

Dyck Arboretum of the Plains

PrairieWindow

to promote through education and stewardship, the conservation and use of plants native and adaptable to Kansas



Summer 2015 Vol. 25 No 2

Arboretum Hosts Over Ninety Attendees, Special Guests at Annual Soirée Fundraiser

Over ninety guests enjoyed an evening of food, conversation and learning about Kansas wildflowers at our 3rd Summer Soirée on Sunday, June 28. Fundraising from the sales of tickets and a silent auction totaled over \$5,000 to help the arboretum end its fiscal year.

The Tallgrass Express String Band started off the evening with their melodies and lyrics, evoking vivid images of the Flint Hills. The band is made up of Annie Wilson of Elmdale, Kansas, who was named the “Flint Hills Balladeer” by the Kansas governor, Carl Reed of Manhattan, Jim Versch of Marion and Kim “Smitty” Schmidt of Goessel.

Throughout the evening, a delicious, elegantly presented meal was provided by Kaye Laudner from Catering by Kaye and served with the help of a dedicated team of seven volunteers.

The evening concluded with a presentation by Michael John Haddock, Assistant Dean of Research, Education and Engagement at Kansas State University Libraries, and co-author of the recently published new edition of “Kansas Wildflowers and Weeds”. Haddock spoke about the process of creating the detailed reference guide in collaboration with his two co-authors, Craig Freeman and Janét Bare. Haddock also signed copies of the new book for guests, as well as his field guide, “Wildflowers and Grasses of Kansas”.

In addition to the musical and educational program, a wide variety of Hesston, North Newton, Newton and Wichita businesses and individuals donated very generously to a silent auction, which raised over \$2,500 to support the arboretum’s operating budget.

The annual Summer Soirée is planned and executed by the Arboretum Events Committee, a sub-committee of the board of trustees, along with staff and volunteers.



Left: John Waltner (middle) stands with director Scott Vogt and board chair Christine Downey-Schmidt. Waltner and Craig Freeman (not pictured) were recognized for their long-time service to the arboretum board of trustees. Right: The Tallgrass Express String Band shares their gifts of song and poetry.

Visit the Flint Hills with the Director Thursday, September 24

Have you ever been somewhere and said to yourself, “I wish more people knew about this place”? I have a few spots I want to share with you as we work our way through the Flint Hills.

After leaving Hesston, we will meander east with a scenic drive stopping at the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve near Strong City. After a tour of the historic ranch, we will turn south to Cottonwood Falls, Kansas, where participants may have lunch on their own at the Grand Central Hotel. Menu options include soups, salads, sandwiches and steaks.

After lunch, we will continue our tour of Chase County at Pioneer Bluffs art gallery in Matfield Green and enjoy the beautiful remnant prairies in that area.

We will leave the Dyck Arboretum at 8 a.m. and return by 6 p.m. \$30 members/\$40 for non-members will cover the entire trip except lunch. RSVP by Monday, September 21.

- Scott Vogt

Earth Partnership for Schools 2016 Summer Institute

by Brad Guhr, Education Coordinator

The ninth annual Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) Summer Institute occurred June 1-5 at Dyck Arboretum. Nineteen educators heard presentations, practiced curriculum activities, conducted field studies, toured gardens, learned about prairie flora and fauna, visited a large prairie and bison preserve, developed an action plan, planned a grant proposal, wrote reflectively, pulled weeds, made art and carried out a planting during the week long interactive institute.

The 2015 summer EPS summer institute attracted a diverse group of educators from organizations and schools including Rainbows United in Wichita, Cheney Middle, Hesston High, Chase County Elementary, South Hutchinson Elementary, Kennedy Elementary in Abilene, and St. Mary Catholic in Newton. The teams of teachers from each school will return home, using the EPS curriculum and what they learned about prairie gardens to engage their students in multiple ways.

After hosting nearly a decade of Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) summer institutes, I have learned that this program consistently attracts teachers who are energetic, positive, inquisitive and creative. One would easily understand then why working with these teachers and conducting this annual 40-hour EPS workshop each summer is my favorite part of this job.

