A love for the land, its plants, its people

It’s a milestone year. Bluebird Nursery celebrates 60 years and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum 40 years.

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA for short) was started by a small group of plant lovers who wanted to promote Great Plains horticulture and tree-planting. Their idea was to create a network of local grassroots arboreums that would be accessible and nearby no matter where you were in the state. Through these gardens, they hoped to demonstrate hardy plants and offer education and local beauty within these communities. Forty years later the network of public garden sites has grown to over 100, including small endeavors like the arboretum in Stella, with a population under 500, and huge endeavors like Lauritzen Gardens in Omaha. Each arboretum has its own goals, capacities and neighbors in mind, so they are far from cookie cutter gardens.

As NSA grew, its leaders saw the need to help communities improve their broader landscapes as well. Partners like the Nebraska Environmental Trust have made it possible to fund $9.7 million in landscape efforts statewide with a total value well over $20 million. That is a lot more shade, cleaner water, bird and pollinator habitat, and beauty, and this program is still going strong.

But our planting efforts have not kept up with canopy loss. The environmental challenges grow along with our communities. Our landscapes cannot just be “pretty,” they need to work... filter our water, rejuvenate our soil, provide habitat for pollinators and wildlife and provide respite for all of us. The thing about landscape efforts is that today’s actions really do impact the next 40 years. Next time you walk under a big beautiful tree, say a simple thanks for the tree planter who bestowed that kindness on you. And do some planting for the people who will follow you.

We are not the only ones celebrating this year. Bluebird Nursery, founded by Harlan and Shirley Hammernik turns 60 years old. This annual Spring Affair event has been made possible because of their willingness to partner and provide high quality plants, many of which are not available elsewhere in the state. If you care about the world you live in and the world you have behind, we’re with you. Let’s keep planting, friends!

Christina Hoyt, NSA Executive Director

Spring Affair
Lancaster Event Center, 4100 N. 84th Street in Lincoln
PREVIEW PARTY Meal and Live Music 6-8, Plant Sale 6-9 p.m. April 27
PLANT SALE 9-2 p.m. Saturday, April 28

A VOLUNTEER EFFORT
The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum wants to thank the 180+ volunteers whose time, knowledge and energy make this sale possible.

LOOK FOR BLUEBIRD’S SURPRISES
 marked with “Surprise” signs at the plant sale
Shop the VENDORS for garden items

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Nebaska Statewide Arboretum is a nonprofit that works toward sustainable home and community landscapes through initiatives in education, public gardens and the environment.

plantnebraska.org
Garden Vendors

(Parvill I at the Lancaster Event Center—in the same building as the plant sale)

plants offered have grown well in my zone 4 garden. I have growing instructions available for anyone who is just getting started. If you have any questions please feel free to stop by my booth at Spring Affair 2017.

LINCOLN IRIS SOCIETY
The Lincoln Iris Society is a group of friendly, enthusiastic people who love and grow irises. They share iris knowledge and information at the monthly meetings and an annual iris show and sale to further inform the public about the beauty and pleasure of growing irises. See our ad in this publication for date/location information for the show and sale. Our meetings are held in the evenings on the last Monday of each month except for May and December. The Lincoln Iris Society currently meets at St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 1015 Lancaster Lane, Lincoln NE. The Lincoln Iris Society is an Affiliate of the American Iris Society (AIS) and is located within Region 21 of the AIS.

MERISYSTEM FARM & NURSERY
Meirissystem Farm & Nursery is a certified organic farm offering the experience of a charming 1900s farmstead within the metropolitan Omaha area. Our primary emphasis is on the sale of aronia berry plants and value-added products, along with native perennials, bedding plants, succulents, nursery stock, and fresh produce.

