

# **If You Plant It, They Will Come**

## ***The 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Michigan Native Plant Conference***

### ***Wildflower Association of Michigan***

March 1 and 2, 2025

Kellogg Center, Michigan State University

***Followed by Three Webinars throughout the Year***

ALL LECTURES QUALIFY FOR MASTER GARDENER EDUCATION HOURS

### **Saturday, March 1, 2025**

**1:30 - 2:00 pm** Red Cedar Room. Gather for the Native Plant workshop (only for those who pre-registered).

**2:00 - 4:00 pm** Red Cedar Room. Enjoy learning the basics on how to convert turfgrass to native gardens with two exceptional speakers, William Kirst who is the co-owner of Adapt Landscapes LLC and Mike Weis who is owner of Dropseed! Native Gardens and Ecological Restoration. Learn how people can be drawn into the idea of native gardens, how to plan a landscape, and how to adapt the garden as it matures.

**4:00 - 6:00 pm** – Dinner Break on your own

**6:00 - 8:00 pm** – Poster Session in the Red Cedar Room (no pre-registration necessary). Come and explore the latest research and ideas in the native plant movement. Posters will be presented by university research students, prior WAM Grant winners and conservation districts. Enjoy appetizers and a cash bar while learning and networking.

### **Sunday, March 2, 2025**

**8:00-9:00** Registration and Refreshments - Red Cedar Room

**9:00 -9:10** Greetings & Announcements Big Ten A

**9:10 – 10:15** Big Ten A

Keynote Presentation

**DR. TODD CRAIL**, University Distinguished Lecturer in the Department of Environmental Sciences at the University of Toledo.

***Plants, People, and Perseverance: Incorporating Native Plantings in Urban Environments - Greening Toledo Through Service***

Greening Toledo Through Service (GUTS) is a student-led project that works to increase native plantings on the Main Campus of the University of Toledo. Student employees convert turf to prairie, implement formal garden projects, and support these efforts through greenhouse cultivation of plant material. Much of the work is facilitated through service-learning opportunities where students experience real-life applications of what they have covered in class. In 2022-2024, GUTS facilitated 1000 student volunteer hours (600 for credit, 400 completely voluntary each year) to grow and plant ~20,000 native plant plugs. We will discuss what we've learned along the way about plants, people, and perseverance.

**10:15 – 10:45** Break– Marketplace Shopping and Networking

**10:45-11:45**

Concurrent Session #1 Auditorium

**JOHN BLAIR**, Retired engineer and native plant enthusiast who has taken his passions to a high level as documented by Fine Gardening magazine, the Michigan Gardener, the Detroit Free Press, and Garden Answer on You Tube.

***My Prairie Restoration Journey***

In this presentation, John Blair will bring you along on his journey to restore his land to original native prairie on his rural property in Brooklyn. He will also cover the restoration of his wooded savanna and how he is bringing three natural ponds back to life after being buried by farmers decades ago. Through John's beautiful photos, you will get to see this wonderful transformation taking place, from hayfields back to lush native prairie habitat, much like what was originally there two hundred years ago!

Concurrent Session #2 Big Ten C

**JEN ROEDEL**, PhD Candidate and Graduate Research Assistant in the Department of Entomology and Michigan State University.

***Who's in My Garden? Exploring Insect Pollinators in Your Urban Garden.***

Learn more about how the types of plants (native, ornamental) you install on your urban garden or farm impact insect visitors and crop pollination.

**11:45 – 1:30 Lunch Break.** WAM Grant Awards, presentation on a troublesome new invasive called Lesser Celandine by WAM President Caroline Miller. Time for networking, marketplace shopping and visiting display tables.

**1:30 – 2:30**

Concurrent Session #1 Auditorium

**LORRAINE JOHNSON**, Published author of more than ten books on native plant gardening including her most recent: *A Northern Gardener's Guide to Native Plants and Pollinators* with an introduction by Douglas Tallamy.

***Gardens for Pollinating Insects: Friends, not Foes!***

In this talk, Lorraine explores some of the surprising corners of insect-plant relationships and how our gardens can support these dynamic interactions. Moving beyond charismatic species such as monarchs and milkweeds, Lorraine shares inspiring information about lesser-known creatures—native wild bees, moths, beetles, and more—that are necessary for all life on earth and how to welcome them, not fear them, in the garden.

Concurrent Session #2 Big Ten C

**ALYSIA G. BABCOCK**, Conservation Steward, Master Naturalist, Advanced Master Gardener, Certified Shoreline Professional and owner of The Garden Guru, Kzoo and the Native Plant Nursery.

***Designing For Nature: There's More to Supporting Pollinators Than Planting Milkweed***

This presentation will discuss the importance of creating habitats for pollinators beyond flowers. Including the value of incorporating grasses and sedges, small-scale water features, and overwintering habitat into your landscape. Finishing with recommendations for designing your own native garden

**2:30-2:45** Break – Marketplace Shopping and Networking

**2:45 – 3:45**

Concurrent Session #1 Auditorium

**DR. RACHEL HACKETT**, Conservation Associate - Botanist, Michigan Natural Features Inventory

***Spring Fever and Summer Loving: Seasons and Complexity of Prairie Fen Wetlands***

Prairie fen wetlands are incredibly diverse ecosystems found mostly in the upper Midwest, including southern Michigan. They were historically influenced by their groundwater source and the prairies and savanna communities that once surrounded them. A single prairie fen can be home to several hundred different plant species with diverse wetland flowers and warm-season prairie grasses. Prairie fen wetlands composition measurably changes throughout the growing season and provides habitat, larval host plants, and nectar sources to several federal threatened butterfly species in Michigan.

Concurrent Session #2 Big Ten C

**KARMA THOMAS**, Pollinator Research Assistant at Michigan State University with work focusing on urban farm pollinator conservation.

***Unexpected Visitors: Pollinator Community Diversity Across Pollination Syndromes***

Explore the unexpected diversity of floral visitors that visit (and effectively pollinate!) the flowers that we plant.

**3:45- 4:00 pm** Break—Marketplace shopping and networking

**4:00 – 5:00 pm**

***WAM Annual Meeting in the Red Cedar Room (registration/breakfast room). All are welcome to share ideas and comments about your organization. Meet your board members. Appetizers and cash bar offered.***