



SANDY'S PLANTS, INC.

RARE AND UNUSUAL PERENNIALS

September 2, 2014

To our customers:

Sandy's Plants' goal is to raise quality perennials that meet or exceed the expectations of our customers and provide enjoyment to the end consumer. To do this, we do use chemical insecticides. If you have visited our nursery, you know that we are in a very residential area. This means that we must take our pesticide application program very seriously. We try to use the least toxic chemicals which will accomplish our objective.

Neonicotinoids (neonics) are an important tool because they not only provide long lasting control of damaging insects; they are safer to humans and non-damaging insects than many alternative insecticides. Longer control means fewer applications and therefore reduced exposure to the spray by both humans and pollinators.

But neonics can pose a threat to pollinators. When misapplied, they can be toxic to pollinators. While the results of some research concerning the effects of neonics on bees have been confirmed by subsequent studies, there are also many conflicting results, especially between laboratory research and field studies. Fortunately, many scientists and universities are conducting research right now in an effort to give us a better idea of how neonics affect bees.

Neonics fall into 2 sub-categories, a nitro group and a cyano group. Studies show that chemicals in the cyano group, which is a newer chemistry, have much lower toxicity to pollinators. About five years ago, Sandy's Plants transitioned to mainly using chemicals in the cyano group of neonics. Nitro group neonics were used mainly for small applications dealing with a specific insect pressure.

Researchers, industry groups, and governments appear to recognize the differences between nitro and cyano neonics as well. All of the pesticides which the European Commission placed a moratorium on in 2013 were in the nitro group. In addition, the *Saving America's Pollinators Act of 2013 (H.R. 2692)* proposes banning only the neonics in the nitro group. This Act is supported by the Center for Food Safety, Beyond Pesticides, Friends of the Earth, the Xerces Society, the NW Center for the Alternatives to Pesticides and many other environmental organizations.

Based on the available research, Sandy's Plants has decided to take the following steps: **Our goal is to stop using the neonic products which are currently under moratorium in Europe and also those that would be banned by the Saving America's Pollinators Act of 2013 (H.R. 2692) by the end of 2014. Should we need to use one of these insecticides in the future as a last resort in treating a specific pest problem, we will indicate it on the Weekly Availability and also include a label in the pot of all treated plants as a warning to the end consumer.**

We occasionally use Acetamiprid, a cyano group neonic which can only be applied as a foliar spray. We will continue to use Acetamiprid in our rotation in a way that has the least impact on pollinators. Based on this product's much lower toxicity and the fact that moving completely away from neonics would expose pollinators and humans to more toxic pesticides on a more frequent basis, we feel this course of action is the best option for our employees, our customers and the environment. If subsequent research results give us new facts, we will re-evaluate this policy.

Sincerely,

J. R. Marker, III
Executive VP/CFO
Sandy's Plants, Inc.