NEBRASKA FOREST SERVICE
The mission of the Nebraska Forest Service is “To enrich the lives of Nebraska’s citizens by protecting, restoring and utilizing Nebraska’s tree and forest resources.” Lots of great hands-on tree health and other related resources. nfs.unl.edu

NEBRASKA STATEWIDE ARBORETUM
This nonprofit organization has offered more than three decades of service with landscape information, new plants, publications and inspiration to gardeners all across the Great Plains. It has helped make homes and communities more attractive, healthy and vital places to live, work and visit. The Arboretum depends on memberships and donations to carry out all of its efforts. plantnebraska.org

JEFF YOUNG
Jeff Young is the Director of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum at Peru State College. He specializes in plants for low water use gardens, sustainable landscaping practices, edible and native plants. He has received awards for his efforts, including the 2012 Nebraska Arbor Day Award and the 2018 Nebraska Master Gardener Volunteer of the Year. He is a member of the American Society of Horticultural Science, the North Central Region of the American Horticultural Society, and the Nebraska Native Plant Society. He is a contributing editor to the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, a column author for the Nebraska State Horticultural Society's monthly newsletter, Nebraska Gardening, and a frequent contributor to the magazine the garden gallery. He is a regular contributor to the Nebraska State University Extension’s Ask the Arboretum and is a practicing horticulturist with a Master Gardener and Master Naturalist Certification.

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Better Together—
Purposeful Plant Combinations

Waterwise Delight
Bring Nebraska’s lovely scenery into your yard with this perennial garden of prairie stunners that beats the heat and likes it dry.

Painted Shade
Brighten things up under the canopy with this perennial garden of low-maintenance flowers and foliage.

Scarlet and Cream
Make your landscape shout “Go Big Red” from spring to fall with this mix of flowers fit for the yard of a husker fan.

Tea Time
Brew fresh, home-grown herbal tea all summer long with this mixed garden of citrus, mint and floral flavors.

Designs by Rachel Anderson, Community Landscape Specialist
Patrick Murphy and Yitao Li, Landscape Design Interns
Sale Day Reminders

NOTE: Saturday sale runs 9-2

Please remember that before you get to a cashier, a ticket writer needs to record your plants on a check-out sheet. Grouping your plants by size and price helps speed up the process.

The sale can be very busy and you may have to wait in line to check out. This year there will be an express lane for Nebraska Statewide members.

Plants can be held for you, either before or after you pay for them, by leaving them with a plant sitter on the north side of Pavilion 1.

You must show paid receipts for plants and vendor purchases to the door attendant as you exit Pavilion 1. Volunteers will be available to help you carry out your plants.

You can pay for your plants with cash, MasterCard, Visa, Discover, American Express or checks payable to Nebraska Statewide Arboretum (NSA).

To receive an NSA member discount, member identification is required at the checkout.

Bring Boxes and Carts

We strongly recommend bringing your own cart or wagon to carry your plants. If you bring a wagon, please label it so it doesn’t get confused with someone else’s; and don’t leave your wagon unattended.

We also encourage you to bring your own flats or trays to save on waste, although box flats will be available.

Please help us thank these Spring Affair Sponsors

Barcel Landscape Products, Inc.  
Minter Family and Rebecca Anderson  
CABG Patch Arboretum

Papio Valley Nursery, Inc.  
Ron & Wanda Kelly  
Lincoln Electric System  
Countryside Bank

*Sponsorship opportunities are still available at plantnebraska.org

Web Resources

plantnebraska.org  
retreenebraska.unl.edu  
nfs.unl.edu  
agronomy.unl.edu  
buy.unl.edu (Backyard Farmer)  
drought.unl.edu  
entomology.unl.edu  
ianrpubs.unl.edu (publications)  
mastergardener.unl.edu  
water.unl.edu  
www.bluebirdnursery.com

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT IS LURKING IN YOUR FIREWOOD

Tree-killing pests, like the emerald ash borer, hitchhike on firewood and spread insects and diseases that destroy our trees. Keep your backyard, campgrounds and favorite places safe from these pests.

PREVENTION IS KEY:

• Buy locally-harvested firewood.
• Ask a park ranger or campground host about where to get local firewood when you travel.
• If you brought firewood in from another area, BURN IT! Don’t leave it, don’t take it with you.

BUY LOCAL, BURN LOCAL.

