

# *Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden's*

## **Native Plant Symposium**

*Talk Descriptions and Speaker Biographies*

November 22, 2025

### **Ohio's Most Imperiled and Unusual Plants and Places**

#### **Andrew Lane Gibson, Ohio Dept. Nat. Resources, 9:00AM-9:50AM**

A photo essay of plants and places 99% of Ohioans don't ever see due to rarity, access, and fragile habitat. This program will be filled with information, loaded with incredible photos, and also a few tales of adventure. The approach will be something different and fresh. This talk will leave you in awe of our native Ohio flora and inspired to explore! It will also have you looking with a sharp eye at your garden with the intent to do more!

*Andrew Lane Gibson works as a field botanist and ecologist for the Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves where he primarily surveys, monitors, and manages Ohio's rare flora and habitats. He's a proud lifelong Ohioan and cherishes the opportunity to share her beauty and biodiversity. He holds a B.S. in plant biology and ecology from Ohio University in Athens, as well as an A.S. in wildlife management and biology from Hocking College. His biggest botanical passion and areas of expertise are the Orchidaceae, Cyperaceae, Pteridophyta, and the rare/unusual. He is blessed to do what I love and love what I do. His blog site, The Buckeye Botanist, is a must visit site for lovers of Ohio and its flora*

<https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/nature-preserves/botanical-symposium/speakers/gibson>

<https://floraofohio.blogspot.com/>

### **Our Gardens are Microcosms of America**

#### **Panayoti Kelaidis, Denver Botanical Garden, 9:50AM-10:40AM**

A home garden contains a rich array of microclimates that can accommodate a wide range of native plants. In fact, our gardens can harbor native plants from an array of wild habitats (some near, some much further away)—and some are already sanctuaries for special selections and forms that are no longer found in the wild. Not quite Noah's Ark, our gardens are nevertheless Microcosms of America: your South facing wall is effectively more Arizona, and the North Wall more like Alaska than what might have grown on your property in Pre-Columbian times.

*Panayoti Kelaidis is a plant explorer, gardener and public garden administrator associated with Denver Botanic Gardens where he is now Senior Curator and Director of Outreach. He began his career at DBG in 1980 as curator of the Rock Alpine Garden, where he designed and oversaw the initial plantings of this extensive garden. Garden Design Magazine has rated this garden as the best public rock garden in North America. He has designed plantings for many of the gardens at DBG, as well as being part of the design team at Centennial Garden (a 5-acre formal garden consisting primarily of drought tolerant native plants) and has designed the Watersmart knot gardens at Denver's Civic Center as part of Denver Mayor Hickenlooper's Water Conservation initiative.*

*Panayoti has introduced hundreds of native ornamentals from throughout the Western United States to general horticulture. He has taken five collecting trips to South Africa researching the high mountain and steppe flora there, as well as travels to the Andes, the Himalaya (Pakistan, Sikkim, Tibet and China), as well as travels throughout much of Europe, Central Asia (Uzbekistan, Mongolia and Kazakhstan) the Caucasus and Turkey. Perhaps the best known of Panayoti's introductions are the many showy hardy ice plants: several dozen of these are now available at garden centers across America and in other parts of the world.*

*In addition to introducing a host of exotic plants to general horticulture, Panayoti has been a champion of Western native plants. He was the second secretary of the Colorado Native Plant Society, and past president of the American Penstemon Society. He has explored the Western mountains from Alaska to southern Mexico, collecting seeds of more than a thousand kinds of Western American wild plants for Denver Botanic Gardens' collections and for research and study.*

