

**Becky Lyons Remarks
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**Keep Ohio Beautiful | National Planting Day
September 23, 2014**

- I'm delighted to be here with my colleague Corinn Reinhard representing Keep America Beautiful and honored to be here celebrating National Planting Day with one of our strongest affiliates, Keep Ohio Beautiful.
- National Planting Day is a call to action to focus our attention on planting more ecologically appropriate, drought-tolerant native species. Native species are losing ground to suburbanization, fragmented habitats, ornamental plants and invasive species.
- National Planting Day plays a critical role in supporting our country's natural ecosystem. Today, invasive species compete with and harm plant and animal communities. Natives need fewer resources and less maintenance. Native plants can provide habitat for wildlife, including important pollinator species (insects, birds, bats) that are necessary for plant reproduction, including the cultivation of crops.
- Keep America Beautiful's network of community-based affiliates and partnering organizations spearhead the planting of native species and trees, as well as sustainable community gardens,

including fruit and vegetable gardens, all of which results in positive, lasting impact in communities.

- Impact that goes way beyond the physical environment. School gardens that are enabling kids to enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables that some of them rarely get. I've been to many community gardens where neighbors who've never met each other are socializing for the first time. Different nationalities are coming together and swapping recipes and culturally unique foods grown in the gardens. So we're not only helping the environment, we're building community.
- Last week Keep Wickliffe Beautiful – right here in Ohio – hosted a National Planting Day event. Thirty-five volunteers made a huge impact by planting 30 native trees in local parks, activity that will be replicated all over the country by Keep America Beautiful.
- We are so proud to have affiliates like Keep Ohio Beautiful who are raising awareness about the importance of native species in restoring balance to local environments through this important initiative.
- During the first two years of National Planting Day, more than 13,500 native trees, nearly 28,000 native plants and shrubs, and 65 million wildflowers and seeds were planted.

[PAUSE]

**KEEP AMERICA
BEAUTIFUL**

- Thank you to Mike Mennett, Keep Ohio Beautiful's Board of Directors, and those in attendance today to support National Planting Day. Together we can all work to keep America beautiful.
- [PAUSE]
- I will now turn it back over to Su Lok.