

# DIG INTO GARDENING

## 2024 SYMPOSIUM

*Growing a Greener Tomorrow*



Saturday, March 16, 2024 | 8:00 AM-4:00 PM  
FFA Enrichment Center | 1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny, IA

## Symposium General Information

*The event is open to the public!*



The Dig Into Gardening (DIG) Symposium is Polk County's inaugural research-based horticulture and gardening education event! Open to everyone from the home gardener to the horticulture pro, DIG will feature keynote speakers, breakout sessions and workshops.

Attendees will learn the latest gardening techniques and best practices from a variety of experts including local Master Gardener volunteers, industry experts, and Iowa State University (ISU) specialists and educators.

A relaxed schedule will give attendees time and opportunity to visit with vendors who can share their products and expertise. The home gardener or seasoned professional will walk away informed, inspired, and ready to dig into their gardens this spring season!

Master Gardeners may earn up to 4.5 CEU credits by attending.



## Schedule & Registration Information

### Schedule

8:15 AM	Check-in, coffee, and breakfast
9:00 AM	Opening Remarks, Morning keynote followed by breakout sessions
Noon	Lunch for all preregistered participants
1:00 PM	Afternoon keynote followed by breakout sessions
3:30 PM	Door prizes

Read on for keynote bios and breakout session topics!

### Registration

Registration limited to the first 190 participants.

January 31 \$75 Early Bird registration

February 1 \$85 Regular registration

Cancellations will be accepted until end of day February 29, 2024. Registrants will be issued a refund minus the \$15 cancellation fee. **No refunds on or after March 1, 2024**



**Register Online:** [go.iastate.edu/20BVPN](https://go.iastate.edu/20BVPN)

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## 9:15 AM Morning Keynote : Benjamin Vogt



### A New Garden Ethic

In a time of mass extinction and climate change, how and for whom we garden matters more than ever. Our built landscapes reflect social ethics and values that guide our response to reviving wildness in and outside the urban environment. How can we recognize and develop compassion for other species? What role do native plants have in opening us to the perspectives of others? What happens to our society when we advocate for the equality and freedom of a silent majority? Through ecology, psychology, landscape design, horticulture, philosophy, and social science, we'll explore the rich complexity of rethinking pretty and what a garden means in the Anthropocene.

Benjamin Vogt is the author of *A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future* and best-selling *Prairie Up: An Introduction to Natural Garden Design*. He owns Monarch Gardens, a prairie-inspired design firm. Benjamin's work has been featured in *The American Gardener*, *Fine Gardening*, *Horticulture*, *Midwest Living*, *the New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*.

## 10:30 AM Morning Breakout Session

### Unsung Heroes: Supporting Pollinators at Home

*Sarah Nizzi, Pollinator Conservation Specialist, NRCS Partner Biologist, Xerces Society*

Join Sarah Nizzi as she discusses how to make a difference for pollinator conservation. Sarah will explain the current status and importance of Iowa's native pollinators, as well as provide steps on how to implement pollinator habitat.

### Create a Family Legacy: Seed Saving in Your Backyard Garden

*Michael Washburn, Preservation Director, Seed Saver Exchange*

Have you ever thought about the word "heirloom" within the phrase "heirloom seeds?" Explore tips, techniques, and stories about heirloom seeds. Learn how to create a living treasure for your family by gardening and saving seeds from year to year and passing them on from generation to generation.

### Water Wise Gardening in Iowa

*Aaron Steil, Consumer Horticulture Extension Specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach*

Learn all about water-wise gardening for now and into the future. Topics include tips to responsibly garden during dry years and ideas for creating a garden that can tolerate drought conditions well into the future – all specific to Iowa.

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## 12:45 PM Afternoon Keynote : Ed Lyon



### Climate Smart Gardening

Our ecosystems will collapse if we don't return to all natives. The species that conservationists fear most (invasives) are precisely the ones that nature needs most. Two contradictory statements, which is right? These are perhaps the most challenging times for gardeners in history. Conventional narrative is that climate change may be leading the world toward what some term as the earth's sixth great mass extinction. We all want to garden with ecological responsibility but where does advocacy become activism and what are the truths behind the controversy and hype? More than ever, we need open minds and accurate science-based education. Ed Lyon will delve deeply into some of those issues in this presentation.

Ed Lyon is the director of Reiman Gardens. For 20 years he has inspired and taught public, lecturing and writing and through Spellbound Garden Writing & Consultation.

He writes for garden magazines and has created online classes for Fine Gardening and Garden Gate. He authored the book *Growing the Midwest Garden*. He serves on the executive board of the Perennial Plant Association. Throughout his roles in public garden administration and hands-on experience in the green industry, he has been as passionate about education as he is horticulture.

## 2:15 PM Afternoon Breakout Session

### Growing Edibles in Containers

*Cindy Haynes, Professor of Horticulture, Iowa State University*

Extending the garden season and food production by growing vegetables, herbs and edible flowers in containers is one way to becoming more self-sufficient. While gardening in containers works well for those with limited space, it is a great idea for all gardeners. Let Dr. Haynes give you some tips on being more successful with container gardening.

### Our Wild Neighbors

*Erica Northwick, Naturalist, Dallas County Conservation*

Who is good in the garden? What other wildlife is around? As we expand our urban areas, we're seeing more wildlife in spaces we haven't before. Come learn about who some of our wild neighbors are, how we can garden with them in mind, and debunk some common misconceptions about them.

### Soils- Let's Dig Into the Underworld

*Mike Henderson, State Resource Conservationist, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Services,*

Have you ever smelled fresh tilled soil? The smell is from geosmin, a compound produced by soil bacteria. The soil is made up of a mix of minerals and a dynamic community of organisms. Healthy soil is the basis for growing healthy plants. Learn how to assess your soils, what makes a healthy soil, and how improve soil health.

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## Vendor Information



### Exhibit Booth Reservations:

The event will feature a unique local opportunity to meet and network with over 200 gardeners, horticulture field experts and professionals! Make a plan and reserve your space! Exhibit booth reservations are now open. Choose your booth location:

**Exhibit Hall/ Atrium - Premium Booth \$200 or Conference A & B - Standard Booth \$175**

Both options include 6 ft table and 8ft x 8ft space and table signage. Premium booth can be upgraded for \$100 to include electric.

POC for Reservations: [events@polkcountymastergardeners.org](mailto:events@polkcountymastergardeners.org)

## Sponsor Information

*Polk County Master Gardeners thank our event sponsors!*

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