

2022 Dakota County Master Gardener Spring Expo: Let's Get Growing Class Descriptions, Speaker Biographies and Speaker Photos

Keynote Speaker – 1:00 p.m. “Landscaping for Pollinators”

Julie Weisenhorn

University of Minnesota
Associate Extension
Professor and
Extension Educator



Keynote address “Landscaping for Pollinators,” presented by **Julie Weisenhorn**, covers basic information about pollinators and how to encourage them in our landscapes. Pollinators are responsible for pollinating much of the food we enjoy, and gardeners of all levels can help encourage pollinators to thrive. Choosing plants that provide food and shelter, creating transitional landscapes, and considering bee lawns all help lessen “bee sterile” landscapes. Join University of Minnesota Extension horticulturist Julie Weisenhorn as she tells the story of pollinators from a landscaping standpoint and presents some options for gardeners to help make this world a better place for these valuable insects.

Minnesota native **Julie Weisenhorn** holds master’s degrees in visual communication and horticulture from the University of Minnesota where she taught landscape design and served as State Director of the Extension Master Gardener Program. As an Extension educator, Julie has statewide responsibility for horticulture teaching, research and outreach with special focus on plant selection and sustainable residential landscape design. Most recently, she has conducted studies on *Flowers for Pollinators* (z.umn.edu/flowers), a study assessing annual flowers’ attractiveness to insect pollinators; and *Pollinators for Food* studying insect pollination of bell peppers. Julie coordinates and regularly appears on the popular WCCO Radio program *Smart Gardens* (Saturdays, 8-9am, AM 830), and edits the *Plant Elements of Design* plant selection database (www.landscapplants.extension.umn.edu/). Julie lives in Mound, MN, with her husband Karl and uses her own yard and garden to test ideas, research and plants. In her own words, “This is the best job I have ever had.”

Session I—9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Laura Van Riper
“Jumping Worms
in Our Landscapes”



Jumping worms are the latest invasive worm to arrive in Minnesota. They live in the top few inches of soil and alter the soil structure and chemistry through their feeding and burrowing behaviors. Found in garden beds, mulch and compost piles, they represent a threat to the health of our managed and wild landscapes. This presentation by **Laura Van Riper** will focus on their distribution and dispersal mechanisms throughout Minnesota. Jumping worms are spread through composting, horticulture, landscaping and live bait. A network of Worm Rangers will be created utilizing a diverse group of Minnesota citizen scientists through the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs.

Laura Van Riper has been the terrestrial invasive species coordinator for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Invasive Species Unit since 2010. Laura works with invasive species policy, management, prevention, and outreach. Key responsibilities include improving invasive species prevention, management, and mapping as well as coordinating and developing invasive species projects and policies with outside organizations. Before working for the DNR, Laura earned a Ph.D. in ecology from the University of Minnesota

Andy Scott
“Native Landscaping
Solutions”



In the “Native Landscaping Solutions” class, **Andy Scott** will cover native garden basics. He will highlight unique, under-utilized and biogeographic native species that can help address, trouble shoot and find balance within specific sites in residential garden settings.

Andy Scott started his small native garden landscape and design business in 2017. He has helped residents and commercial properties convert lawn and wasted space to wildlife-friendly gardens that support beneficial insects, birds, and other wildlife. Education driven, Andy prefers client involvement in the design and planning phases and encourages them to help with plantings as well. Andy holds a Design degree from the Minneapolis College of Art & Design. He is a board member of Wild Ones Twin Cities, a national native landscape non-profit.

Don Feeney
“Vegetable
Gardening 102”



During the last two years many have discovered the joys and sorrows of growing their own food. If that sounds like you, you might be wondering "how can I do it better? " and "what should I be growing next? In this presentation, **Don Feeney** will review the easy, harder, and hardest vegetables to grow (including some you wouldn't have thought of) and the pluses and minuses of growing each one. He'll also go over some of the common mistakes that beginning gardeners make and briefly discuss growing vegetables in containers and the joys of starting your own plants from seed.

Dakota County Master Gardener **Don Feeney** planted his first vegetable garden on a Boston rooftop in 1980 (where he learned that pollinators don't come up to the 12th floor). Forty years later, he's still at it, though now at ground level. He's attempted just about every vegetable crop that can be grown in this climate (and some that probably can't), and eventually figured out that it only makes sense to grow things you actually like to eat.

Gail Maifeld
Sally McNamara
“Enticing Books for
Gardeners”



“Enticing Books for Gardeners” is a shared talk from school librarians and Master Gardeners **Sally McNamara** and **Gail Maifeld**. They include delightful books to excite everyone from young children to adults about gardening. They will have each of the books shared in the room to pass around so participants can have a chance to skim each of the books for themselves during the hour presentation. Many can be found in the Dakota County Library system, but you may just want to buy a few for yourself and as gifts for favorite gardening friends. They are irresistible!

Gail Maifeld, Master Gardener since 2007, has participated in a variety of programs including the Children’s Garden at the Dakota County Fair, UMORE Park Butterfly Garden, Communications and the Leadership Team.

Sally McNamara is our current Master Gardener Leadership Team Chair, and she also volunteers as a Tree Advisor. She is part of a team working on several native planting sites for Mendota Heights and has an amazing home landscape of her own!

Katie Burns
“Creating
Bird-Friendly Homes
and Landscapes”



We find birds nearly everywhere we find people. Our lives are enriched by their songs and diverse array of plumage colors and patterns. We know that when birds and nature thrive, people do as well. Join guest speaker **Katie Burns** of the Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis, to learn about the challenges birds are facing in our shared outdoor spaces and what we can do in our own homes and gardens to help support and attract them throughout the year. Katie will focus on bird-friendly landscaping and bird-safe home solutions during this program with special focus on the relationship between birds and native plants.

