

FEBRUARY 11-12, 2025



**PLAN IT
NATIVE**
LANDSCAPES CONFERENCE



Presented by Deep Roots KC





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A MESSAGE FROM DEEP ROOTS KC

WELCOME TO PLAN IT NATIVE 2025!

Thank you for your passion and interest in native plants! At Deep Roots we say What You Plant Matters. There is no time in history when that has meant more. We hope this conference inspires you, expands your knowledge, and prepares you to plant and maintain more native plant landscapes!

Plan It Native 2025 spans the adjoining grounds of two valued partners, the Kauffman Family Foundation and the Missouri Department of Conservation. The path between the two spaces thrives even in the depths of winter. Seek out the winter blooming witch-hazel. American witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) blooms in the winter and keeps its petals, regardless of weather, for up to four weeks! In the evening, *Noctuidae*, owl moths, pollinate witch-hazel. These moths warm their bodies by shivering and fly around on cool winter nights.

As our days lengthen and get warmer, the grounds of the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center will bloom with native plant beauty throughout the growing season. Following Plan It Native, we hope you visit again and enjoy this amazing urban habitat.

Thank you, again, for joining Plan It Native 2025. Your passion is making the world a better place.

Stacia B. Stelk, Executive Director

P.J. Born, Land Manager

Chris Cardwell, Program Manager

Denna Nachlinger, Administrator and Conference Coordinator

Cydney Ross, Outdoor Education Program Manager

Grace Suh, Outreach and Marketing Manager

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KEYNOTES



OPENING KEYNOTE **NANCY LAWSON, AUTHOR, *THE HUMANE GARDENER***

A World of Discovery: Blending Science and Heart in the Sensory Wildscape

Much has been written about gardening for human senses, but how do plants and animals perceive the world around them? What do we miss when we landscape for human visual appeal but neglect the sensory experiences of our wild neighbors? Conventional gardening practices often interfere with animals' and plants' abilities to interact with their environment in ways we can scarcely imagine. Through science, heart, and our powers of observation, we can learn to mitigate these disruptions and create sensory refuges in an increasingly noisy world.



WHITE OAK AWARD MIDDAY KEYNOTE **SARA PARKER PAULEY**

Thriving Together: Missouri's Conservation Journey and the Enduring Legacy of Leopold's Land Ethic

In this keynote address, we will explore the vital role of individuals and organizations in shaping Missouri's conservation story across past, present, and future. Highlighting Aldo Leopold's enduring Land Ethic, we'll discuss its relevance not only in our shared past, but in today's environmental and conservation challenges. By reinvigorating our shared dedication to restoring and protecting our natural resources, we can revitalize our efforts towards cultivating a thriving ecosystem that serves both nature and society. Together, we hold the power to effect meaningful change and inspire hope and action in others, proving that when we prioritize the health of nature, we ensure a brighter future for all.



CLOSING KEYNOTE **DOUG LADD, AUTHOR OF *TALLGRASS PRAIRIE WILDFLOWERS: A FIELD GUIDE TO COMMON WILDFLOWERS AND PLANTS OF THE PRAIRIE MIDWEST***

Can Citizen-Based Restoration Initiatives Obviate Ecological Collapse? Promise and Limits in an Increasingly Threatened World