Post-institute feedback from teachers confirms that the EPS experience is important to them as well:

“I knew that this prairie garden would be a source of amazement and creativity that our curriculum was lacking. I thought that it would make a difference in our science curriculum, but little did I know that it could revamp what I thought about teaching in all areas and disciplines. The more I learned about the plants and their unique features, the more ideas and activities popped into my head of how I could incorporate this garden in my everyday routines.” ~Melissa Thorsell, Kindergarten Teacher - Kennedy Elementary

“What I have gained during this week long class runs the gamut from acquisition of new knowledge on plant species and types to understanding the importance of biodiversity and water conservation in my own backyard and community. I think the most life changing for me has been the seed that has been planted within me to both teach and learn with my children and students to love and care for our Earth.” ~Jessica King, 1st Grade Teacher - Kennedy Elementary

“In all truthfulness, this has been the best post-graduate workshop I have attended. I am moved and inspired by what we shared, physically did, and experienced. Like a shot of adrenaline to my system, I am fired up and ready to help reduce the “Nature-deficient Disorder” our children and society have fallen into.” ~Matt Johnson, 6th Grade Science - Cheney Middle School

EPS is made possible this year through support from Kansas Health Foundation, The Schowalter Foundation, The Citizens State Bank, Harvey County Farm Bureau Association, and Newton Kiwanis Club.



Above right: Jennifer Broadfoot sweeps for insects while conducting a wildlife biodiversity study. Top left: Kim Goodman, Arlene Berven, and Jessica King practice compass basics. Bottom left: Ashley Messer and Deb Wedel study the floral parts of the rose family.

Prairie Window Concert Series

Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, KS

2015-16



10 STRING SYMPHONY
October 18



CLAIRE LYNCH BAND
November 1



**TIM O'BRIEN
w/ OLD MAN
LUEDECKE**
November 11



MARK ERELLI
December 6



Dyck
Arboretum
of the Plains



**BETSE ELLIS AND
IKE SHELDON**
January 17



**LINDSAY LOU
& THE FLATBELLYS**
February 21



**MATT &
SHANNON
HEATON**
March 6



**THE STEEL
WHEELS**
May 1

SEASON TICKET SPECIAL - THROUGH SEPTEMBER!

ONE FREE SHOW and seating preference

Call 620-327-8127 for tickets. dyckarboretum.org



A Sense of Place: Let the Prairie Inspire You

by Scott Vogt, Executive Director and Horticulturist

Some of the biggest trends in horticulture today revolve around sustainable, environmentally friendly landscapes – in other words, growing plants that are adapted to your particular part of the world and its characteristics, including preferred soil types and climate.

As gardeners of the prairie, inspiration is just outside your door. The unique aesthetics of the prairie should provide a vision for our prairie landscapes and influence how we garden in the Great Plains. The prairie is who we are and where we live – it provides a sense of place.

Prairies provide a natural setting for reflection and appreciation of nature. They provide an ideal setting for watching pollinators or birds, taking a nature walk, and photographing nature. Studies have shown there is something soothing and calming about the prairie landscape. It is a connection that must be experienced first-hand to fully appreciate and understand.

There are so many compelling reasons to embrace our distinctive prairie heritage. Motivation could come as you establish habitat for Monarchs by planting a few milkweeds in your garden. Inspiration could come from the simple beauty of a coneflower in bloom or watching grasses move with the gentle breeze.

Whatever it is that inspires you to try some native plants, the outcome could change your perspective. Even small steps can have a tremendous impact, especially when you combine your efforts with many others who grasp the importance of this extraordinary place in which we live.

There are incredible benefits to matching native plants to a local setting – less input costs such as irrigation, fertilizers and chemicals, less time in overall maintenance, and the beauty of a properly designed garden, not to mention the many pollinators that will flock to your native plants.



A cloudless sulphur finds a cardinal flower in the prairie near Chase State Fishing Lake.

Economic Benefits

I love saving money. That is why I believe native plants are a great alternative to traditional landscaping. Every year at the arboretum, we save thousands of dollars in maintenance costs. Our native displays rival traditional displays in beauty, but endure our climatic challenges with relative ease because they are adapted to this prairie habitat. These adaptations require less water, less labor, and have fewer problems, while providing the distinctive beauty that was once found exclusively in the prairies.

Natural Benefits

The other day I went out and observed several butterfly weed in bloom. The orange flowers were teaming with insects. Each plant was covered with at least five different pollinators, from small flies to large bees and many different types of butterflies. It was like they were all invited to a feast.

Native plants and native pollinators have coexisted for millennia. They need each other for survival. Certainly, native plants provide many important functions in the landscape, such as building up the soils, controlling erosion, and reducing pollution. However, their most important role is to provide for pollinators, whose populations are currently in decline and in jeopardy.