To report potential emerald ash borer, contact the Nebraska Department of Agriculture at 402-471-2351.
PLANT LIST PAGES 7-10 ARE IN A SEPARATE PDF

THEY WILL BE THE INNER SIGNATURE AND WE WILL BE PRINTING EXTRAS OF THEM TO HANDOUT SEPARATELY
What Our Forests Can Teach Us

To design well with trees we first need to understand the ecosystem that they naturally grow in. There are many different types of forest and savanna ecosystems across the world, all having distinct environments, climates, species and even aesthetic qualities. Nebraska is not exactly known for its forests but we have some interesting forest pockets, primarily made up of deciduous trees.

Forest composition is determined by climate, terrain and availability of light (forest interior vs. forest edge) and of water (upland or lowland). In our region of the world, these elements play a significant factor in both the diversity of species and the aesthetics. Terrain influences moisture availability and microclimates so different plant communities inhabit the low areas (linden, pawpaw, birch) and north and east slopes than the more drought-tolerant species, like bur and black oak, which tend to grow on ridge tops and on south- and west-facing slopes.

Proximity to forest edge also influences plant communities. Forest edges occur along areas of disruption such as rivers, creeks, prairie edges, roads and paths. Light is plentiful in these edge environments, which allows for a greater diversity of plant life. Some of the most fascinating elements of the forests that stretch through the Midwest occur along forest edges where prairie plants intermingle. My favorite juxtapositions are where prairie grasses like Indiangrass and little bluestem, and perennials like the sharp yucca, grow right up to forest edge, at times weaving their way in between trunks if the light is sufficient.

Lesson 1: “Right tree, right place.” While we try to recreate the forest in our landscapes, we can apply lessons learned from the forest ecosystem to them. Our landscape composition should be influenced by terrain, climate, light availability and the presence of forest, just as it is in the forest. We have all heard the phrase “Right tree, Right place,” but have you thought about that phrase through a biological lens? There are questions we can ask to help guide us. What is your climate like? What kind of site do you have? Is it protected? Is it wide open? And are there terrain variations which make sloped areas drier and low areas wet? Are there existing trees or other features? How you answer these questions will help guide species selection and overall design.

Lesson 2: Forests contain layers. Using the concept of forest layers to drive our design helps us create aesthetically pleasing and ecologically functional landscapes. Composing a mixture of large-growing trees, understory trees, shrubs and herbaceous material.

Lesson 3: Canopy is important. The forest canopy is comprised of large-growing trees. Regionally it is composed predominantly of oak (Quercus); hickory (Carya); Linden (Tilia); ash (Fraxinus); sycamore (Platanus); hackberry (Celtis); and of course our mighty cottonwood (Populus). Heading west, diversity of these species diminishes and gives way to ponderosa pine forest. Heading east into Iowa and southeastern Nebraska move more of the mix. Canopy trees provide protection for the plants growing below them. Forests are cool environments as a result of the shade and evapotranspiration of leaves. The tall, strong trunks and filtered light are visually interesting. In our landscapes, canopy trees act as a ceiling, give scale to structures, frame views and even act as a screen, depending on the size of the property. Large trees also provide a myriad of other benefits. Placing a large-growing tree on the west and south side of a house provides substantial cooling benefits. Large trees, both evergreen and deciduous, protect from the wind—as an especially important function on open and rural properties. When large trees are used in more urban settings, such as street trees, their leaves also capture a substantial amount of stormwater.

Lesson 4: Small trees need protection. Smaller stunted trees, growing 15-30 feet high, make up the understory of the forest. Here the smaller trees such as redbud, serviceberry and pawpaw thrive in protected, partially-shaded conditions in and among larger trees. Their interesting leaf textures, form and bloom make these species change through the seasons. Many ornamental landscape trees, such as magnolia and dogwood that are native to the U.S. but not to Nebraska, grow in these understory environments. Looking at how understory trees naturally grow, it makes sense that they should be used in more protected environments. Their smaller stature visually connects the canopy trees and gives us a more comfortable sense of scale. There are more practical benefits as well. Understory trees, especially those with rounded canopies, low to mid-top, and/or multi-stems, provide visual screening. It is important to note that some of our smaller-growing trees, such as crabapple and Hawthorn, prefer more light and are naturally found in more scrub or edge conditions where light is plentiful.

