Creating the Home Garden

Peter Zale, Longwood Gardens

9:00AM-9:50AM

Starting with two box trucks containing a carefully curated collection of potted plants and a sloping half acre of turf and weeds in southeastern Pennsylvania, I was able fulfill a longtime desire to create a home botanical garden. Established in 2015, the main purpose of the garden was to reflect my intense interests in collecting and propagating plants from a combination of botanical field work around the globe, specialty nurseries from around the country and the world, and U.S. native species worthy of cultivation for their ornament, intrigue, and cultural importance. The collections are united by common goals of using the collection to illustrate the incredible range of plants hardy in zone 6, the importance and joy of propagating plants, the value of growing plants “with data”, and to illustrate the need for conservation of plants and their habitats. After 8 years, my original vision for the garden is coming to fruition through the creation of different garden spaces and microhabitats that include an extensive woodland garden, a crevice garden, bog gardens, perennial borders, numerous woody plants, and a small alpine house that all together support an ever-expanding collection of over 2000 different kinds of plants, mainly propagated from my own seed propagation efforts. This presentation will discuss the development of the garden, trials and tribulations encountered along the way, some of my propagation techniques, introduce some favorite plant groups that can be embraced by gardeners from a range of different climates, and hopefully convince you that creating a home botanical garden is something you need to do.

Peter Zale, Ph.D holds a Master’s degree and Ph.D in plant breeding and genetics (2009, 2014) from The Ohio State University and is currently Associate Director, Conservation Horticulture and Plant Breeding, at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, PA. In this position he leads the plant exploration, breeding, and conservation programs through a combination of field, garden, and laboratory-based activities. His main efforts at Longwood have centered around development of a comprehensive conservation horticulture program focused on native orchids of the U.S. and planning and participation in over 30 plant exploration expeditions throughout the U.S., East Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and equatorial Africa. In his spare time, he has been creating his own “private botanical garden” with extensive collections of hardy geophytes and orchids, woodland plants, trees, shrubs, and a variety of other plants that reflect personal plant exploration efforts and interest in propagating plants from seeds.
A Few of My (New) Favorite Plants
Richard Hawke, Chicago Botanic Garden
9:50AM-10:40AM

New is important—as gardeners, it is what excites us and makes us drool over nursery catalogs and gardening magazines every winter. Unfortunately, being new does not necessarily mean good. Richard Hawke has spent his career trialing plants—many new plants are tested every year at the Chicago Botanic Garden for their overall performance. Do these new plants have a good habit? Do they get diseases easily? Do they come back reliably after a harsh winter (or four winters)? Richard will share some “new” plants that have done well in the trials—plants that he feels confident enough to recommend to gardeners—and have become some of his favorites.

Richard Hawke is Director of Ornamental Plant Research at the Chicago Botanic Garden and responsible for the breeding, evaluation, and introduction programs, and has managed the plant evaluation program since 1985. Richard has a horticulture degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is an instructor for the School of the Chicago Botanic Garden, the author of Plant Evaluation Notes, and is an author and contributing editor for Fine Gardening. In 2005, Richard received the Perennial Plant Association’s Academic Award for teaching excellence, and the Scott Medal and Award in 2022 from the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College. The Plant Evaluation Program received the Award for Program Excellence from the American Public Garden Association in 2008. Richard is currently president-elect on the board of directors of the Perennial Plant Association.

Working with Perennials at Walter’s Gardens
Hans Hansen, Walter’s Gardens
11:10AM-12:00PM

A humorous and practical tour of the display gardens and Walters Gardens, the nation’s largest wholesale producer of bareroot perennials. Join Hans as he covers the gardens from creation to completion using perennials developed in Michigan. Highlights include a bog garden, urbanite crevice garden, shade garden, and perennial garden designed with color echos in mind.

Hans Hansen is a passionate gardener with humble roots from a small dairy farm in southwest Minnesota. Crazy about plants from a young age he has grown and hybridized perennials most of his life. Currently he is director of Research and Development at Walters Gardens in Zeeland, Michigan where he concentrates on over 70 genera of plants trying to improve garden performance and landscaping value. He has introduced over 500 plants from various breeding endeavors and botanizing expeditions. His blend of humor and practicality will send listeners home with ideas for their home gardens.
Plants I Loved Until I Didn’t
Holly Scoggins, Saunders Brothers Nursery
1:00PM-1:50PM
“You MUST try this.” “Here, take some of that with you – let me get the shovel!” Holly falls for it every time. After decades of gardening, she has plenty of favorites, but it’s helpful (and fun) to examine some flops: rowdy spreaders, expensive rarities where the tag becomes a tombstone, and the ol’ right plant, wrong place (whoops). When herbicide proves ineffective, and the failures are starting to stack up... moving away seems a plausible alternative.

