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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## NEONICOTINOID INSECTICIDES IN THE HORTICULTURE INDUSTRY

**St. Paul, Minnesota** (March 17, 2014) – Bailey Nurseries agrees with and will follow the new regulations that are being put in place by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Further, we have decided to eliminate all foliar treatments made with the 3 named neonicotinoid insecticides – Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam – from our container and bareroot fields. Foliar applications of any insecticides are now known to be the most harmful to bees, and as a result we are ceasing this practice.

We must acknowledge our stewardship role in using these chemistries, deploy them as part of a management strategies like Integrated Pest Management or Best Management Practices and always use them only as directed by the EPA-approved label.

This is an ongoing discussion between governmental agencies, researchers, developers and growers, and Bailey Nurseries is committed to working with our industry partners to find a positive resolution. We focus on conducting business in an environmentally responsible manner and are dedicated to making communities a better place for generations to come. Our company takes environmental stewardship very seriously, and we look forward to forthcoming dialogue.

Attached, please find background information on neonicotinoid insecticides from Bailey Nurseries' Plant Health Manager, Jean-Marc Versolato. He has been involved in industry-wide discussions regarding this issue, reviewed related research and is an excellent resource for the horticulture industry.

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### About Bailey Nurseries

Bailey Nurseries is a fourth-generation family-owned nursery serving customers throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia. They are widely recognized as one of the United States' largest wholesale nurseries, with products distributed by more than 4,500 independent garden centers, landscapers, growers and re-wholesalers. Bailey Nurseries is headquartered in Newport, Minnesota, with additional growing facilities Oregon, Washington and Illinois.

## **Background Information**

Recently we all have seen a spate of media reports and commentaries regarding neonicotinoid insecticides and their potential impact on bees. Many of these stories provide important information for us to consider and reflect upon. We have also received several questions from our valued customers about the use of neonicotinoid insecticides in nursery production.

Growing plants, tending crops and managing greenhouses and landscapes are roles for responsible stewards, and our industry's access to and use of insecticides must be approached with the same level of respect. Neonicotinoids are insecticides capable of killing various insects and, when used appropriately and as directed by the approved EPA labels, are useful tools in the fight against invasive insect species and in ongoing efforts to manage pests.

Some recent reports suggest that plants treated with neonicotinoid pesticides are connected to Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) of bees, a phenomenon in which worker bees do not return to their hive after foraging. However, research and peer-reviewed publications, including those from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the EPA, strongly contradict the finger pointing at neonicotinoids. Rather, the research suggests that CCD of managed hives is likely caused by a combination of factors including pests and parasites – similar to the 1987 introduction of the destructive Varroa mite, the #1 bee killer according to the USDA – combined with bee pathogens including diseases and viruses. Other factors include nutrition problems caused by large monoculture associated with the disappearance of wild flowers. Certain bee management practices, like the constant stress of transporting hives to new locations by beekeepers, loss of natural habitat and climate change conclude the list. This complex issue of pollinator health is that of managed bees, not those found in and around home yards and landscapes. In 2011, CCD in managed bees was linked to corn or sunflower seeds treated with neonicotinoids. Fortunately, our native bees do not appear to be impacted by CCD despite dealing with many of the same parasites and pathogens and having similar exposure to pesticides. This is not to say that pesticides play no role in CCD; the truth is that we do not have all of the answers at this point.

Research has shown that neonicotinoids represent a tremendous advancement over older pesticide treatment options. When used properly, neonicotinoids effectively control problem insects, while exhibiting less impact on non-target insects (including bees). Their ability to provide residual control means fewer applications and less applicator exposure. Other alternatives are more harmful to the environment and beneficial insects, do not provide the same level of control, require repeated applications, leave pesticide residuals on the foliage impacting the aesthetic value of the plant material, and may also cause more plant phytotoxicity.

Our industry recognizes the importance of having effective pesticides with low environmental impact. Neonicotinoids, when used properly, are vital to the success of our industry. They are important tools in defending trees, shrubs, and plants against destructive invasive species (like the Japanese Beetle, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Longhorned Beetle), in dealing with invasive and often chemical-resistant whitefly species and preventing the spread of these and other pests. In some cases, neonicotinoids are approved regulatory treatments for certification and interstate movement of nursery and greenhouse crops. In others, they are critical to managing the development of pesticide resistance to other modes of action.

Based on the current science, combined with the public interest, the EPA will continue to allow application of neonicotinoids with appropriate guidelines because of the fact that neonicotinoid insecticides are among the safer chemicals available to combat many pests. The image on the following page is the language that now appears on the label of 3 neonicotinoid insecticides (Dinotefuran, Imidacloprid and Thiamethoxam) produced after February 2014. These insecticides are used in the agricultural and ornamental industry. Please note that the bee picture that will also appear on the labels.

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## How can we help?

As a proud participant in United States agriculture, we certainly understand the importance of pollinators to the agricultural industry and our natural environment. Our industry must lead the way by providing solutions to improve the health of the bees we enjoy in our own backyards. Bee nutrition and health in general can be improved by advocating for mass planting of perennial shrubs in and around municipalities. Diversity of flowers over a long period of time (spring, summer, and fall) will improve bee immune systems. Providing artificial habitat options and managing them accordingly will also improve bee survival over our long winters.

## New Neonicotinoid Label

FOR FOOD CROPS AND COMMERCIALY GROWN ORNAMENTALS NOT UNDER CONTRACT FOR POLLINATION SERVICES BUT ARE ATTRACTIVE TO POLLINATORS



Do not apply this product while bees are foraging. Do not apply this product until flowering is complete and all petals have fallen unless one of the following conditions is met:

- The application is made to the target site after sunset
- The application is made to the target site when temperatures are below 55°F
- The application is made in accordance with a government-initiated public health response
- The application is made in accordance with an active state-administered apiary registry program where beekeepers are notified no less than 48-hours prior to the time of the planned application so that the bees can be removed, covered or otherwise protected prior to spraying
- The application is made due to an imminent threat of significant crop loss, and a documented determination consistent with an IPM plan or predetermined economic threshold is met. Every effort should be made to notify beekeepers no less than 48-hours prior to the time of the planned application so that the bees can be removed, covered or otherwise protected prior to spraying.