Lesson 5: In forested areas, trees grow in communities. The forest is made up of plant communities that include shrubs and herbaceous material. Coralberry (Symphoricarpos) and currant (Ribes) are common shrubs in Nebraska woods. One of my favorite understory shrubs, creeping mahonia, grows natively in our ponderosa pine forests, making a dense, deep green mat below the towering straight pine trunks. Sun-loving species such as American plum are found on the forest edge.

Lesson 6: Landscapes are dynamic through the seasons. From spring ephemerals to the deep rust, yellow and crimson foliage of fall, forests are always changing. A walk through the early spring woods takes careful stepping not to tread on the delicate green foliage rising from the leaf bud. It is here, in the early spring months, where the herbaceous portion of our forest does its magic. Spring ephemerals like Jack-in-the-pulpit, Virginia bluebells and others come to life before the forest layers above them set leaf. They grow, bloom, fruit and go dormant before the dry summer months and dense shade sets in. The same spot a few months later can be a cool and shady refuge in the dog days of summer and by fall long shadows, pools of light and fall foliage will light up the woods. Landscapes change and we need to embrace these seasonal changes and biological cycles of plants.

Lesson 7: Landscapes change. Tree growth and disturbance influence the plant communities that can grow underneath them. In nature there are successional plants that over time give way to a more mature and established forest. In the same way, we have to anticipate the future growth of our landscapes as well as current conditions. For example, a common mistake is to plant woodland plants in and among new trees, where the current site conditions are sunny and hot. Instead, we need to plant sun-loving plants and transition them over time to more shade-tolerant plants. In the same vein, perhaps you have very mature shade trees. Are you planting for the future? What happens when there is a “forest disturbance”? Will there be trees to replace these trees or will the plant community need to change?

Lesson 8: No cool-season turfgrasses underfoot. Once again, we can’t recreate the forest, but we can take some steps that help with the long-term survivability of our trees. None of the trees in forests are surrounded by carefully-clipped cool season grasses. Landscapes are always more successful when you can incorporate trees into larger landscape beds. This gives separation from turfgrass and also allows you to manage the bed differently. Allowing leaf litter to decompose adds organic matter and gives a place for beneficial insects to overwinter.

Lesson 9: Diversity Not everything in our landscapes needs to be native, but our native forests and prairies give us a rich palette of plants that are adapted to Nebraska’s climate so consider buying trees grown from regionally native seed sources whenever possible.

Christina Hoyt, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum Executive Director

What Our Forests Can Teach Us
Pollinators need a habitat rich in native food sources, with access to water and shelter and protection from chemicals. This may not sound like your typical Nebraska lawn but creating pollinator habitat doesn’t necessarily mean a complete garden makeover. Here are some simple ways you can make your yard more pollinator-friendly.

Provide Water Sources
Small insects have a difficult time drinking from open water. Some pollinators get most of the liquid they need from drinking nectar while others need a water source. Bird baths or other vessels with a brick or rough rock for landing makes water more accessible for pollinators of all sizes.

Nesting Habitat
It’s easy to think about pollinators in summer when flowers are blooming and bees are buzzing, but what do they do the rest of the year? A few species migrate south for the winter but most are with us year-round and survive the cold temperatures by hibernating as adults (like the bumblebee) or as larvae and eggs. Including space for all types of hibernation is a critical part of creating pollinator habitat. To provide space for ground-nesting insects like bumblebees and mining bees, simply leave small bare areas. For carpenter and leaf cutter bees, leave grasses and hollow-stemmed perennials where they can overwinter. Decaying branches and snags offer shelter for beetles and flies. Butterflies and moths can hibernate as caterpillars in plant debris at the base of grasses and perennials. So leave garden cleanup until mid-April to preserve as many nests as possible, and even then you may want to leave 6-12 inches of stem still standing.

Protection from chemicals
Protection from chemicals is one of the most important parts of creating a successful pollinator habitat. If you provide all the qualities they look for in a home but do not protect the area from pesticide use, it can become a death trap. It’s best to limit use of lawn chemicals and place pollinator habitat in areas where you can avoid using insecticides and herbicides. To avoid drift from nearby, you may want to use signage and start friendly conversations with neighbors about what you are doing.