More people are aware of and engaged with conservation and utilization of native plants and vegetation. At the same time, threats to natural systems and their component organisms are increasing in type, scope, and severity. We'll explore what this means for a sustainable future for people and nature, and some key factors to consider as we move forward. Transitioning to a sustainable future embracing and celebrating our natural heritage means transforming perceptions across all segments of society.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Time • Details	Location
7:30-8:30am • REGISTRATION & EXHIBIT HALL	Discovery Center
8:30-9:30am • OPENING KEYNOTE	Discovery Center
Nancy Lawson: A World of Discovery: Blending Science and Heart in the Sensory Wildscape	Auditorium
10:15-11:05am • SESSION 1	Kauffman Center
Shannon Currey: Native Plant Solutions: Perennials for Shade	Kansas City
Alan Branhagen: Shrubs and Small Trees in Landscape Design & Ecosystem Function	Brush Creek
Rashid Poulson: Ecological Stewardship & Ethical Labor Management	Paseo
11:15am-12:05pm • SESSION 2	Kauffman Center
Nancy Lawson: Who's Nibbling in Your Garden?	Kansas City
Chris Oursler: Wild on Purpose – Observations, Experiments and Practice	Brush Creek
Justin Thomas: Wild Natives and Planted Natives: How Different Are They?	Paseo
12:15-1:15pm • LUNCH	Town Square & Troost
1:30-2:30pm • WHITE OAK AWARD MIDDAY KEYNOTE	Discovery Center
Sara Parker Pauley: Thriving Together: Missouri's Conservation Journey	Auditorium
2:30-2:50pm • LIGHT DESSERT AND SNACKS / EXHIBIT HALL OPEN	Discovery Center
3:00-3:50pm • SESSION 3	Kauffman Center
Fred Rozumalski: Understanding Public Perceptions of Native Vegetation and Landscaping	Troost
Guy Sternberg: Woody Plants and Pollinators	Brush Creek
Kristen Heath-Acre: The Reintroduction of the Brown-Headed Nuthatch to Missouri	Paseo
4:00-4:50pm • SESSION 4	Kauffman Center
Caleb Sanders & Nick Nelson: Green Infrastructure Maintenance	Troost
Jim Locklear: In the Country of the Kaw: Loving a Watershed	Brush Creek
Claudia Nuñez-Penichet: Areas for Conservation of Kansas Butterflies. What Can We Do?	Paseo
5:00-7:00pm • SOCIAL HOUR	Kauffman Center

TUESDAY MENU

LUNCH

Baked Cacciatore Pasta

Baked cacciatore pasta in a red sauce with vegetables served with seasonal vegetables, chicken on the side, garden salad with two dressings and garlic bread sticks (V, VG)

RECEPTION

Chardonnay, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, beer
 Stuffed cremini mushrooms (V)
 Hummus, pita & crudités (V, VG)
 Cheese assortment with crackers & fruit (V)

TUESDAY SESSIONS

SESSION 1

Native Plant Solutions: Perennials for Shade

Shannon Currey

Izel Native Plants,
Education & Outreach

Spend an hour getting to know some of the best go-to plants for building ecologically-sound landscapes. We'll take a deep dive into a handful of specific native plants, focusing on a landscape situation or plant adaptation that makes them particularly helpful. This session highlights native perennials for shady parts of the garden. Few plants grow in the full shade underneath evergreens, but there are many native perennials that thrive in less than full-sun conditions. Join us for a look at a range of options that will add beauty and ecological benefits to your landscape.

Shrubs and Small Trees in Landscape Design and Ecosystem Function

Alan Branhagen

Executive Director,
Natural Land Institute & Author

Explore the beauty, use in the landscape and ecosystem value of the Kansas City region's diverse native shrubs and small trees. These woody plants range in size from just a few feet to upwards of 20 feet. Learn how they fit the landscape in all four seasons and celebrate our spirit of place. From groundcovers to screens and accents they can solve many challenging landscape situations. Their role in the regional web-of-life and other ecosystem services will also be described so you can create a functional healthy and biodiverse habitat to live in.

Cultivating Communities: Ecological Stewardship and Ethical Labor Management

Rashid Poulson

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Horticultural Director

Brooklyn Bridge Park is one of the largest public investments to be completed in New York City in a generation and serves to connect people and nature through inclusive, innovative, and sustainable management and design. The park's gardens replicate native ecosystems and are managed with the intention of creating a valuable habitat for wildlife. The horticulture

department at BBP recognizes and supports the need for gardeners to blend new and old ideas in horticulture practices, resulting in successful and innovative techniques. This talk will address the department's staff management approaches, which empowers all employees' capabilities and passions for urban ecology and stewardship, while also supporting the park's most basic needs. Additionally, we will showcase some of the ecologically-minded gardening practices that help the park meet the needs of the wildlife that inhabit its gardens.

SESSION 2

Who's Nibbling in Your Garden?

Nancy Lawson

Author of *The Humane Gardener*

It's hard to imagine, but white-tailed deer were once nearly extinct in dozens of states. Their abundance now puts them at odds with most gardeners and homeowners, who become frustrated by the ineffectiveness of conventional and labor-intensive methods such as use of repellent sprays and so-called "deer-resistant" species that end up getting browsed. Add to the mix all the resident rabbits, squirrels, moles and groundhogs, and many gardeners are ready to throw in the trowel. But by understanding plant resistance and tolerance strategies as well as animal behaviors and natural histories, we can create resilient gardens that will support a diversity of vertebrate and invertebrate life in our home habitats. In this talk, discover how a combination of methods—including mixtures of preferred and unpalatable species, strategic plantings along well-used pathways, and gentle exclusion techniques—can help you trade resistance for peaceful coexistence.

