

Summer 2025 Vol. 35 No. 2

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From the Director's Desk...

by Scott Vogt, Executive Director and Horticulturist

The time has come for a new greenhouse.

Through the years, FloraKansas Native Plant Days has become an important fundraising event for the Arboretum. Not only does this event generate necessary revenue that sustains many of our other events throughout the year, but it also provides a wonderful service for those interested in creating native habitat for wildlife.

To enhance these plant sales and propagate more plants on site, we have begun construction of a production greenhouse. This new space will help provide hard-to-find plants grown from local seedstock. By connecting even more native plants to gardeners, we will be able to meet the growing interest in sustainable landscapes.

The Arboretum received a 20 by 30-foot greenhouse from Hesston College as they renovated some buildings on campus. They needed it to be moved and we were able to save and dismantle it with the help of a group of volunteers. Grants are providing funding for concrete and setting of side poles. Generous donors interested in supporting native plant gardens have helped move this project forward with their financial contributions.

Our goal is to complete the production greenhouse this fall so that we can begin to propagate plants in January

Below: Construction of the production greenhouse began in June south of the existing greenhouse. Right: Shingles were added to the roof of the new gazebo to lengthen the life of the wood beams.



and February in preparation for FloraKansas 2026. This new greenhouse will supplement what we already offer at our spring and fall plant sales. These seedlings will go on to establish more habitat gardens throughout the state and region.

Another project we are excited about is the newly completed gazebo in the bird watch area. It makes such an architectural statement in the landscape with its large posts and beams. The roof was added this spring and is open in the center to encourage visitors to look up in the bird watch area. Stop by and see these new additions to the Arboretum or follow on social media and our website.

See you in the garden.

Handwritten signature of Scott Vogt.



FALL FLORAKANSAS NATIVE PLANT DAYS

Member Day: Thursday, Sept. 4, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Public Sale: Friday, Sept. 5, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday, Sept. 6, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday, Sept. 7, 1 to 5 p.m.

**PRE-
ORDERING
for members:
Aug 1 to
Aug 25**

Garden Success Story: Ron and Kathy Smith

by Katie Schmidt, Horticulturist and Grounds Manager

When Ron and Kathy Smith moved to Newton from California, they had a bit of garden trouble. “If I just looked at stuff wrong, it died,” said Ron of his first attempts at landscaping. The Kansas climate was much more extreme than in California, and the plants they were familiar with were not hardy here. Eventually they decided to work with Dyck Arboretum staff to create a landscape plan with native perennials from this region.

The project began in 2019. Ron and Kathy had a sketch of their idea: large curving beds around the front and side yard, with stone lined paths through the gardens. The couple communicated their goals and vision for the space, and Scott Vogt drew a design for the front yard and foundation plantings. He helped the couple with plant selection, proper spacing, plant quantities, and planning for year-round interest.

The beds include favorites like Penstemon, Echinacea, and ornamental native grasses, as well as some unique showstoppers like *Rudbeckia maxima*.

When it’s in bloom, “people stop

and ask about it,” said Ron of the tall statement plant. He remarked how often he sees birds perching on it. He has been known to give out the seed heads to passersby who are interested in trying them in their own garden.

When the Smiths first planted, they used drip irrigation, though they haven’t needed it much once the garden matured. They used landscape fabric as a weed barrier on the initial install, though their experience with it has been mixed.

“We didn’t know what we didn’t know,” says Ron. Weeds still come up through the fabric, making them difficult to pull. It also slows or stops the natural spread of the plants, which is part of the beauty of a prairie garden. Ron has cut out quite a bit of fabric to allow the plants room to spread.

Here at the Arboretum we don’t use fabric in our beds because it can be such a hassle. We opt for temporary and biodegradable solutions instead, like cardboard with mulch over the top.

Some plants did well right away, and others had to be replaced or moved to a

more suitable spot. Even with the fabric in place, some perennials have seeded in, moved around, and or cropped up in unexpected places.

Ron’s philosophy? “Don’t be too stuck on the design”. Plants move and change, and every year the garden will be a bit different. This is part of the beauty and interest, and is something he looks forward to. “I have no problem letting the plants have their own ways.”

