



Gardenfest

ready, set, grow

Saturday, April 13, 2024 | 7:30 a.m.–4 p.m.

Luecht Auditorium at MCC, Building B, 8900 U.S. Highway 14, Crystal Lake

www.mchenry.edu/gardenfest

Keynote, 9–10 a.m. | Gardening for Nature

Daniel Gerdes

Learn about the meaningful steps that landscape designers, land stewards, gardeners, and homeowners can take to support pollinator populations, birdlife, soil ecosystems, and wildlife—all while reducing their carbon footprint, providing healthy habitats, and enhancing genetic diversity. We'll look at many modern design ideas, discuss the challenges of urban spaces, and touch on the impact climate change will have on our choices as garden stewards.

Session One, 10:15–11:15 a.m.

Choose one of the following sessions

New and Underused Perennials

Brent Horvath

Learn about new and underused perennials and ornamental grasses from someone who has been breeding and growing them for more than 30 years. Brent Horvath of Intrinsic Perennial Gardens—a local nursery that supplies Chicagoland and the Midwest with plants for landscapes, retail garden centers, and public and private gardens—will share stories of how some of the plants were developed and why.

My Plant Has a Disease...What Can I Do?

Rich Tobiasz

Think your plant might have a disease? Plants, much like animals and humans, experience disease with similar pathogens. Some are soilborne, some are airborne, and some are transmitted by insects. Many require specific conditions to infect plants. Join Rich Tobiasz as he takes you on a disease tour through your garden, looking at the causes and—for many—the cure.

The Culinary Garden

Joyce Lande and Raechal Maat

Two of MCC's chefs showcase delicious ways to add flavors from your garden to create sweet and savory dishes. You'll learn how to use waste parts from the garden and incorporate fresh and dried herbs into culinary dishes. We'll also provide tastings and finish with a tour of the culinary lab. *Class limited to 20 students.*

Sustainable Yards: Native Replacements for Invasive Shrubs

Sarah Michehl

Many homeowners have inherited invasive landscaping that needs to be replaced, whether for ecological or aesthetic reasons. In this presentation, Sarah Michehl, Community Ecologist with The Land Conservancy of McHenry County, uses her yard as a case study to show before and after photos of when invasive shrubs were replaced with natives to bring beauty and life back to her yard.



When Your Nearest Neighbors Aren't Human

Peggy Anesi (Doty)

Whether you live in a small community or a larger urban setting, wildlife is all around you. Many species of wildlife are welcome visitors to our properties, but some may wear out their welcome. And while you may not enjoy everything nature has to offer, urban wildlife helps us maintain at least a small connection to nature. Peggy Doty, University of Illinois Extension Educator, will share her knowledge on coexisting with wildlife on your property as well as the legalities if you need to remove it.

More Garden by the Foot

Doug Moore

Learn how to get started with Square Foot Gardening and discover how you can get more garden in a small space.

Session Two, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Choose one of the following sessions

Sensational Shrubs

Kim Hartmann

Discover a wide range of shrubs to consider for your landscape. We'll discuss features such as flowers, foliage, texture, form, wildlife interest, bark, fall color, and showy fruits. See newer introductions as well as proven varieties to add beauty and diversity to your landscape.

Compost—Pile It On!

Cathy Klink and Suzie Morrissey

Join us as we cover the basics of composting—how it's made, the benefits of composting, equipment options, and things to consider before you make the decision to compost at home. We hope this information will encourage you to give composting a try so you can reap the many rewards of becoming an at-home composter.

Greenhouse Tour

Mandy Hood

The MCC Greenhouse includes three bays of plants and plenty of learning. Join Mandy as she leads a tour of the MCC Greenhouse and discusses the construction, facilities, and plants grown there. Plan to spend a few extra minutes in Bay #3, which houses the hydroponic and aquaponic gardens. *Class limited to 20 students.*

Convert Lawn to Wildflower Meadow From Seed

Sarah Michehl

Tired of maintaining large sections of lawn grass? Want to attract birds and butterflies? Learn how to convert areas of your lawn to a native wildflower meadow from seed in this program with Sarah Michehl, Community Ecologist with The Land Conservancy of McHenry County.