Wild on Purpose – Observations, Experiments and Practice

Chris Oursler

DCA Outdoor,
Landscape and New Product Design

This presentation is a tour of the Kansas City Region's Biome. From rural Jackson County to Waldo, PlantRight has designed residential regenerative landscape projects over the past several years. These adaptive ecological landscapes address various degrees of disturbance commonly found in

the residential landscape sphere in an effort to find ecological and aesthetic balance. From highly disturbed new construction sites to legacy residential developments, the goal of regenerating our shared ecology can be achieved. These projects are a path forward to a cultural shift in our region's landscape design/build industry. Let's get Wild!

Wild Natives and Planted Natives: How Different Are They?

Justin Thomas

Institute of Botanical Training,
Director and Primary Instructor

Wild native plants and planted native plants almost always occur in different habitats. This talk will discuss the ecology, physiology, and culture that underpin the behaviors of native plants to better understand and appreciate how they enrich our communities.

SESSION 3

Understanding Public Perceptions of Native Vegetation and Landscaping: Working with "Neatniks" to Create Sustainable Native Landscapes

Fred Rozumalski

Barr Engineering Company,
Ecologist and Landscape Architect

It's been said that perception is reality. This is certainly evident when property owners perceive prairies to be unattractive and messy. Prairies established within residential or public landscapes are often destroyed because they do not meet people's aesthetic of neatness.

We are conditioned to identify property owners of highly manicured landscapes as good people who care about their property and the community. In our culture landscape neatness reflects upon the integrity of the property owner. But these very practices of creating landscape neatness—mowing, fertilizing, applying pesticides and watering—result in the unintentional ecological degradation of the very property for which the owner is trying to provide good stewardship.

By incorporating the aesthetic of neatness into native landscapes, designers and restorationists enable property owners

to take pride in the creation of diverse, ecologically-sound landscapes while providing good stewardship. Incorporating 'cues to care' such as clean, mown edges, blooming wildflowers, attractive fences and quality materials into prairie landscapes provides a level of neatness to satisfy our aesthetic and achieve our goals of sustainability and biodiversity.

Woody Plants and Pollinators

Guy Sternberg

Co-Founder Starhill Forest Arboretum and Author

Most of us think of bees, butterflies, and flower gardens when the word "pollinator" is mentioned. There is so much more to it than that, and our woody plants play a crucial role in the process. Learn about the processes of anemophily, zoophily, entomophily, cantharophily, ornithophily, chiropterophily, myophily versus sapromyophily, sonication, seasonality, nectivory versus pollenivory, and much more as you dive deeply into the part woody plants play in this popular subject.

The Reintroduction of the Brown-Headed Nuthatch to Missouri

Kristen Heath-Acre

Missouri State Ornithologist

As part of a holistic ecosystem restoration effort, conservation partners translocated 198 brown-headed nuthatches from Arkansas to restored pine woodland habitat in southern Missouri in the past 4 years. This talk reviews the history of this landscape, the habitat restoration efforts that ultimately made the reintroduction possible, and the habitat analysis that was done to justify this translocation event. It will also cover the translocation, the post-release monitoring, an update of how these nuthatches are doing, and plans for the future.

SESSION 4

Green Infrastructure Maintenance: Lessons Learned from the Fasnicht Creek Restoration Project at the Springfield Art Museum

Caleb Sanders

Springfield, Missouri Parks, Conservation Coordinator, Special Facilities

Nick Nelson

Springfield Art Museum, Director

Green infrastructure projects that utilize native plants and mimic natural ecological systems are quickly becoming a favorite for designers and engineers for urban places. These projects are able to mitigate water quality and other environmental issues while improving quality of place, affording green infrastructure development an exciting future in our state and region. Despite the success of proving the importance of green infrastructure in the public sphere, even with success in designing and installing these projects, maintenance is still too infrequently considered. This is often the cause of eventual project failure.

Nick and Caleb will discuss the maintenance of green infrastructure maintenance in the context of the Fasnicht Creek Restoration Project at the Springfield Art Museum. They will review failures and pitfalls and how to mitigate them at the outset of a major green infrastructure project. And, if you can't mitigate at the outset, or haven't, and are currently dealing with a failing or struggling green infrastructure project, they will suggest ways for turning these "failures" into opportunities for success, for sustainable maintenance, and vibrant projects.

