

Gardener's Pathway Planning Committee  
Meeting Minutes of March 18, 2026  
10:00 a.m. at the DeKalb County Extension Office

In-person attendance: Connie Handel, Jane School, Karen Irwin, Cary Singer, Richard Dreier, and Steve Worley

Zoom attendance: Ron Rood, Lee Kouski, and Janice Weber

Minutes by: Janice Weber

**Important Dates:**

**Wednesday, April 22, 2026** at 10 a.m. – next committee meeting

**February 27, 2027** – next annual Gardener's Pathway event

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the annual Gardener's Pathway event held on Saturday, February 28, 2026 and to review the attendee evaluations and topic suggestions. Approximately 160 people attended and approximately 79 evaluations were turned in. The evaluation results were compiled by Jane School.

**1. Overall Day:**

- The majority of attendees indicated that the day had exceeded their expectations.
- Many liked the facility.

**2. Things that could be improved - General:**

- Some of the breakout sessions were not what attendees expected because some titles did not accurately describe the content.
- Registration forms were missing for about 6 people, but we took care of it.
- The registration system was difficult to work with.
- Evaluation collection - Collect more by having hosts, at the last breakout, remind people to leave them on the table as they leave the room.
- Some attendees didn't go to registration first, but went right to vendor tables.
- Some attendees asked for a "Make-and-Take" session.

**3. Lunch:**

- Food quality was very good. Consider having buffet again next year.
- Advantage of buffet: no waste from sandwich boxes.
- Advantage of box lunches: Sweet Dreams will label boxes with attendee names.
- Lunch line was long but moved quickly. Consider two rows of food tables with both sides available. Consider recommending that some attendees visit vendors first.
- Attendees needed to know about other places where they could sit to eat lunch.
- Tea bags – move the tea bags, put them all out at once, and provide more hot water.
- Were some veggie sandwich issues. There were 47 requests for veggie sandwiches. Many vegetarians/vegans are used to navigating buffets. Have hummus and cheese available. Could label which salads are vegan and gluten free.
- Had lots of food left over, especially salads and desserts, and almost a full tray of macaroni salad. Imbodens is especially generous. (Cut back order from them next time.) Ran out of cheese and pretzel rolls. Mini-bite desserts had great variety.
- There was additional discussion about the pros and cons of area lunch providers.

#### **4. Vendors:**

- Vendors were good. They were pleased with the day. Worm casting vendor and Fearless Gardener want to come back.

#### **5. Keynote and Speakers:**

- Rotate through best Keynotes from the past. Bring back Richard Hawke.
- Speakers who use a Mac should be reminded to bring everything they will need to hookup. Recommend they come in a week ahead to try their hookup. There is no IT staff available at the Farm Bureau. Let speakers know this on their sign-up form.

#### **6. Topic Suggestions:**

- "Make-and-Take"
- Common plant diseases
- How to amend soil
- Succulents and rock gardens
- More aspects of Design
- Maintaining a healthy garden
- Native plant varieties and differences between natives and cultivars
- Container gardening
- Houseplants
- Floral arranging
- Conifers
- Winter sowing
- Garlic and shallots
- Edible landscaping
- Preserving and freezing food

#### **7. Additional Topic Suggestions provided by Jane School from a Seattle Workshop:**

- Where to buy local food
- Invasive species
- Worms
- Ancient wisdom
- Make-and-take air plants or miniature gardens
- Strawberries
- Vines
- Integrated pest management
- Water-wise habits
- How to correct pruning mistakes
- Dahlias
- Slugs and snails
- Ground cover
- Living mulch
- Planting under trees.

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