Sensory Benefits

If you watch a prairie as it progresses through the seasons, you will observe constant change --wildflowers coming into bloom and going out of bloom every few weeks as the grasses continue to elongate. The sights, smells, and sounds are unique to our part of the world. Since the prairie is so diverse, there are plants that will thrive in every landscape situation you may have and provide year-round beauty.

Health Benefits

One of the most important components of our mission is connecting people with the prairie. We try to accomplish this in a number of ways, such as through educational programs, plant sales, tours and the Earth Partnership for Schools program. The prairie is rich with cultural and natural history. So much can be learned from the prairie ecosystem.

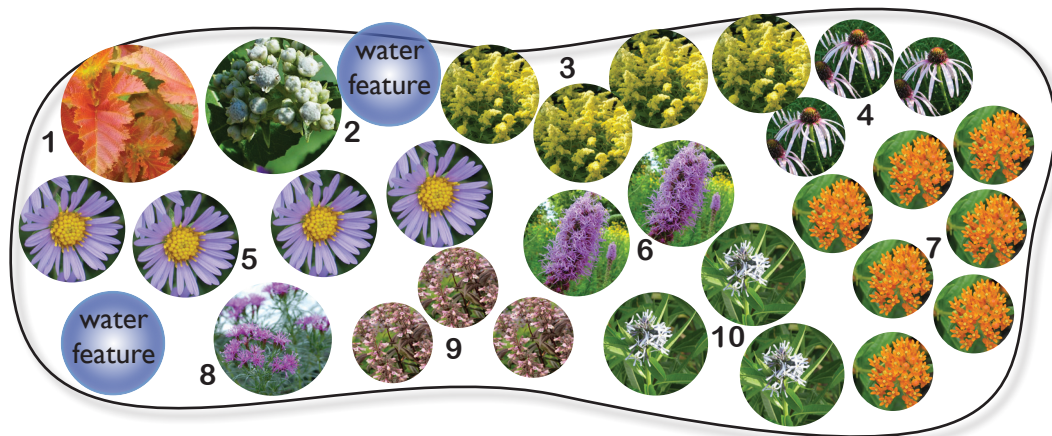


Honeybees and common moth species feed on Echinacea purpurea. It's easy to overlook some of the less colorful pollinators.

Sample Native Landscape Designs

Butterfly Point

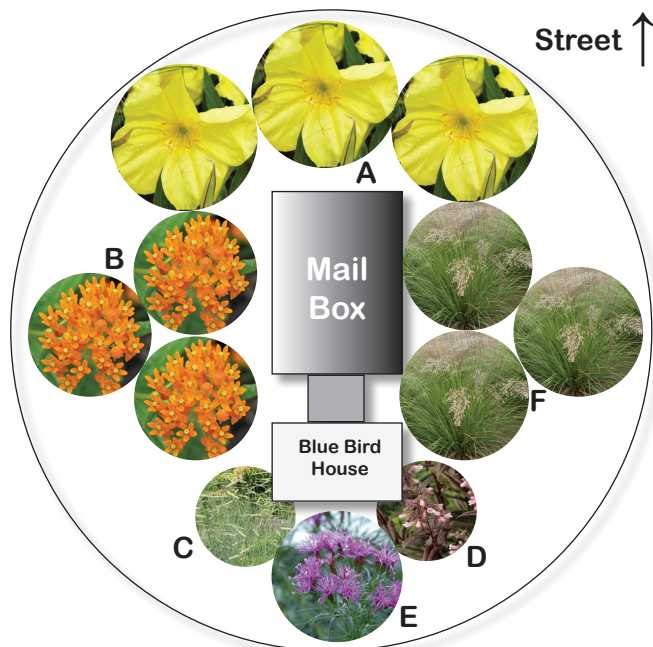
For this planting, choose an area in your yard that is 9 feet wide by 4 feet deep, gets at least six hours of sunlight each day, and has well-drained soil.



Planting Key for Butterfly Point: 1. Ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius* 'Amber Jubilee'); 2. Wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*); 3. Short goldenrod (*Solidago* 'Little Lemon'); 4. Pale purple coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*); 5. Aromatic aster (*Aster oblongifolius* 'October Skies'); 6. Prairie blazing star (*Liatris pycnostachya*); 7. Butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*); 8. Letterman's ironplant (*Vernonia lettermanii* 'Iron Butterfly'); 9. Beardtongue (Penstemon 'Dark Towers'); 10. Shining blue star (*Amsonia illustris*); 11. Butterfly water source - bird bath, water basin, or hollowed out rock

Mailbox Planting

If your mailbox sits out near the curb, mowing around it can present a challenge. However, if you landscape around it, you may not want to drag your hose out to the street very often to water it. Try this grouping of native plants around your mailbox to provide habitat for pollinators and birds, as well as color and texture throughout the seasons.