In the Country of the Kaw: Loving a Watershed

Jim Locklear

Author of *In the Country of the Kaw* and Director of Conservation, Lauritzen Garden

In his recently published book, *In the Country of the Kaw* (University of Kansas

Press), Jim Locklear profiles the natural and cultural wonders within the watershed of the Kaw (Kansas) River, which arises on the High Plains of Colorado, Kansas, and Nebraska and joins the Missouri River in Kansas City. His presentation will give an overview of geology, landforms, woodlands, prairies, wildlife, and other aspects of natural history of the region, as well as how people past and present have interacted with the land. He will also highlight inspiring work in conservation, restoration, and revitalization in communities natural and human.

Areas for Conservation of Kansas Butterflies. What Can We Do?

Claudia Nuñez-Penichet

Presidential Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech

Butterflies play a crucial role in ecosystems as pollinators and indicators of environmental change, making their study essential for conservation efforts. In Kansas, the diverse array of butterfly species provides an ideal system for investigating ecological patterns, tracking ecosystem changes over time, and developing targeted conservation strategies. However, the lack of detailed knowledge of butterfly species' distributions across the state can affect the design and implementation of such strategies. We present potential distributional areas for butterfly species across the state, identifying regions of high species richness as well as under-sampled areas. Our investigation also highlights gaps in knowledge regarding species-specific habitat preferences and host plant associations. We particularly focus on butterfly species that rely on native plants, such as milkweed (*Asclepias spp.*), prairie clover (*Dalea spp.*), and blazing stars (*Liatris spp.*), underscoring the importance of preserving native prairie ecosystems. Additionally, this study emphasizes the role of community engagement in monitoring butterfly diversity as well as planting and preserving native host plants.



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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Time • Details	Location
8:30-9:30am • EXHIBIT HALL OPENS	Discovery Center
10:15-11:05am • SESSION 5	Kauffman Center
Fred Rozumalski: Understanding Public Perceptions of Native Vegetation and Landscaping	Kansas City
Guy Sternberg: Forest Ecology for Naturalists	Brush Creek
Rashid Poulson: Ecological Stewardship & Ethical Labor Management	Paseo
11:15am-12:05pm • SESSION 6	Kauffman Center
Chris Helzer: Prairie Stewardship in Today's World	Kansas City
Alan Branhagen: A Better Direction for Urban Tree Plantings	Brush Creek
Shannon Currey: Low-Resource Landscaping: Covering Ground with Native Plants	Paseo
12:15-1:15pm • LUNCH / DRKC OVERVIEW	Town Square & Troost
1:30-2:30pm • SESSION 7	Kauffman Center
Chris Helzer: Strategic Prairie Restoration for Conservation Success	Kansas City
Annabel Renwick: From Pocket Prairies to Native Plant Gardens	Brush Creek
Krista Noel: Landscaping for Missouri's Native Bees	Paseo
2:30-2:50pm • LIGHT DESSERT AND SNACKS / EXHIBIT HALL OPEN	Discovery Center
3:00-3:50pm • CLOSING KEYNOTE	Discovery Center
Doug Ladd: Can Citizen-Based Restoration Initiatives Obviate Ecological Collapse?	Auditorium

WEDNESDAY MENU

LUNCH

Sandwich Buffet

- Roasted Turkey: House-roasted turkey breast, provolone and mix greens with a dijonaise spread on whole grain bread
- California Chicken Club: Deli-sliced chicken breast, cheddar, bacon, lettuce, and tomato with an avocado spread on whole grain bread or as a wrap
- Portobello Wrap: Grilled portobello mushrooms, roasted red peppers, grilled asparagus & spinach with an herb aioli in a flour or lettuce tortilla wrap (V, VG)
- Served with a garden side salad (V, VG)

WEDNESDAY SESSIONS

SESSION 5

Low-Resource Landscaping: Covering Ground with Native Plants

Shannon Currey

Izel Native Plants,
Education & Outreach

Gardens are often designed in ways that require significant resources—water, fertilizer, pesticides, fuel, and labor. Conscientious gardeners are looking for ways to minimize these inputs and create a garden that instead adds ecological benefits while building resilience. This session series focuses on native plants for groundcovers. We'll talk about creating a living mulch that competes with weeds, reduces runoff and erosion, and provides support for wildlife. The goal is to add big benefits while reducing inputs. Learn about the strategies plants use to compete and cover ground, discuss species to look for in the landscape for inspiration, and work through how to make smart choices in your landscape.

