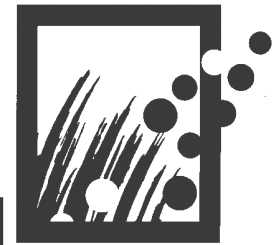


Dyck Arboretum of the Plains

PrairieWindow

cultivating transformative relationships between people and the land



Summer 2019 Vol. 29 No 2

Native Plants, Science, and Agriculture: Making Connections

by Lorna Harder, Hesston College Professor Emeritus in Biology/Formal Board Member

This spring, Education Coordinator Brad Guhr, Intern Coel Ediger, and I attended the [American Public Gardens Association's](#) symposium *Celebrating Crop Diversity: Connecting Agriculture, Public Gardens, & Science* in Iowa.

At the outset, the connection between native prairie plants and agricultural crops seemed somewhat obscure. However, the connection becomes quite clear when we consider that all crop plants are derived from wild relatives, and in keeping this genetic diversity, we retain resiliency for our existing crops.

The conference began with these sobering facts: globally, there are 30,000 crop plants available; 75% of the global population depends on 12 crop plants; and 60% of the global caloric intake depends on just 4 crop plants – wheat, corn, rice and potatoes. The consequences? We have a fragile food system that lacks biodiversity and that makes existing crop production vulnerable to repeated catastrophes.

The symposium brought together a diverse group from public gardens, universities, federal agencies, conservation and science NGOs to tackle issues related to sustainable crop production for our growing global population. 1) How do we bioculturally conserve important crop wild relatives (CWRs)? 2) How can science communication be used to engage our citizenry with CWRs in public garden settings? 3) How can we build collaborations between conservation and agricultural communities? 4) How do crop wild relatives factor into ongoing crop breeding projects?

Stimulating presentations from groups such as the Global Crop Diversity Trust and the Bureau of Land Management discussed the importance of collecting, studying and conserving CWR seed genetic diversity while also highlighting the important connection between cultural and biodiversity.

Urban agriculture was also featured, giving a nod to our



Lorna Harder looks over the conservatory balcony at the Des Moines Botanical Garden during the APGA Crop Diversity symposium.

increasingly urbanized global community, and the need for environmentally sustainable food that supports healthy communities.

One important outcome of this symposium was the creation of a *Roadmap to Crop Wild Relatives*, which explores opportunities for outreach and engagement with CWRs. Roughly 300 native crop wild relatives and useful wild species have been described in North America. Some of these species occur in our own Kansas prairies. At present, however, no clear conservation strategy exists for these important species. The *Road Map* will serve to advance the conservation of crop wild relatives in North America.

How does the Dyck Arboretum fit into this conversation? As a public garden, we are afforded the opportunity to be part of the *Road Map*. We can play a role in the conservation effort by identifying and collecting seed, growing CWRs in our collections and providing interpretation for visitors. In so doing, we are once again reminded of the inherent value of native prairie plants in our past, present, and future.

Prairie Window Concert Series

Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, KS • 2019-20



MARK ERELLI
September 29



**THE STEEL
WHEELS**
October 26

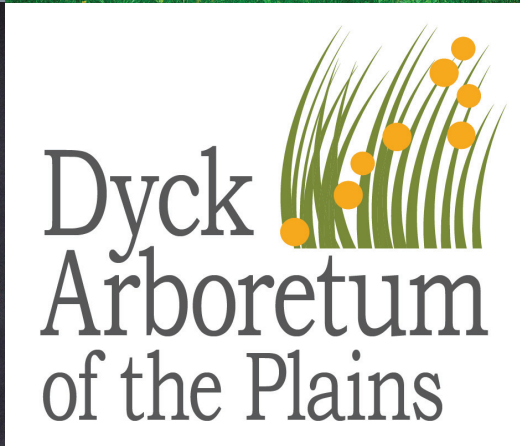


KYSHONA
November 24



**THE
TALBOTT BROTHERS**

December 8



Dyck
Arboretum
of the Plains



**MISSY ANDERSEN &
HER ONE MAN BAND**
February 9



FLAGSHIP ROMANCE
March 1



DALA
March 15



JEFFREY FOUCAULT
May 3

SEASON TICKET SPECIAL - THROUGH SEPTEMBER 25

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WICHITA **89.1**

Spotlight on our Members: Vada Snider

by Katie Schmidt, Horticulturist/Grounds Manager

Vada Snider wasn't always a gardener. Hard to believe, as I stood in the lushly landscaped woodland behind her house, but she insists it was a passion ignited later in life. "I didn't garden as a child. It was the land, this place — I knew I wanted a garden here".