Planting Key for Mailbox Planting

A. Missouri evening primrose (*Oenothera macrocarpa*); B. Butterfly milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*); C. Blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis* 'Blonde Ambition'); D. Beardtongue (Penstemon 'Dark Towers'); E. Letterman's ironplant (*Vernonia lettermanii* 'Iron Butterfly'); F. Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)

A Recipe for a Prairie Garden:

The basics of establishing a natural landscape

The purpose of this class is to take you through the entire process of developing a natural garden, from start to finish. Learn about site selection, establishment and maintenance of native plants.

Starting a garden using native plants begins with small steps. Choose an 8' x 10' plot that is visible from the house or street. Make it your goal to plant it with a diverse group of plants that will provide interest all season. You will be rewarded by the natural beauty of wildflowers and grasses along with the diverse pollinators they attract.

Join Scott Vogt as he takes you through the process of planning, designing, installing and maintaining a natural landscape. Come prepared with a scale drawing of your landscaping site. Attendees will receive an additional discount at our 2015 fall or 2016 spring plant sales to purchase the plants from their design. Cost is \$20/person, \$15/Members.

Call the arboretum for reservations. Classes are limited to the first ten who register. Choose Thurs., Aug. 20 at 7 p.m. or Sat., Aug. 29 at 9 a.m. Call (620) 327-8127 to register.

FloraKansas Fall Plant Sale

Join us for the fall FloraKansas Plant Sale, Sept. 11-13. Our member sale is Thurs., Sept. 10, from 1 to 7 p.m. Members receive a 10% discount on all plant purchases. See our website for a full schedule and plant list. Members may email in plant orders no later than Sept. 1st.



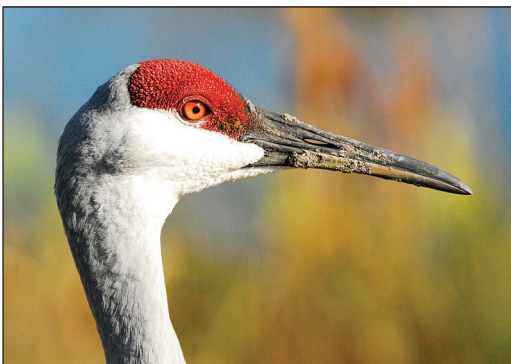
Address Service Requested

Cranes and Constellations

Saturday, November 7, 3 to 11 p.m.
with Brad Guhr, Education Coordinator

Take advantage of this unique event that every Kansan should experience at least once in their lifetime - the fall migration of the abundant sandhill crane provides rich sounds and visuals through a sunset that you will never forget. And we will certainly be on the lookout for the federally endangered whooping crane too, which is known to populate the same migratory route.

Gregg Friesen will share his vast knowledge of many other migrating birds that pass through this smorgasbord rest stop at Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. Round out the evening after dark with John Hobbs and be treated to his enthusiasm for the night sky. If the timing of migration and weather cooperate, this evening should prove to be a memorable one.



A box supper and coffee will be provided. The van will return to the Arboretum by 11:00 PM. Cost: \$40 members/\$45 non-members will cover entire trip (\$20 for children under 13). For reservations, call (620) 327-8127 by Thursday, November 1.

Staff

Scott Vogt, Executive Director/
Horticulturist
Brad Guhr, Education/Prairie Restoration/
Concert Series Coordinator
Janelle Flory Schrock, Office Manager
Brett Prothro, Grounds Manager

Board of Trustees

Lorna Habegger Harder - Hesston (Chair)
Christine Downey-Schmidt - Inman (Vice Chair)
LeAnn Clark - Hesston
Connor Dyck - Wichita
Mark Landes - Hesston
DeDee Lehman - Hesston
Forrest "Woody" Miller - Newton
Gaylen Neufeld - Hesston
Jonathan D. (J.D.) Spicher -
Weatherby Lake, MO
Anthony Swartzendruber - Hesston
John Torline - North Newton
Marilyn Wilder - Hesston