

2026 WINTER SYMPOSIUM
57TH CVNLA SHORT COURSE
PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION

GROWING WELLNESS: PEOPLE, PLANTS, & A THRIVING PLANET

FEBRUARY 11, 12, 13, 2026



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026

8:30 AM

Registration opens for in-person attendees

8:45 AM

Zoom webinar opens for virtual attendees

9:00 AM

Welcome address

9:10 AM

It's Getting Hot in Here: Tree Selection and Mitigation Strategies in the Face of Climate Change

Dr. Glynn Percival, Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories

Improving landscape conditions for trees and shrubs can be a powerful tool to manage pests and diseases, but one that often goes overlooked. Practical solutions for cultural control of current and emerging pests and diseases will be presented and plant health will be discussed as a factor to consider in long term landscape management.

10:10 AM

Break

10:20 AM

Everybody's Right to Beautiful, Radiant Things: Horticultural Therapy in the Carceral Space

Becca Amos, Horticultural Therapist, Chesterfield County Jail

The healing, growth, and beauty that is nurtured within incarcerated individuals against incredible odds inside jails and prisons is designed to be locked away from public view, thus reinforcing negative stigmas and upholding systems of oppression. Becca explores a decade of nature-based interventions as tools for healing in carceral spaces. She invites conversation about the role that nature plays in all of our lives, the systems in place that deny incarcerated people access to it, and the importance of reimagining and redesign in the discourse about the role of nature in healing and community building.

11:20 AM

Lunch and networking

12:30 PM

Habitat Creation for Native Beneficial Insects

Leah Purdy, Stream Scientist, Resource Environmental Solutions

Insects are an essential, yet often underappreciated, part of our ecosystem. They provide numerous ecological and economic services that influence and benefit our daily lives. Despite their crucial importance, their populations are declining rapidly, which could lead to serious consequences. Stream scientist Leah Purdy discusses the services insects provide and the factors contributing to their declining populations. Her presentation emphasizes gardening and land management practices that can enhance insect habitat in the context of ecological restoration and residential landscapes, including the principles of integrated pest management, seasonal garden maintenance, and insect hotels. She also highlights a short list of plants that can offer good insect habitat and nectar resources while serving as vital hosts for insect pollinator species.

1:30 PM

Break

1:40 PM

Towards Ecosystem Service Potential: A Framework for Decision-Making in the Garden

Preston Montague, Landscape Architect, Owner and Founder, Preston Montague Studios

In an age of unprecedented access to plants, tools, and information, gardeners are better equipped than ever before. Yet the growing volume of books, newsletters, social media content, and expert advice points to a deeper need: clarity. Despite a wealth of resources, many gardeners find themselves navigating a craft where multiple answers can be right at once. How do we move from knowledge to confident, informed decision-making in such a nuanced and context-driven practice?

Join landscape architect Preston Montague for a conversation on creating a framework for decision-making in the garden, built on popular stewardship practices used by landscape managers and designers in the early 21st century. Participants will learn about approaches to stewardship in landscape architecture that help professionals make decisions at scale and with the health of the planet in mind.

2:40 PM

Break with snacks

2:55 PM

Knowing and Growing Boxwood

Lynn R. Batdorf, The Boxwood Guy LLC

Boxwood is a low maintenance, durable shrub. Yet in cultivation, it seems to have many concerns. Learn everything boxwood would want you to know: the proper care, correct site conditions, and managing pests and diseases. A fun and insightful worldwide tour reveals the wonders and secrets of boxwood. In cultivation for 6,000 years, it is a proven winner, successfully passing the ultimate test: time.

3:55 PM

Adjourn

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SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Glynn Percival



Dr. Glynn Percival is the Senior Arboricultural Researcher at the Bartlett Tree Research Laboratory based in Charlotte, NC. He is the author of over 100 scientific papers, magazine articles and book chapters. In addition, Dr. Percival is on the editorial board for Arboriculture and Urban Forestry and Urban Forestry Urban Greening, and is the co-editor of the proceedings of the Trees, People and Built Environment Conference, published by the Forestry Commission. Reading University made Dr. Percival an honorary visiting research fellow, citing his valuable contributions within the Plant Science Department and the University. Dr. Percival is also a visiting lecturer at the Kew Royal Botanic Gardens and was awarded the prestigious Arboricultural Association Award for Research and Education in 2017 and the International Society of Arboriculture's L.C. Chadwick Award for Research in 2020. Dr. Percival is actively involved in managing urban and rural landscapes for the Royal Households and Duchy of Cornwall.

Becca Amos, MSW



Becca is a Richmond-based psychotherapist at WHOA Behavioral Health, a horticultural therapist at Chesterfield County Jail, and a local floral designer. Driven by an abolitionist framework, Becca has facilitated programs serving incarcerated individuals for nearly a decade. She has a Master of Social Work degree, a bachelor's in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from VCU, and is a certified horticultural therapist. Her work is centered on marginalized populations and the ripple effect of grief caused by systems of oppression including but not limited to the prison industrial complex. Intimate engagement with flowers and spaces for it, she believes, uniquely facilitate a deep tenderness for and understanding of the self, and should be available to all.

Leah Purdy



Leah Purdy is an ecologist specializing in stream restoration. She is passionate about insect conservation and has an extensive background in horticulture, where she combined her love of insects and plants by focusing on insect habitat creation through garden plantings and maintenance practices. As a Stream Scientist at Resource Environmental Solutions, she leads and trains field teams in stream assessments, macroinvertebrate sampling, and monitoring. She creates site planting plans focusing on creating resilient habitats that support insect species both inside the stream channel and within the floodplain. Leah actively educates the public on native insect conservation through lectures, outreach programs, and hands-on demonstrations, emphasizing the vital role of beneficial insects in ecosystem health. Her dedication to ecological restoration extends to volunteer efforts, where she has worked on invasive species removal projects and native replanting initiatives to enhance biodiversity and improve habitat resilience. Leah obtained a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture at Temple University, a Master of Natural Resource Stewardship at Colorado State University, and is currently working on a graduate certificate in entomology from the University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Preston Montague



Preston Montague is a landscape architect and artist working to strengthen relationships between people and the natural world. Growing up in the foothills of Virginia, he developed an interest in the environment while studying landscape painting with professional artists. After earning a BFA from UNC-Greensboro, Preston worked as a freelance exhibit artist and in the aquarium industry, where he was introduced to environmental design and ecology. Through this work he discovered gardening which, for his mentors and friends, was a vehicle for the arts as well as for social and environmental justice. He later earned a bachelor's degree in Horticulture and a master's in Landscape Architecture from North Carolina State University. Preston now leads a landscape architecture and art studio practice focused on the design of environments that have narrative qualities, are experience-rich, and are ecologically robust. He aims to create meaningful, resource-efficient, long-lived places that promote education, public health, and environmental stewardship in service to human and non-human communities.

Lynn R. Batdorf



For 36 years, Lynn R. Batdorf served as curator of the National Boxwood Collection at the USDA, U.S. National Arboretum, in Washington, DC. From 2020 – 2025, he served as an Advisory Panel Member for the Boxwood Blight Insight Group (BBIG), an international transdisciplinary team of research scientists sponsored by a USDA initiative to safeguard boxwood from *Calonectria*. Since 1985, Batdorf has served as the International Registration Authority for *Buxus*.

Batdorf holds a Bachelor of Science degree in ornamental horticulture from the University of Maryland. He has written six books and about eighty articles on boxwood topics in various journals, and travels internationally to lecture and consult on boxwood. He is an honorary life member of the English Boxwood Society, the American Boxwood Society, the French Boxwood Society, and the German Boxwood Society.