

“Gardening in an Era of Climate Change: Is the Sky *Really* Falling?”

**DRAFT AGENDA**

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**Wednesday, February 4**

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**Registration**

8:00-8:30 a.m.

**(1) Keynote:** **Allan Armitage, Ph.D.**  
8:30-9:30 Department of Horticulture, University of Georgia  
Athens, Georgia



**Background:** **Allan Armitage**, or “**Dr. A.**,” is known throughout the world as a horticulture writer, photographer, speaker, teacher, and researcher. He may be best known for his book, *Herbaceous Perennial Plants*, now in its third edition (2008), but he has also transformed the greenhouse and garden trades with his plant trials and new plant introductions.

**Title:** “**Gardening Is a Four-Letter Word**”: **The Changing and Confusing Landscape of Consumer Preferences and Industry Trends**

**Description:** If a breeder, a distributor, a producer, a retailer and a consumer sit at a poker table, who holds the best cards to predict what plants the consumer will buy? Hot button issues like sustainability, native plants, and lifestyle are thrown around, but what do they really mean? Dr. A. will give an overview based on his travels and talks with industry leaders, landscapers, and gardeners. He also will present the very best plants he has trialed at the world-famous Trial Gardens at the University of Georgia and will showcase eye-popping, low-maintenance plants that have thrived despite the last few brutal summers.

**(2) Speaker:** **James Urban, FASLA**  
9:30-10:30 Urban and Associates  
Annapolis, Maryland



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**Background:** **James Urban** is a landscape architect and urban arborist nationally recognized for his leadership in planting trees in difficult urban sites. He has written and lectured extensively on the subject and has introduced many innovations, including most of the current standards for urban tree plantings. As a result, Urban is credited with re-awakening the landscape architecture profession to the fundamental needs of trees and the skills required to address them.

**Title:** **Healthy Soils in the Built Environment**

**Description:** Healthy soil is critical to the success of trees and other plants, but it is often overlooked as a design element in contemporary urban landscapes. By understanding basic soil science and planning accordingly, landscape architects, architects, urban foresters, planners, and others can increase the odds that the landscapes they create will support healthy plant growth. Using photographs and innovative concepts from his new book, *Up by Roots*, Urban will show how soil, even in difficult urban spaces, can be transformed into a medium that helps trees flourish.

**Break**  
10:30-10:45

**(3) Speaker:** **Richard Bir, Retired Extension Specialist**  
10:45-11:45 Brevard, North Carolina



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**Background:** **Richard Bir**, retired extension specialist, is the author of *Growing and Propagating Showy Native Woody Plants* and innumerable research, extension and trade articles. His primary area of interest over the years has been the culture, production and utilization of nursery crops, especially woody plants.

**Title:** **Successful Gardening in an Era of Change**

**Description:** Change happens! What will grow now and continue to grow in your garden for years to come? Recognize which beautiful plants that are adapted to change

already exist and learn about efforts to create better ones, as well as how simple adaptations tilt the scales in favor of your own garden.

**Lunch**

11:45-12:45

**(4) Speaker: Kennon Williams, Landscape Architect/Senior Designer**

12:45-1:45  
Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects  
Charlottesville, Virginia



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**Background:** **Kennon Williams** is a Senior Designer and Project Manager at Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects in Charlottesville, Virginia, whose specialty is sustainable design. At Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden he is best known for coordinating a master plan for water management, but other projects he has spearheaded include WaterColor, a new town development near Seaside, Florida; the Museum of Life and the Environment, a new museum in York County, South Carolina; and The Dell, a stream restoration project at the University of Virginia. He has contributed to numerous other community design projects and urban design charrettes, as well, sponsored by groups such as the Nature Conservancy and the 1000 Friends of Oregon.

**Title:** **Healing Waters: Sustaining Natural Hydrology in the Landscape**

**Description:** Ecology-minded designers and gardeners no longer have to choose between beauty and environmental sustainability when planning the physical site for a garden. Shaping the land for natural hydrology can create landscapes of astonishing beauty that also promote biodiversity, conservation, restoration, and environmental sustainability. Using case studies of sustainable design projects from Virginia and around the country, Williams will show how landscape features designed to capture rain water, reduce storm water run-off, and minimize dependence on municipal water systems can make water a central and essential landscape element.