Forest Ecology for Naturalists

Guy Sternberg

Co-Founder, Starhill Forest Arboretum,
author

Learn the basics of forest ecology and the options available to us for managing forests for natural values. We will review forest types and habitats, components of the forest, factors influencing forest composition, natural succession and cycles, goals of management, threats to forest ecosystems, and the nature and value of urban and community forests. Originally developed as a class for the Illinois Master Naturalist program and applicable to Illinois and other Midwest states.

Cultivating Communities: Ecological Stewardship and Ethical Labor Management

Rashid Poulson

Brooklyn Bridge Park, Horticultural Director

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New York City in a generation and serves to connect people and nature through inclusive, innovative, and sustainable management and design. The park's gardens replicate native ecosystems and are managed with the intention of creating a valuable habitat for wildlife. The horticulture department at BBP recognizes and supports the need for gardeners to blend new and old ideas in horticulture practices, resulting in successful and innovative techniques. This talk will address the department's staff management approaches, which empowers all employees' capabilities and passions for urban ecology and stewardship, while also supporting the park's most basic needs. Additionally, we will showcase some of the ecologically-minded gardening practices that help the park meet the needs of the wildlife that inhabit its gardens.



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SESSION 6

Prairie Stewardship in Today's World

Chris Helzer

The Nature Conservancy, Nebraska,
Director of Science and Stewardship;
Author

Gosh, it's a wild world out there, huh? The climate is changing, invasive species and woody plants are coming from every direction, and habitats are becoming increasingly fragmented. How are we supposed to save what's left of the prairie? There are so many tradeoffs to consider! If we burn frequently enough to stave off woody plants, we might lose many of our insects. Mowing can help suppress some invasives, but it can facilitate others. What to do? It's important to recognize your available options, be clear about your objectives, and act, learn, and adapt. We'll discuss a range of potential objectives and strategies that might apply to the situation you find yourself in. We'll also talk about adapting expectations for what "high-quality prairie" is, given today's conditions. Prairies are resilient, but they rely on human stewardship to stay that way—just as they have for millennia.

A Better Direction for Urban Tree Plantings

Alan Branhagen

Executive Director,

Natural Land Institute & Author

Learn issues and hear guidance towards creating a more biodiverse and climate resilient urban forest that benefits not just us humans, but creates a landscape rich in all of life. Urban forests should not only mitigate heat islands caused by all the man-made materials but be a life-giving stopover to the billion migrating songbirds that fly overhead each spring and fall season. Learn from past mistakes and reflect on ongoing challenges to plant a future urban forest that will enrich our communities into the future and provide the benefits of its full potential of ecosystem services.

Understanding Public Perceptions of Native Vegetation and Landscaping: Working with "Neatniks" to Create Sustainable Native Landscapes

Fred Rozumalski

Barr Engineering Company,
Ecologist and Landscape Architect

It's been said that perception is reality. This is certainly evident when property owners perceive prairies to be unattractive and messy. Prairies established within residential or public landscapes are often destroyed because they do not meet people's aesthetic of neatness.

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SESSION 7

Strategic Prairie Restoration for Conservation Success

Chris Helzer

The Nature Conservancy, Nebraska,
Director of Science and Stewardship;
Author

There are lots of ways prairie restoration can enhance the conservation of grasslands. Are you trying to enlarge and/or reconnect existing prairie fragments? Do you want to create a site that will draw the public in and turn them into prairie enthusiasts? Is it your aim to build quality habitat for pollinators, grassland birds, or other animals? Whatever your objectives, it's crucial to think strategically about how best to design and evaluate your project based on what you actually want to achieve. You don't have to

create a prairie that looks like the one across the road or the one that existed 200 years ago. Instead, you should strive to create a prairie that will establish and adapt in the climate-crazy, fragmented world of today. That requires thoughtful planning and a willingness to let go of rigid preconceptions of what a restored prairie should look like.

From Pocket Prairies to Native Plant Gardens, a Journey in Management and Public and Professional Responses

Annabel Renwick

Curator, Blomquist Garden of Native Plants

Why is it so hard to grow and maintain native herbaceous perennials in the landscape? Dr. Annabel Renwick, who is British, has gardened in the Blomquist Garden of Native Plants at Duke University in North Carolina for the past 14 years. In this talk Annabel will discuss the changing attitude of public and professional gardeners to creating and managing landscapes that contain native herbaceous perennials and will draw on her experience with three projects from Duke Gardens.