Food from Spring to Fall
Native flowers are rich in pollen and nectar. Research shows that native plants are four times more likely to attract adult pollinators than non-natives. In addition, many pollinator larvae feed from only a specific or very narrow range of host plants. So include native plants in your landscaping, especially larval host plants and ones that flower throughout the year. And don’t forget grasses. As well as being part of a balanced garden, native grasses are larval hosts for many species of butterflies, skippers and moths.

Spring-blooming Plants
- Large Beardtongue, *Penstemon grandiflorus*
- Wild Columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*
- Pasque Flower, *Pulsatilla patens*
- Dwarf Spiderwort, *Tradescantia harkyi*

Summer-blooming Plants
- Purple Poppy Mallow, *Callirhoe involucrata*
- Culver’s Root, *Veronicastrum virginicum*
- Virginia Mountain Mint, *Pycnanthemum virginianum*
- Rose Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*
- Little Joe Pye, *Eupatorium dubium* ‘Little Joe’

Fall-blooming Plants
- Aromatic Aster, *Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*
- Wild Senna, *Senna hebecarpa*
- Pitcher Sage, *Salvia azurea*

Grasses
- Indiangrass, *Sorghastrum nutans*
- Little Bluets, *Schizachyrium scoparium*
- Blue Grama, *Bouteloua gracilis*

Sarah Buckley, Bloom Box Program Coordinator

Personalized Bloom Box
**Sign up by April 30!**
Welcome bees and butterflies into your yard with a Bloom Box sized and personalized for your landscape.

**BLOOM BOX**

Options include:
- 24 plants for an 10x10’ garden
- Weed Shield PlantPack, 36 low-growers
- For schools, plants tailored for learning

plantnebraska.org/bloom-box

Monarch gardens

Stock seed
Plants for Tough Spots

Name Your Challenge

Native plants can handle some of the most challenging landscape problems:

**Low spots or wet spots.** Deep-rooted native or prairie plants can usually withstand extremes of wet to dry moisture better than most landscape plants.

**Dry shade under trees.** Root competition can be troublesome under trees, but there are plants that can take it.

**Dry shade under trees.** Root competition can be troublesome under trees, but there are plants that can take it.

Lychnis, 2-3'
Paeonia, 2-3
Papaver orientale, 2-3
Penstemon, 2-3
Persicaria, 2-4
Philadelphus microphyllus, 2-3
Philox, 2-3
Ratibida, 4'
Rudbeckia fulgida, 3-4'
Salvia azurea, 4'
Senna hebecarpa, 2-3'
Silene regia, 3-4'
Solidago, 3-4'

**PERENNIALS, full sun**
Acantlesia, 3-4'
Achillea, 3-4'
Alcea rosea, 3-6`
Amorpha canescens, 4'
Asclepias, 2-4'
Aster, 3-4'
Baptisia lactea, 36-48'
Boltonia, 3-4'
Buddleja, 3-7'
Carthamus, 3'
Centranthus ruber, 2-3'
Echinacea, 3-4'
Eupatorium dubium, 3-4'
Fallisia biflora, 12'
Helianthus ‘Lemon Queen’, 4-5'
Hibiscus, 3-5'
Ipomopsis aggregata, 4'
Iris sibirica & spuria, 2-3'
Kniphofia caulescens, 3'
Lepeolz, 3'
Liatis, 3-5'
Lycopus, 1-2'
Malva, 2-3'
Monarda, 3-4'
Polemonium reptans, 3-4'
Polemonium, 3-4'
Ranunculus, 1-2'
Rudbeckia fulgida, 3-4'
Salvia azurea, 4'
Salvia farinacea, 4'
Silene regia, 3-4'
Solidago, 3-4'

**PERENNIALS, partial shade**
Acomanum, 3-5
Calliarpa dichotoma, 2-3'
Chelone glabra ‘Black Ace’, 3-6'
Clematis vines 6+ ft.
Delphinium, 3-5'
Filipendula, 3-5'
Heptacodium miconioides, 15'
Ligularia, 4-5'
Lobelia, 3-4'
Lonicera, 8'
Lysimachia, 2-3'
Monarda, 3-4'
Thalictrum, 2-5'
Weigela, 6'
Wisteria, 15'

**PERENNIALS, shade**
Actaea, 36-60'
Hosta, 3-4'
Tricyrtis, 24-36'

**Groundcovers for Living Mulch**

One of the best ways to avoid weed- ing is to crowd them out with groundcovers.* Asterisk denotes very aggressive.

