

DYCK ARBORETUM OF THE PLAINS PRAIRIE WINDOW

cultivating transformative relationships between people and the land

Fall 2021 Vol. 31 No. 3

Indoor/outdoor Eco-Art-Sphere installation immerses viewers in a play of scale

by Janelle Flory Schrock, Public Engagement Coordinator

What began as a prairie land management consultation between Dyck Arboretum Prairie Restoration Specialist Brad Guhr and Prairie Works Design Inc artists Ann Zerger and Chip Parker has blossomed into an inspiring and beneficial collaboration. Zerger, Professor Emeritus of Art at McPherson College, and Parker, an award-winning architect, returned to Zerger's family farm in 1988 and opened their architecture and sculpture studio near Moundridge.

Their multi-media art installation "Parallels", which has previously been at home on their "Eco-Art-Sphere" in McPherson County, along with other permanent and ephemeral pieces, will be on display at the Dyck Arboretum through mid-December.

From the studio's website: "The focus of this eco-arts sphere was to create a permanent environmental installation on a portion of land that has been in Ann's family for over 100 years that would celebrate the Great Plains Prairie and the local and migratory wildlife that depend on this environment for existence. The intent was to create an installation that would impede the return of this land to agriculture or any other type of production as well as be a catalyst for a visceral

conversation with the viewer on the beauty, diversity and serenity of the prairie.

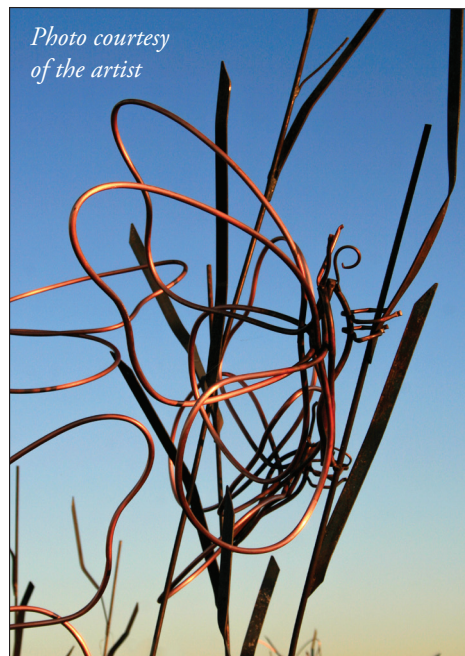
"The exquisitely beautiful and fragile monarch butterfly with its complex life cycle would be our metaphor for the complexity and beauty and the necessity of preserving the Great Plains Prairie."

Five copper and steel sculptures depicting prairie grasses, butterflies and caterpillars are displayed on the Arboretum grounds. In addition, sixteen photographs, capturing moments in the artists' Eco-Art-Sphere through the seasons, are on display in the Visitor Center.

All elements of the installation are available for purchase, with a portion of the proceeds being generously donated to the Arboretum by the artists.

Right: Chip Parker and Ann Zerger of Prairie Works Design Inc, Moundridge, install the indoor portion of "Parallels" in the Visitor Center Education Room. Above: Five copper and steel sculptures are displayed outside near the small bridge leading to the island. All elements of the installation are available for purchase, with a portion of the proceeds being generously donated to the Arboretum by the artists.

*Photo courtesy
of the artist*



Oil painting, batik and mixed media by Jan Butler of Wichita: In the Visitor Center Gallery through mid-December

2022 VIRTUAL Winter Lecture Series

by Brad Guhr,
Education Coordinator

Stimulate your intellect and expand your horizons from the comfort of your own home. Join us via Zoom for the Winter Lecture Series in January, February and March. Featured topics for this coming series are conserving oak ecosystems, exploring prairie insects, and restoring prairie on a college campus. Lectures begin at 7:00 and end by 8:30 p.m. **Cost: \$5 per person.**



Tuesday, January 25, 2022 with Gerry Steinauer

Conserving Oak Ecosystems

Since Euroamerican settlement, control of wildfires and other factors have greatly altered oak woodlands. Indian Cave State Park, located near the Missouri River bluffs in southeast Nebraska, contains nearly 2,500 acres of oak woodlands. Over the last century, lack of fire has allowed shade-tolerant and fire-intolerant trees and shrubs to proliferate in these woodlands. The resulting dense shade has stifled oak regeneration and herbaceous plant diversity, as well as degraded wildlife habitat. In recent years, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and Northern Prairies Land Trust have instigated prescribed fire, tree thinning and invasive plant control in the park's woodlands. Game Commission botanist Gerry Steinauer will discuss this effort and changes in the park's oak woodlands.