Garden Insects: Good, Annoying, and Invasive

Nate Szkil

A wide variety of insects are beneficial to the ecosystem of a healthy garden—but other insects can wreak havoc. We will delve into insects that keep everything in balance and are helpful in the garden, insects that are a nuisance, and insects that are invasive and destructive. Join us as we look at garden insects and their role in this ecosystem.

You Planted Vegetables. Now What?

Rich Tobiasz

So you've started a vegetable garden—maybe your first. But the work isn't over yet! There are several tasks that need to be done to bring in good-looking veggies. This session will cover things that you should have already done and the next steps in having a successful vegetable garden.

Lunch 12:30–1:30 p.m.



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Session Three, 1:30–2:30 p.m.
Choose one of the following sessions

Hosta—America’s Favorite Shade Perennial

Mike Kraus

Where do hostas come from and where should they be placed? In this session, we’ll discuss the different types of hostas, how they can be used in landscapes, and the different pests and diseases they can face. We’ll also review online sources where you can find more information about hostas or safely buy them, such as Facebook Marketplace.

Container Gardening

Heather Moister

Create exceptional planter combinations using color, contrasting textures, and out-of-the-box ingredients. Heather will share her favorite plant selections for all four seasons and various growing conditions. Learn the best maintenance practices, longest-lasting winter materials, and techniques to elevate the look of your plantings with botanical accents and accessories. This will be a fast-paced, colorful presentation full of ideas you can use to design distinctive and durable planters at home.

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Natural Lawn Care Practices for a Healthy Environment

Sarah Zack

You don’t have to choose between an attractive lawn and protecting water quality. Many natural lawn care practices can help you work with nature to grow a healthy landscape. Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant’s “Lawn to Lake Midwest” program promotes sustainable lawn care practices at the household level to reduce the impact of fertilizer and pesticides in the Great Lakes Region and beyond. This presentation will dig into the science behind natural lawn care and give attendees some simple and effective natural lawn care tips.

Rain Gardens

Nancy Gonsiorek

Rain gardens are beautiful to look at, but they can also be a work horse in your garden. They help recharge our aquifers and lessen the harsh environmental impacts of stormwater, while also providing important habitat for wildlife. Nancy will explain how plants connect with our water cycle and why native plants are particularly important in rain gardens. Through her use of examples and photos of real gardens, you will learn how to create a beautiful rain garden in your own yard. Enjoy lots of pictures of appropriate native plants for your raingarden and learn where to find them.

Foraging for Mushrooms

Garrett Beier

Want to learn more about mushrooms? This session will cover common edible mushrooms in Illinois and where to find them. Supplies, identification, and safety will be discussed.

Tool Care and Sharpening

Rich Tobiasz

Good tools can make a variety of gardening tasks easier to accomplish. Hand tools especially need to be kept in good working order (think sharp blades!). Join Rich as he discusses the ABCs of tool care. If you bring a hand tool, Rich will teach you how to sharpen it.

Limited to 24 students.



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Session Four, 2:45–3:45 p.m.

Choose one of the following sessions

Going Vertical: Using Vines in the Garden

Kim Hartmann

There are many different climbing plants—so how do you choose the best vine for your situation? In this session, we'll discuss what makes each climbing plant unique, how to care for them, and the characteristics of various perennial vines, from clematis to trumpet vines. We'll also showcase vine varieties for sun and part shade for their foliage and blooms.

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Monarch Conservation 101

Carol Elkins

Carol is thrilled to represent The Xerces Society as a Great Lakes Regional Ambassador and to share her presentation with Gardenfest participants. She will discuss the population status of Monarch butterflies in the United States, their epic migration, their threats, and what we all can do to help these iconic insects in our own landscapes.

Common Tree Mistakes

Garrett Beier

Is your tree looking sad? Learn about the most common mistakes people make when planting and caring for their trees. From mulch volcanoes to tree topping, we will discuss a variety of bad practices and how to fix them.

Historical Kitchen Gardens

Christina Rank

What are kitchen gardens and how have they evolved throughout history? How can we benefit from this knowledge and apply it to gardening today? Learn about kitchen gardens as we explore gardening tricks and techniques from past eras along with some almost-forgotten vegetables and other kitchen garden plants. Sampling of food items will be encouraged!

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Pick Up Door Prizes, 3:45–4 p.m.



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