

# GROWERTALKS

## GT in Brief

8/27/2014

## Minnesota's New Pollinator Labeling Law

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While some retailers are making their own labeling or supply requirements for plants treated with certain pesticides, the Minnesota legislature took the matter into their own hands. Minnesota passed amendments to their nursery labeling bill to include restrictions concerning pollinators. The law went into effect July 1, 2014, and it has the Minnesota industry scrambling to comply; and not everyone is happy about it.

Here's part of the bill: A person may not label or advertise an annual plant, bedding plant or other plant, plant material or nursery stock as beneficial to pollinators if the annual plant, bedding plant, plant material or nursery stock has been treated with and has a detectable level of systemic insecticide that: (1) has a pollinator protection box on the label; or (2) has a pollinator, bee or honey bee precautionary statement in the environmental hazards section of the insecticide product label.

If you read through the FAQ from the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA), you'll see there are several interpretations of "label" and "advertising" that could get a grower into trouble, prompting the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to test their plants.

According to the MNLA, producers have two choices:

1. Members who can be certain that the plants they sell have not been treated with systemic insecticides will not be affected by this new law, though MDA will continue to inspect their plants and may take samples.
2. Nurseries that cannot make that statement may need to significantly alter their labeling and advertising practices in order to comply.

Industry groups such as AmericanHort and SAF, as well as state organizations and even individual growers, are hard at work to bring more science to the fore. However, there may be more rulings like this coming quickly down the pike. **GT**