Tuesday, February 22, 2022 with Chris Helzer

Little Things in the Hidden Prairie

When most people think about nature and conservation, they envision large charismatic mammals and birds. In reality, ecosystems really depend most on smaller organisms like plants and invertebrates. Those species have stories just as fascinating as those of tigers, whales or pandas, but they don't get much attention. Chris Helzer, conservation photographer and Nebraska Director of Science for The Nature Conservancy will share photos and tales of these 'Little Things' and their complex interactions. As a conclusion, he will also share images and experiences he gained from his year-long photo project entitled Hidden Prairie: photographing life in one square meter, which has been turned into both a book and a museum exhibit.



Tuesday, March 22, 2022 with Katie Kingery-Page

The Restorative Potential of Native Plants in Urban Settings

Katie Kingery-Page is a licensed landscape architect, professor and associate dean in the College of Architecture, Planning, and Design at Kansas State University. Her background spans sculpture, art theory, ecology, and landscape architecture. Kingery-Page's work co-creating landscapes with community members centers on the many ways public space can be restorative to diverse audiences of people. Gardens of drought-adapted native plants can provide ecological, therapeutic, and educational benefits. Kingery-Page's talk will focus on lessons learned designing, building, and maintaining such gardens.

Warm your hands and hearts at Winter Luminary Walk

We are happy to announce our annual Winter Luminary Walk, November 26 to 28 and December 3 to 5, 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. This outdoor holiday event provides a safe, fun way to gather with family and friends to enjoy the beauty of the prairie in winter.

Our Prairie Pavilion “Snow Globe” will feature the following performers, each performing two 45 min sets at 6 and 7 p.m. each night: classical guitarist Howard Glanton on November 26, harpist RoJean Loucks on November 27, pianist Ken Rodgers on Nov 28 and December 3, violin/clarinet duo “Outside the Bach(s)” on December 4 and square dancers from the “Shoe Scuffers” of Hesston and “Circle 8” from Park City on December 5.

The local Scout troop will be serving hot beverages outdoors as a fundraiser. Tribute luminaries to memorialize a lost loved one will be available by donation.

In addition this year, there will be a Wreath Decorating Contest. All sizes and wreath materials will be accepted, including live or artificial greenery, straw, twig, etc. Entries are due at the Arboretum Pavilion on Nov. 23. Contact LeAnn Clark at 620-345-6806 with questions.

Attendees should observe the following guidelines: purchase tickets in advance to help us evenly distribute visitor arrivals - in case of inclement weather, a snow date will be determined and communicated to ticketholders; wear face masks while indoors; keep at least six feet of distance from people not in your household group at all times; walk around the path in a clockwise fashion; live music at the Pavilion will be observed outdoors - be mindful of crowding; there will be no indoor spaces for gathering, but restrooms will be available.

Tickets are available online at dyckarboretum.org, in the gift shop or by calling the office in advance. Your ticket purchase and donations support the ongoing work of Dyck Arboretum.



2022 VIRTUAL Native Plant School

The Arboretum offers numerous workshops to encourage the use of native plants in landscaping. These plants are drought-tolerant, ornamental, and provide food and shelter to wildlife. A garden rich with native plants can be enjoyed for its beauty and the wealth of birds and pollinators it attracts. All classes are \$5 per person and will be hosted via Zoom. Members may apply their discount or coupon to class registrations. Visit dyckarboretum.org/arboretum-events to register.

Site Analysis to Guide Planting Decisions

Thursday, January 27, 2022 • 7 p.m. • Scott Vogt

Most successful gardens did not happen by accident. The gardeners who tend them developed a deep understanding of the site over time. This class will take you through the steps necessary to evaluate your landscape. Your analysis will then help you choose plants that match the area you want to develop, getting your garden off to a strong start.

Rethinking Native Plant Maintenance

Thursday, February 10, 2022 • 7 p.m. • Scott Vogt

Over the years, we have noticed a few differences between maintaining native and non-native plants. Native plants grow well in community while a non-native (traditional) garden has plants that don't grow together naturally and aren't adapted over thousands of years to the local environment. This class will take you through some nature-inspired native plant maintenance tips, for smaller home gardens as well as larger acreage prairies.