**Break**

1:45-2:00

**(5) Speaker: James Urban (see above)**

2:00-3:00

**Title:** **Healthy Trees in Urban Settings: Challenges and Solutions**

Description: Unlike most urban assets, trees become more valuable with age, yet thousands of trees die prematurely, many soon after being planted. Satellite imagery shows that tree cover has declined more than 20% in forty U.S. cities over the last ten years. More often than not, the problem is that trees need better soil and more room to grow. Urban will offer practical solutions that can meet these needs and at the same time contribute to more environmentally sustainable cities, increased property values, and a better quality of life for the community.

**(6) Closing: Speakers Roundtable Wrap-up: “How Do Recent Shifts in Gardening Philosophy Influence Decisions about the Plants We Buy and Sell?”**

3:00-4:00 **Allan Armitage, Dick Bir, James Urban, Kennon Williams**

**Adjourn**

4:00 p.m.

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**Thursday, February 5**

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**Registration**

8:30-9:00 a.m.

**(1) Keynote: Felder Rushing, Author and Photographer**

9:00-10:00



Background: **Felder Rushing**, garden writer and photographer extraordinaire, has authored or co-authored fifteen gardening books, including several national award winners. Known for his offbeat, "down home" lecture style full of humorous anecdotes, garden-irreverent metaphors, zany observations, and stunning photography, he is one of the green industry's favorite speakers.

Title: **Challenges Facing “Garden Variety” Gardeners and Pros Alike**

Description: Sustainability is an increasingly important concern for all earthlings, but especially for gardeners and practitioners of the green industries. Challenges abound: plant hardiness; design features; water, fertilizer, and pesticide issues; information gaps and overload, political correctness (natives vs. exotics); and more. What are the implications for you and your corner of the planet?

**(2) Speaker:** **Roger Harris, Ph.D., Interim Head**  
10:00-11:00 Virginia Tech Department of Horticulture  
Blacksburg, Virginia



**Roger Harris** is the new Interim Head of the Department of Horticulture at Virginia Tech. He joined the department in 1993 and has taught classes in Nursery Crops, Landscape Establishment and Maintenance, Plant Propagation, and Urban Horticulture. His research has focused primarily on landscape plant production and establishment issues and urban forestry.

**Title:** **Horticulture in a Changing World: The Virginia Tech Perspective**

**Description:** Find out how Virginia Tech and the Department of Horticulture are embracing the challenges and opportunities of a world where climate and demographics are changing at an ever increasing rate. Their fundamental philosophy is that plants are integral to healthy environments and human well being. Harris will highlight examples of educational initiatives that feature multidisciplinary student involvement and investigations into environmental sustainability and adaptation to an urbanizing world.

**Break**

11:00-11:15

**(3) Speaker:** **Mike Semones, LiveRoof Sales Specialist**  
11:15-noon Riverbend Nursery  
Riner, Virginia



**Background:** **Mike Semones** works for Riverbend Nursery in Riner, Virginia, marketing LiveRoof, an extensive modular green roof system growing in popularity with the design and construction communities. With thirty-four years experience in building and landscaping materials sales, Semones approaches the vegetated roof as a stand-alone building component, rather than as an extension of typical project landscaping. His objective is to help his customers see the planning,

purchase, and implementation of vegetated roofs through the eyes of the architect, the owner, and the general contractor.

Title: **Green Roofs—What? Why? Where? How? When?**

Description: Green roofs—vegetated roofs—garden roofs. No matter what your clients or customers may call them, they will expect you to know the answers to the questions they have about this new “horticultural frontier.” What motivates the green roof buyer? Is it a garden shed he wants to cover, or is he providing green space outside the upscale dining area on the 21<sup>st</sup> floor of the new hotel he’s about to open? Is he looking for a lush flowering meadow, the feel of open prairie, or a park-like setting complete with trees? Is he building a new building or renovating an existing structure? Who will maintain the space after planting is complete? What deadlines will apply to the production and installation of his project? Do you help him with his job, or should you run the other way? When it comes to green roofs, you’ll want to love them or leave them alone!