Landscaping for Missouri's Native Bees

Krista Noel

Missouri Dept of Conservation,
Kansas City Regional Natural History
Biologist

The benefit bees provide pollinating our food crops is well known but these keystone species also increase biodiversity and are a part of complex food webs. A little more than half of known bee species are scientifically described, and bees are declining worldwide. Considering their importance for food production and ecosystem function it is imperative that this disturbing trend be reversed. Studies have shown that even small-scale landscaping for native bees, such as yards, vacant lots in cities, and rooftop gardens can make a difference in bee diversity and abundance. Missouri has approximately 452 bee species that vary in their flower preferences, nesting needs, activity periods, and appearance. Native garden beds can be planted, in sun and shade, inexpensively to provide a beautiful view in every season and food, shelter, and nesting sites for a myriad of native bee species.

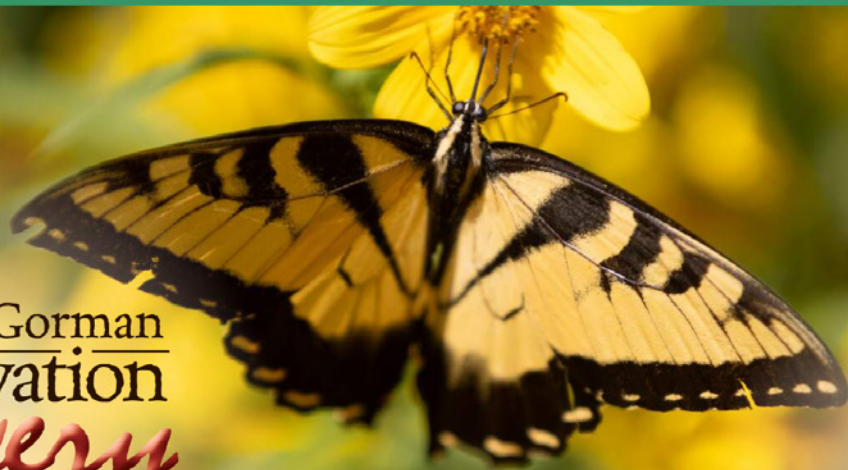
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Get involved with Deep Roots throughout the year!

“Thanks again for arming us with the tools to get going. It now feels achievable — which I’m assuming was your whole point!”

Nature Advisors

A nature inspiration and consultation service
 Nature Advisors volunteer consultants span the metro, meet with residents, tour their properties, and then offer detailed guidance in person and in a written report. Request a consultation or share your knowledge and help more people choose native plants!



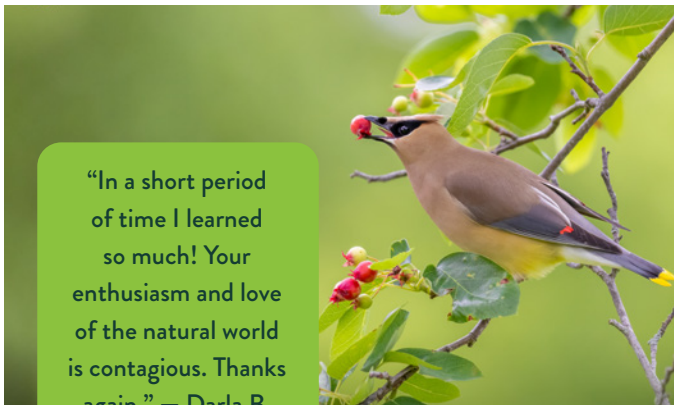
“I thought the tours were fantastic. I’m a master gardener in Johnson County and this was one of the best, consistent learning opportunities I’ve had in a long time.”

Habitat Garden Tours

Join us and get inspired! Join the 2025 Habitat Garden tours for a panoramic sweep of the native flora that support our birds, bees, and butterflies.

Nominate a garden, volunteer, or join a tour!

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“In a short period of time I learned so much! Your enthusiasm and love of the natural world is contagious. Thanks again.” — Darla B.

Discover Native Gardening

At the Anita B. Gorman Conservation Discovery Center

Feel empowered – Enjoy Camaraderie
 Learn Seasonal Skills



“Your programs are full of great useful information, and I appreciate having ideas for using natives in my small gardens.” — Christine B.

Webinars

Deep Roots Native Plant Webinars bring together experts on the first and third Thursdays of each month to talk about all things native plants!



Get involved and learn more at www.deeproots.org.

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