by taking the following actions:**

* Check with your suppliers and purchase only neonicotinoid-free plants.
* Offer third party certified organic plants whenever possible.
* Do not sell garden sprays and other products that contain neonicotinoids.
* Educate your customers on why you have made the important decision to protect pollinators.

Please consider acting today to support our bees and other native pollinators. As a local garden center, you have a unique opportunity to make a positive impact on our environment and to set an example by educating the public on the dangers of neonicotinoid pesticides.

If you would like more information on protecting pollinators, please visit the Audubon Society of Rhode Island website at asri.org/pollinators.

Sincerely,