



## News from the Ohio Turnpike

682 Prospect Street ❖ Berea, Ohio 44017-2799

440.971-2066

[www.ohioturnpike.org](http://www.ohioturnpike.org)

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **Ohio Turnpike's Mahoning Valley Service Plazas to feature Ohio-native plant gardens**

*Project announced for Earth Day and will feature 17 pollinating perennial plants native to Ohio*

**BEREA** (April 21, 2017) -- Two more of the Ohio Turnpike's Service Plazas will soon feature "Ohio Turnpike Native Pollinator Plant Gardens." Located at the Mahoning Valley (westbound) and Glacial Hills (eastbound) Service Plazas in New Springfield, the gardens will feature 17 different Ohio-native plant species.

The Ohio Turnpike is partnering with Keep Ohio Beautiful and The Davey Tree Expert Co. on the beautification project and students from the area will help install the gardens at an event on **May 19**.

Native plants are adapted to Ohio soil and climate, are easy to care for and are naturally drought-resistant. They attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife. The garden design plans are being provided by Davey Tree.

"The native plant gardens will serve as a model to educate and encourage people to grow native species in their own gardens," said Ohio Turnpike Executive Director Randy Cole. "These plants and shrubs will display a sense of beauty and place that is uniquely Ohio."

"We are proud to join with the Ohio Turnpike, Davey Tree, Keep Mahoning County Beautiful and our other partners to educate Ohioans and those traveling our beautiful state about the role of native plants in a healthy ecosystem, as well as in community beautification and pride," said Michael Menett, Executive Director, Keep Ohio Beautiful. "Our focus this year on pollinators will bring attention to their important role in Ohio's food supply and the delight they can bring to residential gardens."

The Gardens will have 17 different species of plants and shrubs plus an Ohio Buckeye tree at each plaza:

Yarrow  
Swamp Milkweed  
Sullivant's Prairie Milkweed  
Butterfly Weed  
New England Aster  
White Turtlehead  
Purple Cone Flowers  
Rattlesnake Master  
Swamp Rose Mallow

Northern Blue Flag  
Gayfeather  
Great Blue Lobelia  
Bee Balm  
Prairie Cone Flower  
Ohio Goldenrod  
New Jersey Tea Shrub  
Common Buttonbush  
Ohio Buckeye Tree

-more-



Native Pollinator Plant Gardens were first installed by the Ohio Turnpike, Keep Ohio Beautiful and Davey Tree at the Middle Ridge and Vermilion Valley Service Plazas in 2016. This year, the Mahoning Valley and Glacier Hills Service Plaza gardens will also function as a “bioswale,” which is a landscape element designed to slow, collect and filter storm water.

Pollinators are critical to maintaining our ecosystems and putting food on our tables. Yet honeybees, monarchs and native pollinators are in decline. Habitat loss has been identified as a significant factor in this decline. Fortunately, transportation rights-of-way can provide habitat corridors for pollinators to reproduce, forage and migrate.

With a nearly 90 percent population decline in just 20 years, and as an iconic, charismatic species, the monarch butterfly has become a flagship species for pollinator conservation, according to the [Monarch Joint Venture](#).

-more-

Ohio plays a vital role in the annual migration pattern of monarch butterflies as they fly from South America to Canada. Pollinators such as milkweed are among those attractive to the monarch. As described earlier, it's one of 17 different species of plants and shrubs featured in the gardens.

-30-

**Contacts:**

Brian Newbacher, Public Information Officer  
Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission  
[brian.newbacher@ohioturnpike.org](mailto:brian.newbacher@ohioturnpike.org)  
(440) 971-2066, (440) 821-3399 (mobile)

Michael Mennett, Executive Director,  
Keep Ohio Beautiful  
[mmennett@keepohiobeautiful.org](mailto:mmennett@keepohiobeautiful.org)  
(330) 338-8328