April 9, 2015 (Washington, D.C.) – As professional horticulturists, we grow trees, plants and flowers, and healthy trees, plants and flowers are critically important to healthy bees and healthy bee habitats. Pollinator health is a highly complex issue, and we recognize that there many factors that can affect bee health. Although the improper use of pesticides can harm bees, a growing number of credible independent studies indicate that neonicotinoids, when used as directed, are not the cause of widespread bee health issues.

Consumers want plants that are healthy, beautiful and pest-free, and neonicotinoids have proven to be among the most effective pest management tools available. Neonicotinoids also are among the safest products we have for both our employees and the environment.

Lowe’s position is surprising, considering the most recent and positive reports on the state of honeybee health (NASS honey report) and recent peer reviewed research. This is an issue for which sound science must take priority.

Plant growers are experts on how to produce healthy plants. We embrace the challenge of protecting bee and pollinator health and the opportunity to be part of the solution. We will continue to fund important research on the health of bees, and guide horticulture on safe and responsible pest management. Horticulture will look to the best science to guide our efforts.

For additional information on what horticulture needs to know about pollinator health, view our video at http://bit.ly/ProtectingPollinatorsVideo.

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AmericanHort was formed in 2014 by the consolidation of the American Nursery & Landscape Association and OFA – The Association of Horticulture Professionals. With a combined history of 220+ years, AmericanHort supports nearly 16,000 member and affiliated businesses that include breeders, greenhouse and nursery growers, garden retailers, distributors, interior and exterior landscape professionals, florists, students, educators, researchers, manufacturers, and all of those who are part of the industry market chain. The horticulture industry’s production, wholesale, retail, and landscape service components have annual sales of $163 billion, and sustain over 1,150,000 full- and part-time jobs. Our mission is to unite, promote, and advance the horticulture industry through advocacy, collaboration, connectivity, education, market development, and research. The association has offices in Columbus, Ohio for administration and member services, and in Washington, DC to facilitate government relations and research activities.

The Society of American Florists is the leading organization representing all segments of the floral industry. SAF is proud to provide marketing, business and government services to its members, including growers, wholesalers, retailers, suppliers, importers, educators, designers and allied organizations. The association was chartered by an act of Congress in 1884.

The American Floral Endowment (AFE) founded in 1961, is dedicated to advancing the industry through funding floriculture research, educational grants and scholarships. More than $16 million has been funded toward research projects benefiting the entire industry, and more than $700,000 has been funded in scholarships designed to attract and retain the future leaders of the industry.

The Horticultural Research Institute (HRI), founded in 1962, has provided more than $7 million in funds to research projects covering a broad range of production, environmental, and business issues important to the green industry. Nearly $11 million is committed to the endowment by individuals, corporations, and associations. For more information about HRI, its grant-funded research, or programming, visit www.hriresearch.org.