

2025 Gateway Green Conference

Class Descriptions

SESSION I - 8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

A. Urban Forestry and Climate Change – *Justin Vozzo*

Our Urban Forests are being affected by changing climatic conditions, but also play a crucial role in both mitigating and adapting to these shifting climate conditions. Explore how trees interact with and affect the environment from the individual level up to the regional scale.

Learn about the factors influencing and stressing our urban trees as well as how they can help us cope with a changing planet.

B. Healthy Soils in the Home Landscape – *Karla Griesbaum*

The importance of healthy soil is not confined to agriculture systems or natural areas management. It is just as important in the home landscape. Soils support the plant population within the home landscape, supplement surrounding natural areas, alleviate common landscaping issues, and improve whole ecosystem function in residential areas. Managing soil structure and content can differ depending on the living communities it is supporting. A balanced soil ecosystem also helps lead to resiliency in a changing world.

SESSION II - 9:10 - 10:10 a.m.

C. New and Upcoming Tree Pests: Spotted Lanternfly, Elm Zigzag Sawfly, and Other Exotic Critters – *Fredric Miller*

This session will focus on the latest information on the spotted lanternfly, zigzag sawfly, and other important invasive exotic pests and an update on what to expect in 2025.

D. Engaging and Empowering Volunteers for Ecological Stewardship: HeartLands Conservancy Volunteer Programs – *Anna McAtee*

HeartLands Conservancy will discuss how to engage volunteers in impactful ecological stewardship. The session will highlight regular restoration workdays and unique opportunities such as bluebird monitoring and "watering warriors". Additionally, the conversation will explore how investing in volunteer skills through ongoing training - ranging from chainsaw safety to tool maintenance - can empower individuals to undertake special projects for your organization and foster stewardship in their own communities.

SESSION II - 9:10 - 10:10 a.m. Cont'd

E. Creating Native Plant Buffers to Control Geese – *Susan Helm*

Learn how to control geese, support pollinators and improve soil and water health, including erosion control, around open water like ponds, rivers, and streams using native plants. Susan will take you through a Springfield, IL parks project that has been continuing over the last three years at Washington Park. Any community struggling with controlling geese and people feeding them despite warnings not to will appreciate this story and the "how to's" of doing it.

SESSION III - 10:20 - 11:20 a.m.

F. Getting to the Root of Tree Problems – *Sarah Vogel*

Trees in the urban landscape encounter many challenges throughout their lives. When challenges compound, decline is inevitable. The first step in managing tree problems is diagnosis, which can be complex. Using a systematic approach may help identify inconspicuous yet important factors.

G. Managing the Pesky Critters In and Around Your Home and Gardens – *Matthew Springer*

Many wildlife species call Illinois and the Midwest home. Often homeowners and gardeners are happy seeing them outside as long as they do not cause damage to their property, gardens, and landscaping. Dr. Springer will cover multiple ways you can help attract wildlife to where you want them and how to help discourage them from being where you don't want to see them. Multiple different management options will be presented and their strengths and weaknesses discussed.

H. Choosing Edible Species for Planting in Public Spaces – *Nick Frillman and Elizabeth Wahle*

Choosing edible plants for human consumption in public spaces involves many considerations. From disease resistance, IPM, pest prevalence, growing zone, and more, we'll help you dial in your decision-making. Discussion will focus on several species of shrubs and trees that should work well in most public planting environments and spaces. Finally, a brief case study of one such edible landscaping environment will be presented – the Refuge Food Forest in Normal, Illinois – to drive home the message.

**LUNCH ON YOUR OWN
11:20 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

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SESSION IV - 12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

I. Chainsaw Safety and Maintenance Demonstration – Kevin Rohling

Proper maintenance techniques, tools, and practices for chainsaw safety and maintenance will be discussed and demonstrated. Topics of discussion will include fuel and oil considerations, chain sharpening options and techniques, bar maintenance, chainsaw safety features, filters, maintenance schedules, and maintenance tools.

J. Native Grasses in Landscaping – Erin Garrett

Grasses are often low maintenance, four-season interest plants that can help fill out a landscape design. With the increased availability of native grasses for purchase, which ones should you use and where? Come learn which native grasses work best for formal landscape beds and more naturalized settings. Native grass alternatives for non-native and invasive grasses currently planted ornamentally will also be discussed.

K. Beyond the Faucet – Darci Webber

Water is a vital natural resource for all people and living organisms worldwide. While the global water crisis continues to persist, we can intentionally recognize comprehensive strategies for water efficiency while optimizing water use in our gardens and homes. Discover key practices, such as utilizing rain barrels, to slow the rate of water running out of our faucets and create more sustainable practices in our communities.

SESSION V - 1:40 - 2:40 p.m.

L. Post Cicada Invasion: Are My Trees in Trouble? – Tricia Bethke

The presentation will explore the fascinating relationship between cicadas and trees. Learn how these noisy insects impact tree health, from the potential damage caused by their feeding and egg-laying to the broader ecological role they play. The program will also cover strategies to improve tree health and vigor.

M. Staying Inside the Lines: Best Practices for Firebreak Design – Chris Evans

Prescribed fire is an important management tool in forests and grasslands. A well designed and correctly installed firebreak is the first line of defense in keeping your burn safe and effective. This presentation will cover the basics of firebreak placement, installation, design tools, and techniques.

SESSION V - 1:40 - 2:40 p.m. Cont'd

N. What's the Buzz with Bee Hotels?: Common Misconceptions About Pollinator Conservation – Eliza Pessereau

The recent news about the global pollinator decline has inspired gardeners, landscapers, and farmers alike to prioritize pollinator conservation in their management. While most of these recommendations (for example growing native plants or leaving leaves for overwintering habitat) were initially backed by science, over time many have been diluted or misconstrued, such as messages that conflate European honey bee decline with the decline of native bees in the US. This talk will walk through common misconceptions about pollinator conservation (does not mowing your lawn actually help bees? Should everyone be using bee hotels? Spoiler alert: its more work than you think!) and give audience members science-backed recommendations to support our furry flying friends.

SESSION VI - 2:50 - 3:50 p.m.

O. A Day in the Life of an Arborist: Identifying Preventable Tree Issues – Aaron Schulz

Tree are valuable assets designed to survive for decades to centuries, depending on species. However, not everything goes according to plan to due to human error. This session will look at preventable tree issues observed by a Consulting Arborist and how to mitigate them, beginning in the nursery. Topics covered include: structural pruning, species & site selection, planting practices, and field identification of manageable tree issues.

P. Keeping an Eye on Invasive Species as Climate Shifts – Amy Lefringhouse

Many of us have encountered invasive species firsthand—whether it's an invasive carp leaping into your boat or the sweat dripping down your brow as you struggle to clear another Amur honeysuckle bush from your property. With our climate shifting, what effects can we expect on invasive species? This session will explore key topics such as changes in invasiveness, expanding habitat ranges, adaptation to disturbances, and the emergence of new invasive threats. Join us to gain insights into how these species respond to changing environmental conditions and learn about useful tools for their detection and management.