Despite a few hiccups, the garden has thrived. It attracts birds, butterflies, and insects of all kinds, along with the occasional raccoon and armadillo! It is a season-long treat for anyone who goes by, and a great example of how converting a bit of lawn to garden creates beauty and habitat in our neighborhoods.

We love to help people dream up beautiful, ecologically-friendly landscapes. If you are interested in a landscape consultation, call the office at 620-327-8127. Note that best planting times are April and September, and proper site preparation can take many months, so be sure to plan ahead.



Left to right: Ron and Kathy Smith’s front yard in Newton, before, during and after their native plant redesign. All photos by Ron Smith. For the full garden story with more photos, visit dyckarboretum.org/blog

DYCK ARBORETUM OF THE PLAINS ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25 AT A GLANCE

RAINFALL, ROOTS, AND GREEN SHOOTS

Central Kansas has seen more than its average rainfall this spring and summer. The rain spurs perennial native plants to grow, bloom and fruit. When the rains let up, plants may have to sacrifice some of their leaves and flowers, but thanks to their robust root systems, they will live to thrive another year.

We see native plants and their resiliency as a fitting metaphor for our organization. Your participation and contributions are like rainfall that stimulate the growth of our mission and activities here at the Arboretum. Educational programming and community events are like the green stems that flourish and flower with that generous support. As you can see from the graph to the right, roughly two-thirds of our revenue this past year came from our FloraKansas fundraisers, earnings from our endowment, membership contributions and annual giving, creating a strong root system for the annual operations of the organization. These roots help sustain our operations through seasonal highs and lows.

The other third of our revenue is generated by the Prairie Window Concert Series, grants, gift shop sales and community usage of our facilities. The revenue from these sources can vary from year to year, but because of generous donors helping to build our strong roots, our organization continues to grow in its outreach and impact every year.

The Dyck Arboretum of the Plains continues to be a place focused on deepening our connection to the land by providing a setting for quiet reflection and the simple enjoyment of nature. As we look to the future, we believe there are opportunities for growth and we sincerely hope you will continue to nurture them alongside us.

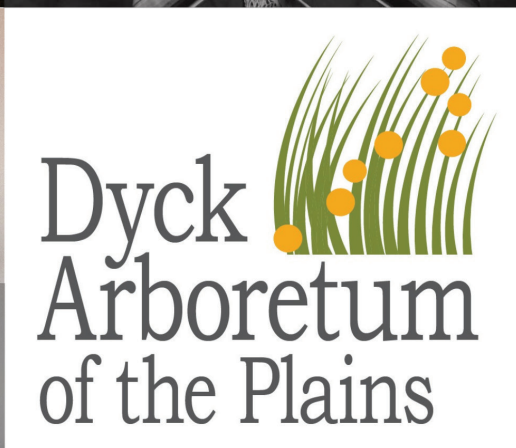
Thank you for your enthusiastic participation and support this past year and we look forward to future possibilities with great anticipation.



2024-25 REVENUE

Prairie Window Concert Series

Dyck Arboretum of the Plains, Hesston, KS • 2025-26



SEASON TICKET SPECIAL - THROUGH AUGUST 29

EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT and seating preference

Tickets and more information at dyckarboretum.org or 620-327-8127

HESSTON COLLEGE





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MEET OUR SUMMER INTERN!

I'm Ty Kraemer, the 2025 summer intern at Dyck Arboretum. I'm an Environmental Stewardship major entering my senior year at McPherson College this fall. I love to be outside. You can often find me hiking, biking, or playing frisbee. I'm also super involved in the band program at McPherson College, playing euphonium in concert band, trombone in jazz band, and leading a trombone ensemble in my free time.

I've always been curious about the natural world, and through my education I was prompted to make it my career. My father is an arborist, so I've been climbing trees and learning about plants from him as far back as I can remember. Both his teachings and my passion for the environment have led me to this awesome opportunity.

I'm excited to learn as much as I can from the talented folks that maintain this wonderful place. If you see me around, please don't hesitate to strike up a conversation with me!

If you or someone you know might be a good candidate for a Horticulture and Grounds Management Internship, please visit dyckarboretum.org/internship for more information. The application period for our 2026 summer internship will open up in January.



Staff

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

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Established in 1981 by Harold and Elva Mae Dyck, the Dyck Arboretum of the Plains operates under the auspices of

**HESSTON
COLLEGE**