Seasons of Color

Thursday, March 3, 2022 • 7 p.m. • Katie Schmidt

Planning your garden blooms for maximum beauty, habitat, and pollinator attraction is a tricky business. Let our staff teach you winning plant combinations for every season. We will cover design principles, and how to create a garden color palette that builds a cohesive yet dynamic aesthetic throughout the year.

Nativars, Cultivars and Adaptables, oh my!

Thursday, March 24, 2022 • 7 p.m. • Brad Guhr

Do you find yourself a bit bewildered by all the native/nativar/cultivar/adaptable plant options being promoted by the horticultural industry these days? Brad sure does! He's going to sort through and try to make sense of some of these confusing labels and distinctions to help us in our collective quest for improving ecosystem function in our not-so-native urban environments. Join him on this quest.

From the Director's Desk...

by Scott Vogt, Executive Director and Horticulturist

The Dyck Arboretum of the Plains is a gift from Harold and Elva Mae Dyck to the community, state and region. This year, we celebrate the 40th anniversary of that gift. It was the hope of Harold and Evie that the Arboretum would encourage a greater understanding and appreciation of the prairie and the simple beauty of Kansas.

Through the years, the Arboretum was guided by Ted Brantingham who oversaw the early development from 1984 to 1985, Joe Oppe, Jim Locklear, Larry Vickerman, Julie Irish Torseth, and Scott Vogt (2012-present). Each of these directors before me helped the Arboretum become what it is today. As a tribute and thank you to them and their leadership, I thought it would be fun to ask each of them a few questions about their time here.

JOE OPPE: DIRECTOR 1985 - 1987

The first Director, Joseph W. Oppe (1932-2012), had a career in public horticulture that took him across the United States from Ohio to Colorado, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Kansas, Florida, Iowa and finally back to the Mid-Ohio Valley. He enjoyed the unique opportunities of each place and never left without friendships that would last a lifetime.

JIM LOCKLEAR: DIRECTOR 1989 - 1994



Locklear, second from right, accompanies founders Harold and Evie and board member Nelson Kilmer on a site tour in the early 1990s.

What was your first impression of the Arboretum when you started/were hired?

"I was excited about the opportunity to lead a public garden devoted to the native plants of the prairies and plains."

What are some of the events/programs/buildings you initiated?

"I expanded the collection of Kansas and Great Plains native plants, established Friends of the Arboretum organization, established Discovery Days, established the Winter Lecture Series, and completed the paving of the parking lot."

What are one or two of your favorite memories of your time here at the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains?

"The most moving experience was seeing a community member who had recently lost a loved one under tragic circumstances walking the Arboretum with a friend. The Arboretum was providing them with a place of comfort and healing."

Where are you now and what are you doing?

"I've been Director of Conservation at Lauritzen Gardens in Omaha, Nebraska since 2010."

LARRY VICKERMAN: DIRECTOR 1994 - 2000



Vickerman leads a garden tour in the late 1990s.

What was your first impression of the Arboretum when you started/were hired?

"I was hired as horticulturist in 1992. The Arboretum was full of potential and it had an enthusiastic group of people supporting it on the board and committees. There was a really good master plan in place that featured plants of the Great Plains. I was enthusiastic to get started building plant collections at the site."

What are some of the events/programs/buildings you initiated?

"We started FloraKansas which was the first real native Plant Sale in Kansas back in the mid-1990's. It is still thriving today as a bi-annual event! I am most proud of being part of the team that started this sale. The Visitor Center campaign and construction were completed in 1999."

What are one or two of your favorite memories of your time here at the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains?

"Having the opportunity to [...] work with Harold and Evie Dyck, Elam Peachey, Duane Graham, Jim Locklear, Julie Irish and Scott Vogt, plus many other great people! All of those I worked with at the Arboretum were genuine and generous people who cared deeply about the Kansas landscape and its people."

"[I remember] the first FloraKansas sale, which featured many

Director's Desk, continued...

plants we had grown ourselves in the little greenhouse on the Hesston College campus. I remember Saturday morning as 100's of people arrived to start shopping and to attend seminars. It was a very rewarding time in my life."

Where are you now and what are you doing?