*Panayoti has been party to the discovery of a number of species of plants new to science including In 1980 he pressed the first specimens of a lady's tress orchid in Golden that was subsequently to be named *Spiranthes diluvialis* by Charles Sheviak. In 1987 John Lavranos sent Panayoti an Aizoaceae he collected on Komsberg Pass in South Africa which Panayoti subsequently shared with John Trager at the Huntington Botanical Garden, and finally Steve Hammer. This taxon was finally recognized as *Delosperma sphalmanthoides* by Hammer. In March of 1996 Panayoti and Jim Archibald collected a specimen of an undetermined *Moraea* on Mount-aux-Sources, Orange Free State, South Africa which Peter Goldblatt determined to be a new species (*Moraea vigilans*). Several more of his south African collections are undergoing evaluation as likely new species to be published in the coming years.*

*Panayoti takes particular pride in sharing the plants and information he accrues through many channels: he has lectured in nearly 150 cities in nine countries, and has been featured in dozens of television, newspaper and magazine pieces.*

*He has been inducted in 2000 to the Colorado Nursery and Greenhouse Growers Hall of Fame. In 2004 he received the Boulder History Museum's 60 Year Living History award, in 2003 by being inducted into the Garden Club of America as Member-at-Large, in 2002 he received the National Garden Clubs Medal of Honor and in 2000 he received the Arthur Hoyt Scott Medal from the Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore College. He has received three of the North American Rock Garden Society's awards over the last two decades. In 2009 he received the Liberty Hyde Bailey award of the American Horticultural Society.*

*He believes that gardening is humanity's best way to gain an appreciation of nature and natural processes. In an increasingly urbanized and polluted world, horticulture is, perhaps, the best way to create a sustainable future for mankind and our planet.*

<https://www.botanicgardens.org/>

<https://prairiebreak.blogspot.com/>

## **Knockout Natives – The Best of the Best from 2022-2025**

### **Sam Hoadley, Mt. Cuba Center, 11:00AM – 11:50AM**

Join Sam Hoadley, the Manager of Horticultural Research at Mt. Cuba Center, as he highlights knockout native species and cultivars from the highly respected native plant trials at Mt. Cuba Center. Top performers and favorites of *Carex*, *Amsonia*, *Solidago* and *Vernonia* represent some of the best native plants for Eastern North American gardens. Sam will discuss their horticultural and ecological performance and will share important information on standouts that will make beautiful additions to your garden. (Note: this talk is an update of the presentation Sam made for the CZBG in 2021.)

*Sam Hoadley is the Manager of Horticultural Research at Mt. Cuba Center where he evaluates native plant species, old and new cultivars, and hybrids in the Trial Garden. Sam earned his degree in Sustainable Landscape Horticulture from the University of Vermont.*

<https://mtcubacenter.org/>

## **Solution Driven Plants, Tried and True with a Splash of New!**

### **Arden Pontasch, North Creek Nurseries, 12:50PM-1:40PM**

This plant-packed lecture will highlight the newest of the new, pay homage to a select assortment of tried-and-true classics, all while featuring problem-solving perennials for even the toughest of garden conditions. From plant trials to retail benches, join Arden for a peek into the fast-paced world of perennial plant evaluations, propagation, and how new selections are brought to market.

*Arden Pontasch is the Plant Trials Manager at North Creek Nurseries, a wholesale propagation nursery with a strong emphasis on Eastern US native plants and their cultivars. She serves on the Board for the Ecological Landscape Alliance, is the Regional Director for the Mid-Atlantic Region for the Perennial Plant Association and serves on the Government Relations Committee for the Pennsylvania Landscape & Nursery Association. Arden holds a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies from the University of Toledo, Ohio, and has dedicated herself to the Green Industry (with experience in both private and public sectors) for 20 years. Above all, Arden is passionate about connecting people with nature, which has led her on a never-ending path of exploring plants and their role in shaping the world around us.*

<https://www.northcreeknurseries.com/>

## **Successfully Growing Native Plants in Typical Urban & Suburban Sites**

### **Steve Foltz, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, 1:40PM – 2:30PM**

There is a lot of talk out there that suggests or even claims that native plants—because they are native—are adapted to, well, anywhere. You’ve probably heard it: They have deeper roots. You can plant them in any soil, even without proper soil preparation. They will out-compete. Etc. All this is at best an over-simplification and at worst misinformation. In gardens, native plants have all the needs of any other kinds of plants. Therefore, choosing the right species and selections is paramount to success. So is building soils that can support a diversity of them, and, of course, proper follow-up care and maintenance. This pragmatic talk will go straight to facts and present all the basics and beyond for how to achieve all your garden goals using garden-worthy and high-functioning native plants.

