

## **Chapter 731 Cincinnati Weed Ordinance needs a change**

### 1. Environmental concerns:

- This ordinance does not recognize natural landscaping and alternative yards, defining noxious weeds (Sec. 731-1-A) as any and all grass, weeds and wild plants over 10 inches.
- Pesticides pose health risks, especially to children and wildlife. This ordinance talks about spraying with a chemical compound (Sec 731-3 and Sec 731-5) to eradicate “weeds.”
- Most of the “weeds” listed (Sec. 731-3) are not noxious, except possibly to farmers’ crops. Several are native plants.

### 2. Enforcement concerns:

- There is no warning, and the complaint is anonymous. A \$200 fine is excessive for individual homeowners.
- Does this really deal with the issue of foreclosed, neglected properties and absentee owners, or are they the most difficult to track down? What are other measures to identify and cite neglected property?
- The citation people are not trained in plant identification.

### 3. Greening and updating the code:

- Although this is a small code and matter, it might be seen as an indicator of environmental awareness. Other cities, such as Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Louis, and Madison, have addressed these issues to allow for and even encourage biodiversity in yards.
- Education on how to transition to an attractive, natural (not neglected) yard would be helpful. There are great resources on this topic, including the EPA website, our own Parks, ODOT, and local groups like the Civic Garden Center and Wild Ones.
- We agree that a taskforce, comprised of knowledgeable representatives of organizations like the Parks Department and other groups who have voiced concern, should review the ordinance and make recommendations for changes.