

Dear Council,

I am writing to give support to the passage of the Native Plant Protection Act. As a gardener in Montgomery County, I can say that I rarely see pollinators on my non-native ornamentals, while when I visit my native milkweed and bee balm, there are almost always bees and butterflies flying around. I've observed native insects such as the Eastern Carpenter Bee, the Red Milkweed Beetle, the Swamp Milkweed Leaf Beetle, and the Brown-Belted Bumblebee. In only one year of my native rain garden, I've seen more biodiversity than in the 5 years of our non-native garden. If these efforts were county-wide, I expect we would all see an increase in native insects, which bring the benefit of pollination to vegetable gardens, pollination for local farmers, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience. We also preserve the experience of seeing beautiful butterflies for ourselves and our children. In addition, native plants require less harmful pesticides and fertilizers than non-native plants, as well as having lower maintenance costs. As a college student studying Environmental Science, I know that native plants would be a huge benefit to our health and the health of our local ecosystems. I would be so excited to see the passing of this bill and I appreciate your efforts in considering it.

Thank you for your time,

Alyssa Hafken