

DYCK ARBORETUM OF THE PLAINS PRAIRIE WINDOW

cultivating transformative relationships between people and the land

Fall 2022 Vol. 32 No. 3

Winter Luminary Walk is now PRAIRIE LIGHTS!

A winter tradition continues as Dyck Arboretum invites the community to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season, the approach of the solstice, and the quiet of winter with Prairie Lights.

Formerly the Luminary Walk, Prairie Lights will once again feature those quiet winter walks along sidewalks sparkling with lights. Hot chocolate, s'mores by the campfire, festive displays and musical programming in the Pavilion are all included with the price of one ticket.

This year's theme, "Welcoming Winter," will showcase dioramas and performers reflecting cultures that have shaped and continue to contribute to our community – Native American, African American, Mexican American and Germanic/European.

Each evening, storytelling will occur on the south side of the Pavilion at 6:15, 7:00 and 7:45 pm. Musical programming will be on the west side of the Pavilion at 6:30 and 7:15 pm.

The musical line up includes:

- Nov 25: Ken Rodgers on piano
- Nov 26: Outside the Bachs, Joan Griffing and Les Nicholas
- Nov 27: Wichita War Dancer
- Dec 2: Prairie Bronze Handbell Ensemble
- Dec 3: Azteca Dancers

- Dec 4: Bethel College Academy of Performing Arts Dancers

Visitors are invited to share in the rich cultural stories and traditions that are part of our community, traditions that welcome the arrival of winter on the Kansas prairies!

Prairie Lights will be held from 5:30 to 8:00 pm on the evenings of Friday, November 25, Saturday, November 26, Sunday, November 27; and Friday, December 2, Saturday, December 3, and Sunday December 4.

Tickets are \$5.00 per adult. Admission for children 12 and under is free.

Tickets are available online (www.dyckarboretum.com/prairie-lights) or they can be purchased directly at the Dyck Arboretum, 177 W Hickory, Hesston, KS 67062.

Prairie LIGHTS



Photos by Amy Sharp

From the Director's Desk...

by Scott Vogt, Executive Director and Horticulturist



As the fall deepens and the cooler weather sets in, I have taken a little time to reflect on the past year. Each year is unique in its challenges, efforts and thrills. Of course, the biggest challenge this year has been the weather. We have been suffering through a drought likened to the dust bowl. In spite of the unrelenting heat of the summer, the prairie was still able to manage some color and the grasses are in their full glory. These prairie plants are so resilient.

One program we focus on is the Earth Partnership for Schools (EPS) teacher institute. It is so gratifying to interact with educators during the week long summer institute in June. A special thanks goes to Brad Guhr education coordinator and his amazing team who lead these teachers through the week long training.

To date, 317 teachers from 94 schools/entities trained through summer and winter EPS Institutes at the Dyck Arboretum are becoming transformed by a unique curriculum. They regularly remark that this institute provides some of the most inspiring training they have ever received. These passionate educators are also passing this infectious energy along to their students by the thousands. Students learn about the prairie and its plant species, get dirty planting them on school grounds, enjoy the wildlife attracted to them, and so much more. The need for children to connect with nature and the outside has never been more important.

We are thrilled that more and more people are discovering the Arboretum and the programs and events that we host. Last year, the spring 2021 Native Plant School classes had an average of 91 registrants attending each class. We reached people from a vast geographical area including rural western Kansas, south central Kansas (Wichita, McPherson, Hutchinson, Salina and Newton), Kansas City Metro, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Nebraska, and New York.

The three fall 2021 Native Plant School classes averaged 48 participants and the four spring 2022 Native Plant School classes averaged 78 registrants. There is truly a growing interest in our mission to “cultivate transformative relationships between people and the land.”



Another thrill is our new welcome sign at the south end of our parking lot. This new sign has an Arboretum map with points of interest, garden etiquette, hours, admission and an announcement display case for upcoming events. This welcome sign was made possible by the generosity of the Christine Petrocci Hershberger Memorial Fund, the Mary Erb Armfield Memorial Fund, Robert and Chris Carlton, and the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust.

Arboretum staff worked with Flint Hills Design to come up with the concept and then they manufactured and installed it in August. After the ground settles, we will install new landscape plants next spring. It is a nice addition to the grounds with valuable information for visitors as they enter the garden.