**LOW GROUNDCOVERS FOR SUN**
*Cerastium tomentosum, sun-in-summe
Euonymous, cushion spurge
Geranium sanguineum, cranesbill
Juniperus, spreading juniper
Sachychs, lambs ear*
Symphoricarpos, coralberry
Thymus, thyme
Veronica prostrata, speedwell

**GROUNDCOVERS 6-8”**
Achillea, yarrow
Aurinia saxatifol, basket-of-gold
Napeta, catmint
Salvia
Sedum, stonecrop

**GRASSES FOR SUNNY AREAS**
Bouteloua curtipendula, side oats gra
*Bouteloua dactyloides, buffalo grass
Bouteloua gracilis, blue grass
Carex bresci, C. buckwheat
Muhielbergni cuspidata, plains muhi

**GROUNDCOVERS FOR PART SHADE**
Aegopodium podagraria, bishop’s weed
Ajuga, bugleweed
Alchemilla mollis, lady’s mantle
Bergenia cordifolia, heartleaf bergenia
Brunnera macrophylla, Jack Frost is a
variegated cultivar
Cerastium tomentosum, plantain sedge
Ceratostigma plumbaginoides, plumbago
Coronilla varia, lily of the valley
Epimedium, barrenwort
Euphorbia, cushion spurge

**Euphorbia, cushion spurge**
Euonymus fortunei, wintercreeper*
Fragaria virginiana, barren strawberry
Gaulium odoratum, sweet woodrank
Geranium sanguineum, cranesbill
Hedera helix, English ivy*
Lamium maculatum, spotted dead nettle
Lysimachia nummularia, moneywort
Pachysandra terminalis, Japanese spurge
Vinca minor, periwinkle*

**NATIVE PLANTS FOR SHADE**
Asarum canadense, wild ginger
Camea species
Heuchera richardsonii, coralbells
Pachysandra, golden ragwort

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Friends of Extension

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Benson plant rescue

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waddell & reed
Everything a gardener needs—
plantnebraska.org/plants

Lists of native and recommended plants, landscape tips, publications, seasonal articles...

The Arboretum has compiled a lot of resources over the last 40 years of work. More, in fact, than can be easily gathered in a single website. We’ve tried to make sure the best, most essential and most concise bits of information are available on our revamped website, though, and with the fewest number of clicks. Whether you’re a new gardener or someone who’s been planting for decades, you’ll find something of interest.

Most of the landscape resources for gardeners are under the Plants menu tab. In Plants/Resources you’ll find lists of native and recommended plants, how-to guides, videos and outdoor ideas for preschoolers to seniors. Under Plants/Publications there’s a wealth of publications on prairies, trees, pollinators and much more. Plants/This Month offers timely information for your interest and efforts and Plants/Bloom Box introduces you to information and plants specifically for pollinators.

If you work with larger landscapes, under the Community Landscapes tab you’ll find information about current grant opportunities, developing a public landscape and interesting graphics and case studies highlighting school landscapes, waterwise plantings and more.

There’s always a lively conversation going on the Arboretum’s Facebook (or Twitter or Pinterest or Instagram) page. Gardeners are a curious, engaged and lively group and there’s always room for one more bit of experience, tip or advice.

If you can’t find what you want online, give us a call or email, come to a free first Thursday brown-bag at the Jane Snyder Trail Center, 228 N 21 Street in Lincoln. Or join us at a plant sale or tour or other event. You’ll always be able to find us… we’ll be in the garden somewhere nearby.