Creeping dead nettle, bee balm, sea oats all looking vibrantly green even in the heat of the summer, the space has its own magic, evident from the moment you walk in. Her rescue dog George understands it; he appears and disappears amongst the coneflowers and black eyed Susans, turning the shady paradise into a playground.

When she bought this North Newton property in the nineties it was an aging orchard. Before that, a dairy farm. A perfect setup for ambitious Snider: a site with pre-manured soil and mature trees already in place.

In her woodland oasis Vada doesn't do anything fussy or traditional. "I always wanted it wild," she said, when asked about her aesthetic. Early on she took on any plant that people were willing to give away. She aimed to fill the space, to plant the aggressive plants that cover the ground quickly. To this day she does not use mulch, laughs when I ask how she manages that. Her big secret to shade garden success is to "just leave it", to let things spread, fill in, and seed out of their own accord. Crowd out weeds with desirable plants, with strategic weeding happening constantly. This methodology has led to a naturalistic garden that still shows intention and care.

The beds are loosely themed, delineated by mulch paths. Some feature a mass planting of spring ephemerals for a punch of color, all at once — columbine, woodland phlox, violets — and other beds are as simple as a tight cropped bed of vinca vine to give the eye a rest.

Her advice for new gardeners? Visit a mature garden, perhaps your neighbor's place or the Arboretum.

"Go look at what grows, what actually survives past the first year, and plant that." She spent many years and dollars forcing certain plants to grow that were not well adapted to our climate.

Her newest project is repopulating the woodland her father started in the seventies just to the north of her family home. Adding elderberry and hazelnut to the understory, banishing any sprig of poison ivy that pops up.



Vada Snider's backyard woodland area is a wonderful example of working with nature in the native plant garden.

From the Director's Desk...

Dear Friends,

We have had a tremendous year so far connecting with so many people around south-central Kansas through our various events and classes. It was our privilege to host over 35 participants at each of our Native Plant School classes this spring. We received good feedback from these students and were thrilled by the enthusiasm and energy they brought to the conversation. We look forward to introducing another group to the many benefits of native plants as we teach a new set of classes later this summer.

This spring, we were able to move over 15,000 plants into the gardens of our supporters as part of our semi-annual FloraKansas Native Plant Festival. This fundraising event was an incredible success.

Your participation not only supported the Arboretum, but expanded the patchwork of native plant gardens in our region. Remember, stewardship starts at home.

With the construction of the Horticulture and Utility Building (HUB) complete, we are turning our focus to other important projects that will continue to improve the Arboretum. The board is discussing expanding the endowment to further support operations and programs. We are working on grants and underwriting of the [Kansas Earth Partnership for Schools \(EPS\) Program](#), and continuing to improve Arboretum walkways, signage of buildings and plants.

We want to thank all our members and donors for their support over the past year. Your encouragement, participation and partnership in our mission to "cultivate transformative relationships between people and the land" has made all the difference. We are very grateful.



Handwritten signature of Scott V. J.



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NATIVE PLANT SCHOOL: SUMMER SESSION!

To register, email arboretum@hesston.edu or call 620-327-8127.

Cost is \$10 per registrant.

Aug 8 at 7 pm: "[Native Plant Basics](#)": Enjoy a lesson on the natural history of Kansas and explore the unique adaptations native plants use to survive!

Aug 15 at 7 pm: "[Birdscaping](#)": Learn how to use native plants to attract birds to your yard.

Aug 22 at 7 pm or Aug 24 at 9 am: "[Sustainable Lawns & Lawn Alternatives](#)": Trade in your water guzzling, chemical-laden lawn care routine for something that is more eco-friendly and adds new aesthetic value to your space.

Aug 29 at 7 pm or Aug 31 at 9 am: "[Garden Prep & Design](#)": Join us for a primer on site preparation and design techniques for creating a prairie garden.

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Horticulturist

Brad Guhr, Education/Prairie Restoration/
Concert Series Coordinator

Janelle Flory Schrock, Office Manager

Katie Schmidt, Grounds Manager/
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