I hope to see you at the upcoming Prairie Lights (formally Luminary Walk) on November 25-27 and December 2-4. Each night there will be unique performances, storytelling, s'mores, and of course the lights.

With much gratitude,

A handwritten signature of Scott Vogt in black ink.

2023 WINTER LECTURE SERIES

Stimulate your intellect and expand your horizons through our Winter Lecture Series in January, February and March. Featured topics for this coming series are native pollinators, McPherson Valley Wetlands, and the breeding biology of prairie chickens. One lecture will be remote and the other two in person. Lectures begin at 7:00 and end by 8:30 p.m. **Cost: \$5 per person.** Respective photos by Heather Holm, Tim Bidrowski, and Dr. Jackie Augustine.



Attracting Bees & Beneficial Insects with Native Plants

*Tuesday, January 31 (via Zoom)
with Heather Holm*

Native plants can be selected to attract specific bees and beneficial insects including predatory and parasitic wasps, beetles, flies, true bugs, and lacewings. Learn about the predator-prey relationships of these beneficial insects and how they help keep problem insect populations in balance. The life cycles, diversity, and nesting habitat of native bees will also be covered, with examples of native plants for different site conditions.



McPherson Valley Wetlands: Past, Present & Future

*Tuesday, February 28 (in person)
with Jason Black*

Historically there were thousands of acres of wetlands in the McPherson Valley Wetlands complex. These wetlands were of extreme importance to migratory birds, even supplying railroad car loads of waterfowl to Kansas City restaurants. Over time, these wetlands were gradually drained off the landscape. Hear the full story of this unique wetland ecosystem and the plans for its restoration from a Public Land Manager perspective.



Home on the Range: Breeding Biology of Prairie Chickens

*Tuesday, March 28 (in person)
with Dr. Jackie Augustine*

Dr. Jackie Augustine, Audubon of Kansas Executive Director, will discuss the biology of Greater and Lesser Prairie Chickens, species that she has been studying for nearly 20 years. These charismatic birds perform impressive displays to gain mating opportunities.

Come hear about the rolling prairie, the antics of prairie chickens, and the challenges of studying these declining species.

Join us for the next session of Native Plant School!

*Classes will be held via Zoom. Cost is \$5.
Please register at dyckarboretum.org*

The Wonderful World of Grasses

Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 7 pm

Join Scott as he introduces you to the grass plant family, its ecosystem role within the prairie, how it differs structurally from forbs and how to design with ornamental grasses. We will also look at traditional turf lawns and offer alternatives.

Instructor: Scott Vogt, Arboretum Director and Horticulturist

Ancient Plants, Modern Design

Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 7 pm

There are lots of fascinating garden styles out there, but very few utilize native plants. This class will teach you how to use time-tested native plants to create contemporary landscapes, diving into the history of popular garden styles, learning their basic principles, and then identifying how you can emulate them in your own landscape with water-wise, pollinator friendly plants.

Instructor: Katie Schmidt, Arboretum Grounds Manager and Horticulturist

Liberating the Prairie: A Review of Tree/Shrub Removal Methods

Thursday, March 23, 2023 at 7 pm

The prairie ecosystem relies on regular forms of disturbance to maintain its existence. With the removal or reduction of the historical frequencies of fire and grazing, prairies across Kansas are transitioning to forests. We'll review the latest techniques to help in reclaiming our prairies from invading shrubs and trees.

Instructor: Brad Guhr, Prairie Restoration Specialist



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CARRY YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD IN YOUR (DIGITAL) WALLET!

Beginning in January 2023, we will be partnering with Cuseum to provide digital membership cards to our members. Here's a super quick FAQ about the switch:

Why digital membership? First and foremost, we'd like to make the process of utilizing your membership benefits as simple as possible. There's not much about the prairie that happens instantly, so we thought we'd at least try to make your membership quick and easy. Second, it will help us streamline procedures for our staff and volunteers. And finally, digital memberships will minimize our usage of paper goods.

What if I don't want a digital membership card? Can I still get a physical membership card?

Yes, you absolutely can still request a physical card. Please bear in mind that the process will take several weeks. We are seeking ways to make the turnaround of physical cards faster as well.

More information will be coming your way in December!



Staff

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

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the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains is owned by

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