For more than 15 years, bird conservation through community organizing and education has been central to **Katie Burns’** work. She began her career in the grasslands of South Dakota where her work would inform state level land management practices for the benefit of wildlife and people. Her passion for environmental education led her to Minnesota where she spent nearly a decade as an interpretive naturalist at the University of Minnesota Raptor Center, before designing and managing state-wide community education and municipal challenge programs for Audubon Minnesota. In her free time, she enjoys working with her horse, traveling, cooking and exploring new outdoor spaces both near and far.

Session II—10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.

John Zweber
“Plan, Plant and
Grow”



“Plan, Plant and Grow” is the class for you if you always wanted a vegetable garden or wondered how to make it easier. In this session **John Zweber** teaches you how to start your vegetable garden from scratch, including site selection and preparation, selecting seeds and transplants, planting and maximizing space, managing weeds and pests, harvesting, and extending the season. You will also learn about several different gardening options from traditional row garden, square foot gardening, no dig, raised bed gardens and how to get started with them. Also learn some advantages and disadvantages of each gardening method.

As a Master Gardener for 16 years, **John Zweber** has been teaching gardening classes throughout Dakota County, including garden clubs and adult classes for ISD 196 and ISD 194. John also is the small business owner of Easy Gardens by John, where he sells and installs vegetable gardens. Other interests include beekeeping and knitting. He is converting his suburban property into a mini homestead with ten 4x8 raised beds, several chickens, several fruit trees and four beehives.

Maggie Reiter
“Lake-Friendly
Lawn Care”



Maggie Reiter’s presentation “Lake-Friendly Lawn Care” is a lawn class about shifting from traditional lawn management to protecting water quality and enhance biodiversity, all while maintaining the functions of a green carpet used for recreation. Responsible lawn care requires a thoughtful approach to limit routine applications of pesticides and reduce watering. This presentation will outline new methods to increase the ecological sustainability of lawns, like low-maintenance grasses, flowering bee lawns, and water conservation strategies.

Maggie Reiter is the Extension Educator for Turfgrass with University of Minnesota Extension. Maggie works to implement urban turfgrass management programs that conserve water, nutrients, and energy. She works with turfgrass managers to integrate new technologies and enhance ecosystem services like biodiversity and stormwater retention. Ultimately, this work protects Minnesota's natural resources and builds a climate-ready urban landscape. Maggie has previously led turfgrass programs at the University of California.

Faith Appelquist
“Smarty Plants:
How Plants
Communicate”



In “Smarty Plants: How Plants Communicate,” learn what plants do all day with a presentation by **Faith Appelquist**. She will describe eye opening research that makes it more clear how remarkable our fellow inhabitants on this planet really are.

Did you know plants can see you? Not only that, but plants can also hear, smell, taste, communicate, count, remember and manipulate animals. Contrary to the long-held idea that plants are just “vegetating,” recent research has made it clear that plants, despite not having brains or central nervous systems, perceive their surroundings with ever greater sensitivity than animals. They efficiently explore and react promptly to potentially damaging external events without any internal command centers and can remember prior catastrophic events and actively adapt to new ones.

Faith Appelquist is the owner of Tree Quality in St. Paul, Minnesota. She earned a Food Science degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a Landscape Design degree from Dakota County Technical College. She is an International Society of Arboriculture Board Certified Master Arborist, and she is excited about current research on plant communication.

Julie Weisenhorn
“Edible
Landscaping”



Gorgeous plants and delicious food both have a place in gardens. In “Edible Landscaping,” University of Minnesota Extension horticulturist **Julie Weisenhorn** will show how to make good plant choices, and how to creatively mix and match for your desired garden look, and plant for sustainability and healthy plants.

Julie Weisenhorn coordinates and regularly appears on the popular WCCO Radio program *Smart Gardens* (Saturdays, 8-9am, AM 830), and edits the *Plant Elements of Design* plant selection database (www.landscapeplants.extension.umn.edu/). Julie lives in Mound, MN, with her husband Karl and uses her own yard and garden to test ideas, research and plants. In her own words, “This is the best job I have ever had.”

Dr. Vera Krischik
“Managing Invasive
Insects”



In her presentation “Managing Invasive Insects,” **Dr. Vera Krischik** teaches us that insects can be categorized as native, exotic, invasive, endangered, threatened, or disease vectors. She will discuss the top 10 insect pests in gardens and landscapes for native and exotic insects, and you will learn how the life history of an insect makes it invasive, whether a native or exotic. Attendees will learn how an understanding of life history is necessary to develop a successful IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program. If rusty-patched bumblebee is found in an area, then an endangered species IPM program must be implemented through the MN DNR. The discussion will include insecticide use, compatible with conserving bees, butterflies, and beneficial insects.

Dr. Vera Krischik is a University of Minnesota associate professor and IPM specialist with 34 years of experience promoting Integrated Pest Management (IPM), biocontrol, and compatible insecticides to protect pollinators and other good bugs in greenhouses, nurseries, lawns, urban forests, parks, and restorations. The Krischik lab's research identifies the best ways to manage pests through IPM to reduce non-target effects on native pollinators and biocontrol insects, such as parasitoids, lady beetles, native butterflies; and native bees, such as rusty patched bumblebee.

The lab has a website devoted to IPM of pollinators, with information on pollinator identification, proper host plants, and IPM management of restorations.

<https://ncipmhort.dl.umn.edu>, cues.cfans.umn.edu.