*As the Director of Horticulture at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, **Steve Foltz** is responsible for one of the area's finest botanical gardens. 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 board 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.*

<https://cincinnati-zoo.org/gardens/>

## **Native Bees and the Habitats They Require**

### **Brannen Basham, Spriggly's Beescaping, 2:50PM-3:40PM**

In this talk, European honeybees take a back seat to the almost 4,000 species of bees native to North America. Learn about the lives of these pollination juggernauts through an exploration of common species and the habitat each requires for nesting and survival. From the largest to the smallest, native bees are fascinating and extremely beneficial. Supporting them in your spaces is easier than you might think. This presentation offers approaches you can infuse into your everyday gardening that make a huge difference to the bees and other beneficial wildlife around you.

*Brannen Basham, with his wife Jill Jacobs, owns Spriggly's Beescaping, a nature education and habitat restoration business from Western North Carolina. Brannen is a horticulturist and landscape designer who cut his teeth in the native gardens at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, PA and the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC. Jill is a graphic designer and museum educator who began her career at Please Touch Museum - the Children's Museum of Philadelphia.*

*Brannen presents regularly on a variety of nature-based topics, including pollinator-focused presentations with the Organic Grower's School, Cullowhee Native Plant Conference, and WNC Gardening Symposium, along with writing for local, regional, and national publications. Brannen has also published two books, a non-fiction collection of nature articles, *A Guide to the Wonderful World Around Us* and a children's book co-authored with his wife, *Finding Home: A Story of a Mason Bee*.*

*They have an online course series, called *Gardening for the Planet*, that features over 16 hours of on-demand beneficial wildlife and sustainable gardening content. In addition, Spriggly's creates educational signage and interactive exhibits that expand upon and highlight important conservation topics.*

*On the habitat restoration side of their business, they offer services to homeowners, businesses, and municipalities, focused on designing and implementing spaces to support pollinators, wildlife, and the ecosystem around them. Visit some of the public pollinator gardens he's designed and installed at Frog Level Brewing in Waynesville and 7 Clans Brewing in Asheville, along with a rain and pollinator garden at the Haywood County Arts Council.*

<https://sprigglys.com/>

## **Building a Better Monarch Butterfly Garden**

**Dr. Daniel Potter, 3:40PM - 4:30PM**

This talk will help attendees to better understand why Monarch butterflies are in peril, why their conservation matters, and how the gardening public can help to restore this beloved native butterfly to sustainable status. It covers the monarch's fascinating natural history, including its spectacular long-distance migrations and special relationship with milkweed, as well as best milkweed species and nectar plants for supporting monarchs and bees in small gardens. Recent research showing that garden design and placement matters, and that cultivars of native milkweeds ("nativars") have conservation value for gardens, will be discussed, as well as how to prevent a garden from becoming an "ecological trap" due to predation by invasive wasps or planting the wrong type of milkweed. Consumer demand for milkweed seedlings and nectar plants is burgeoning. This webinar will help Master Gardeners and other educators to better advise the public about gardening for monarchs and other pollinators.

*Daniel A. Potter, PhD, is Professor Emeritus of Entomology at the University of Kentucky, where for 44 years his research informed strategies for sustainable management of pests and conservation of beneficial insects in urban landscapes. Dan is an award-winning teacher and frequent invited keynote speaker at scientific and trade conferences around the world. An elected Fellow of the Entomological Society of America, he has received national leadership awards from the Professional Land Care Network, American Nursery and Landscape Association, U.S. Golf Association, and other organizations.*

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