### **Lunch**

Noon-1:00

**(4) Speaker: Chris Lawrence, Agronomist**

1:00-2:00 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service  
Richmond, Virginia



Background: **Chris Lawrence** has served as State Agronomist since 2004 handling cropland issues for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Virginia. He is the lead technical contact for NRCS in Virginia in the areas of cropland agronomy, soil quality, erosion prediction, nutrient management, and pest management. Lawrence has particular expertise in the area of soil organic matter management in both conventional and organic agronomic cropping systems in Virginia.

Title: **Soil Quality Management**

Description:

**(5) Speaker: Margaret Pooler, PhD, Research Geneticist**

2:15-3:00 U.S. Department of Agriculture/Agriculture Research Service  
U.S. National Arboretum  
Washington, D. C.



**Background:** **Margaret Pooler** is a plant geneticist with the USDA's Agriculture Research Service and has served on the staff of the U.S. National Arboretum for twelve years. She directs the Arboretum's shrub breeding program, whose mission is to develop woody landscape plants of superior ornamental value that can also tolerate pollution, disease, pests, and other environmental stresses.

**Title:** **Better Trees and Shrubs through Science**

**Description:** The U.S. National Arboretum, located on 446 acres in Northeast Washington, DC, is a research institution and living museum with the mission of serving the public need for scientific research, education, and gardens that conserve and showcase plants to enhance the environment. The tree and shrub breeding programs were established in the late 1950s and have resulted in the release of over 60 new trees and shrubs for the landscape. How do breeders develop these new plants? What new technologies are available to make the process more efficient? What role does science play in the process? How do we test new plants and get them out to the public? An overview of the Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit will be presented, followed by discussion of the breeding programs, recent plant introductions, and future directions.

**(6) Speaker:** **Felder Rushing** (see above)  
3:00-4:00

**Title:** **Enlarging the Pie—Not Just Dividing It into Smaller Pieces**

**Description:** Young new homeowners and retirees alike are busier than ever, with tighter budgets, and many were not raised by gardeners. To get "dabblers" hooked on gardening in ways that cause their neighbors to want to give gardening a try, we have to alter our approach, lure them with tried-and-true plants with easy names, and not scare them off with horticultural jargon or gimmicky products.

**Adjourn**  
4:00 p.m.

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## **Friday, February 6: Pesticide Applicator Recertification Day**

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### **Full Certification Credit for Categories:**

- 3A: Ornamentals
- 3B: Turf
- 8: Public Health

- 10: Research and Demonstration
- 60: Registered Technician
- 91: Private Ornamental Production
- 2-year credit for all-day attendance on Friday, February 6

**Registration**

8:30-9:00 a.m.

**(1) Legal Update**

Speaker: **David Townsend**, Pesticide Investigator  
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

**(2) New Options for Turf Weed Control**

Speaker: **Matthew Goddard**, Graduate Research Assistant, Virginia Tech  
Turfgrass Weed Science

**Break**

10:30-10:45

**(3) Ornamental Insect and Disease Update**

Speaker: **Debbie Martin**, Invasive Species Coordinator  
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

**(4) Calibration Update**

Speaker: **Paul Davis**, VCE, New Kent and Charles City  
11:30-noon

**Lunch**

Noon-1:00

**(5) Mosquito Management in Residential Areas**

Speaker: **Randy Buchanan**, Environmental Engineer II  
Henrico County Department of Public Works

**(6) Pesticide Safety Tips for the Workplace**

Speaker: **Jason Young**, Environmental Coordinator  
Henrico County Department of General Services/Risk Management

**Break**

2:30-2:45

**(7) Pest Management Products Update**

Speaker: **Eddie Wirt**, Herod Seeds  
2:45-3:45

3:45-4:00 **Paperwork and Adjournment**