

APRIL 27, 2020



TWO TIMELY PIECES OF INFORMATION

1st

A reminder that due to the COVID-19 crisis, LWVLA's Annual Meeting has been postponed indefinitely. Information about how voting on the 2020-2021 budget, the slate of officers and directors, and the approval to continue program and bylaws will be accomplished in 2020 was sent to members on April 15 using Constant Contact email. Please make sure you have reviewed it.

Questions about the budget and nominations, and additional nominations, are due by May 8. Voting will be conducted by email and will begin on May 15. Directions will be sent to members via email. Contact Co-President Donna Mullins donnamullinslwvla@gmail.com.

2nd

In the April *Capitol Voter*, the Environment Committee's article about safe gardening had some non-working links (due to both technical problems and human error.) Apologies to the article's author, Marion Gorton. Since many members are in the process of planning their gardens during this time of year (and greenhouses are reopening!), this helpful and timely information is reprinted below.

SAFE GARDENING IN A DANGEROUS TIME **Marion Gorton**

Many of us habitually return to gardening this time of year, and COVID-19 has made it attractive to even more folks. We're starting seedlings and looking for ways to make our surroundings beautiful and fruitful—good intentions we don't always follow through on. But now we are home and have that opportunity. It's important, though, that you consider the environment as well as your landscape as you tinker with Mother Nature—to make your lovely garden environmentally friendly.

Plant flowers and shrubs native to Michigan.

Plants that belong in Michigan soils are a good idea for many reasons. They require less maintenance and fewer chemicals: they thrive naturally because they are in their native

habitat. They also help preserve our natural ecosystem: the birds, bees and bugs know and depend on *them*, not on exotics. Some species that have been introduced from other countries are invasive because there are no natural controls on their growth; they will take over every corner of the garden. You may come to despise those very plants that looked so pretty at the nursery. To learn about native plants and where to purchase them in Michigan visit the [Wildflower Association](#) of Michigan or the [Michigan Native Plant Producers Association](#).

Keep your garden safe for the bees, butterflies and other [pollinators](#). Eliminate neonicotinoids.

These chemicals are found in many pesticides and in the soils and plants that we purchase at some local nurseries and retail outlets. Research has shown that they kill more than the garden pests we are trying to get rid of; they can also end up killing those pollinating insects you want in your garden such as bees, wasps and butterflies. While they've been banned for outdoor use in Canada and Europe, the [EPA](#) continues to allow their use. [The National Wildlife Federation website](#) has helpful information about "neonics."

[A comprehensive report](#) from 2015 shows how long we have known of the problems and provides valuable information about being a pollinator-friendly gardener. Even if you don't want to read 70 pages, just a glance at this report will let you know how important this problem is and some effective ways of dealing with it.

Now you know what to plant and how to protect bees and other beneficial creatures that might visit your lawn and gardens. The next step is to learn the best methods of attracting butterflies, bees and other pollinators.

Pollinators have suffered huge decreases in population in recent decades. According to the Center for Biological Diversity, in the past 20 years the population of Monarch butterflies has decreased by 80%. Bee populations have also suffered tremendous losses. Some species of bats are in danger of extinction. The reasons are numerous, from disease to habitat loss to climate change. It is in our best interest to protect and sustain populations of pollinators. The health of our planet depends on it. Here are a couple of sources to find out what you can do. You will see that the research has come full circle with discussions of native plants and pesticides.

<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/AttractingPollinatorsV5.pdf><https://www.nrdc.org/stories/8-ways-attract-bees-and-butterflies>

If you're interested in attending a **webinar on planting for pollinators**, with a Smart Gardening video from MSU Extension followed by a discussion, let us know (elink767@gmail.com) and we'll notify you of the date and time.

HAPPY GARDENING!