"I have been with Denver Botanic Gardens for 16 years as Director of Chatfield Farms. It is a 700-acre native plant refuge and working farm in the southwest metro Denver area. We are in the planning stages of a new master development plan that will include nearly \$30 million in improvements. I am a native Coloradoan and I feel like this job really fits with what Colorado is all about."

JULIE IRISH TORSETH: DIRECTOR 2000 - 2011

What was your first impression of the Arboretum when you started/were hired?

"My first impression of the Arboretum in 1998 was as the newly hired Director of Development working out of the Hesston College maintenance facility prior to the construction of the Visitor Center - no windows, no plants, no sunshine. I was operating on ideas engendered during my interview with the visionary founders, Harold and Evie Dyck, that the Arboretum was a unique resource for the community and beyond."

"When I became director in 2000, my goal was to emphasize each season in the Arboretum so that visitors could see the prairie as a lava lamp of ever changing texture and bloom."



Julie Irish Torseth in 2010.

What are some of the events/programs/buildings you initiated?

"FloraKansas: Native Plant Sale, Earth Partnership for Schools with Brad Guhr, the south Prairie Window Project, Greenhouse, Prairie Pavilion, Prairie Window Concert Series and many other one-time or thematic events."

What are one or two of your favorite memories of your time here at the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains?

"The bridge in the Bird Watch Area was designed and built by my late husband, John Torseth, with the help of Scott. John

was always the volunteer to log the most hours and loved every minute of being part of the life of the Arboretum. The sculptures bearing quotes designed by Conrad Snider on the periphery of the Arboretum were my tribute to Evie Dyck, who campaigned tenaciously for the Arboretum to be a place of quiet meditation.

"And the very best part of my job was the knowledge that came from wonderful people. Larry, Scott, Brad, Allison, Regina, Susan, Judy, and board members including Elam Peachey, John Waltner, Don Weaver, Lorna Harder, Christine Downey-Schmidt, Craig Freeman, Carolyn Williams, Duane Graham, Vada Snider, Jim Gillmore, Bill Watson, LeAnn Clark, and Gary Dyck. Volunteers and donors too numerous to mention. Experts in the field who came to share and instruct, songwriters who brought their musical poetry. Visitors, wedding parties, teachers and students. A tribe of like-minded people who brought oxygen to Harold and Evie's dream of preserving native plants for generations to come."

Where are you now and what are you doing?

"Now I am living on a 300-acre part-wooded, part-row crop farm in Wisconsin with family. My appetite for authenticity and a spiritual connection with the land nurtured at the Arboretum continues. *(Julie invites those who would like to stay connected to reach out. Contact the Arboretum office for her contact info.)*

The support of the Arboretum this past year has been phenomenal. Thanks to your generosity through volunteering, donations, purchase of plants, memberships and attendance, we were able to finish the fiscal year on June 30 in the black.

Your support allows us to: maintain our magnificent 29-acre site for visitors to enjoy, offer horticulture programs and environmental education for students of all ages, conserve native plants of the Kansas landscape and prairie communities, become a source for native prairie plants to homeowners, businesses and the horticulture industry, and bring the wonders of the prairie to life through enriching exhibits and special events.

As we come to the end of another year, I ask you to consider a gift* of any multiple of \$40 (\$40, \$80, \$120...) in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Arboretum. Last year, we exceeded our year-end fundraising goal of \$11,000 so this year we are setting our goal at \$15,000.

**Year-end gifts can be made online at www.dyckarboretum.org/giving-opportunities/. If sending a check, please write "Year End Gift" in the memo line. If you would like to designate your gift toward a particular area of our mission, such as education, concert series or groundskeeping, you may indicate that in the memo as well.*

Dyck Arboretum of the Plains

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Thank you for celebrating 40 years with us!



Clockwise from top left: Board member Connor Dyck greets and serves a guest in the Visitor Center - the meal was prepared by Hesston College dining services; families gather under the cottonwood trees while "The Flannelbacks" performed under the Pavilion covered patio; guests picked up a free tree as a thank you gift; guests gathered on the lawn in chairs loaned from Hesston College; sidewalk chalk provided a creative outlet for little ones - thanks to Hesston College Campus Activities Board for starting the sidewalk mural!; guests had the opportunity to have a complimentary family portrait taken by local photographer Amy Sharp to remember the occasion.

Staff

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

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Established in 1981 by Harold and Elva Mae Dyck,
the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains is owned by

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COLLEGE**
START HERE, GO EVERYWHERE