Holly Scoggins, Ph.D. recently retired after 20 years as Virginia Tech Horticulture faculty with teaching, research, extension, and garden administration responsibilities. She’s currently employed as the Program Manager for NewGen® Boxwood, proudly serves as president of the Perennial Plant Association, and writes and presents on a broad range of topics for growers, landscape professionals, and gardeners. In the spirit of “never stop learning,” she’ll a) try to grow just about anything and b) remains a sucker for a good symposium. In her spare time, Holly and her husband also run a U-pick blueberry farm and apiary in the mountains of southwest Virginia.

American Roots
Nick McCullough, Garden Designer/Author
1:50PM-2:40PM
Follow the journey across the US and take a closer look at gardens that designer Nick McCullough captured on his quest to celebrate the American garden in his new book AMERICAN ROOTS (Timber Press). You will explore a selection of gardens created by 20 creative gardeners across our vast land from Big Sur, California to the shores of Rhode Island. Gain inspiration, planting tips, and an expanded notion of what an American garden is.

Award-winning garden designer Nick McCullough has developed a distinctive style he calls Midwest Modern, one that relies on a balance of natural paving and innovative perennial plantings. Based in Ohio, he and his team at McCullough’s Landscape & Nursery create and maintain plant centric gardens in and around the Midwest that are both ecologically sensitive and family-forward. His first book American Roots which he co-authored with his wife Allison and Teresa Woodard has recently been published by Timber Press.
Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden’s Plant Trials Day

Exciting New Woodies We’ve Trialed and a Look into the Future
Steve Foltz, CZBG
3:10PM-4:00PM
Steve Foltz will review a wide cross section of excellent new woody plants that have been trialed at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden in recent years and will also discuss even newer selections we hope to trial in the near future. As always, the adaptability and function of these selections will be assessed along with their good looks.

As the Director of Horticulture at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, Steve Foltz is responsible for one of the area’s finest botanical gardens. As such, the CZBG trials many new plants, from annuals to tall shade trees. Steve’s extensive experience is widely-known and respected throughout botanical and green industry circles.

A graduate of the University of Kentucky with a B.S. in Ornamental Horticulture, he is currently teaching Horticulture at both Cincinnati State Technical and Community College and at the University of Cincinnati. Steve has been a member of the Ohio Plant Selection Committee, serving as Chair of the committee for two years. He is also a member of the Kentucky Plant Selection Committee for the Theodore Klein Award and a member of the International Plant Propagators Society, Eastern Region. Steve was the 2015 recipient of the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association’s highest award, the Distinguished Contributor Award.

Houseplants: A Look at What is New, Interesting, & Unexpected Uses for Predictable Indoor Plants
Liz Hughes, Groovy Plants Ranch
4:00PM-4:50PM
Groovy Plants Ranch is a garden center in Central Ohio known for its extensive selection of indoor and outdoor plants. Liz & Jared Hughes are the masterminds behind this one-of-a-kind plant-lovers destination. They will share with you some of the new and exciting introductions in the houseplant market. They will also share how to use houseplants in other applications, such as mixed annual planters and porch décor.

Liz Hughes is the owner of Groovy Plants Ranch along with her husband Jared. Liz has her MFA in fine art and was an art teacher for 10 years before joining Jared at Groovy Plants Ranch. Together they have built a business that is known for its excellent selection, cleanliness, friendly and knowledgeable staff, and eccentric details like a hippie van. Liz teaches most of the fun and education at The Ranch, creates educational content for online customers, and coordinates most of the onsite events. Liz was chosen by GPN as Forty under 40 2021. Liz, Jared, and Groovy Plants Ranch have been featured in my digital and print media including Midwest Living, Better Homes and Gardens, Greenhouse House Grower, GPR and many others. Liz wears many hats around the ranch, and through her leadership and professional edge, she is paving the way forward for The Ranch and helping others grow in the process.