



Leafings

A Newsletter of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum
Spring 2025

plantnebraska.org

Thank You for a Fabulous *Spring Affair!*

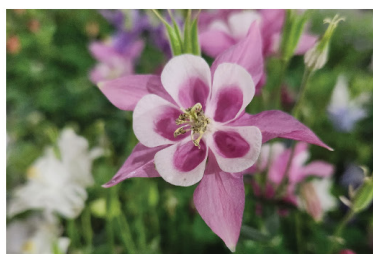
We couldn't be more grateful to the more than 3,000 shoppers, our legion of volunteers, our event sponsor—Great Plains Nursery—our creative and talented vendors and our members, all of whom helped to make this year's Spring Affair a fabulous success!

The three-day extravaganza kicked off on the evening of Thursday, April 24 with record attendance at the Preview Party and Preview Sale. Guests enjoyed a tasty taco bar, cocktails and conversation, delightful music by Jack Rodenburg and plant shopping (of course!).

Friday was smooth sailing (no tornadoes this year!), with more than 700 shoppers streaming into Sandhills Global Events Center when doors opened at 2 p.m. The check-out line grew quickly, but our tireless volunteers tallied orders and moved plants and people through the line with efficiency. We truly could not pull off an event of this magnitude without the help of our volunteers!

The final morning of the sale on Saturday was a bit more mellow as shoppers sipped coffees and strolled the aisles in search of gems for their gardens and yards.

Not only is Spring Affair the Great Plains' biggest plant sale, it's also the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum's biggest fundraiser of the year. Your support helps us plant trees, create sustainable landscapes and offer expert advice and environmental education in cities and towns across Nebraska all year long. Thank you for helping us Plant Nebraska!



Mission

We plant Nebraska for healthy people, vibrant communities and a resilient environment.

Board Members

Julie Zahn, *President*
Syracuse

Edward Pohren, *President-Elect*
Ashland

Carol Thomas, *Treasurer*
Syracuse

Leah Meyer, *Secretary*
Lincoln

John Cariotto, Lincoln

Megan Fogue, Lincoln

Bob Grimit, Lincoln

Jeff Kennedy, Gothenburg

Katie Markheim, Gering

Karen Pesek, Omaha

Dr. Richard Bishchoff, *Ex Officio*
IANR

John Erixson, *Ex Officio*
Nebraska Forest Service

A Message from the Executive Director

Happy spring to one and all! Each spring I am fortunate to be able to send you this missive to celebrate a new season full of opportunity. This year is no different, as our upcoming season is filled with fun and important events that will allow us to connect with you throughout the state.

First, we are excited to welcome new affiliate sites to our Nebraska Statewide Arboretum network. Already this spring we welcomed Westview High School Arboretum in Bennington, Hawley Hamlet in Lincoln and Cody Park in North Platte. We have many other sites working toward their accreditation across the state, and we hope to be able to celebrate those sites in July during Member Appreciation Week.

Speaking of Member Appreciation Week, plans are well underway for all of our summer events. June kicks off with Nebraska Wildflower Week (June 1-8), and we have wonderful plans in the works. From a guided wildflower hike around Chimney Rock to a return of wine and trivia and our annual Gering plant sale, there is something for everyone during Wildflower Week.

New this year, we're moving our Lincoln and Omaha Garden Walks to July 8 and 15 so we can enjoy the blooms at the height of their summer glory. I can't wait to see you all (a little sweaty) at the gardens chosen for this year's walks. July closes with Member Appreciation Week (July 21-25), featuring trivia, tours and talks during our most-loved week of the summer.

Finally, thank you all for your support during what continues to be uncertain times for nonprofit organizations around the country. We do not take you or your support—be it time or money or advocacy—for granted. Thank you for what you do to support our work to Plant Nebraska; we'll keep planting thanks to you!



Hanna Pinneo
Executive Director
Nebraska Statewide Arboretum



Tree Planting & Landscape Grants

We are pleased to announce that the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum recently received two grants from the Nebraska Environmental Trust. We are excited to pass this funding through to public entities across Nebraska that have plans to pursue tree planting and sustainable landscaping projects in the near future.

Grant applications will open soon. Please visit our program funding webpage at plantnebraska.org/funding for more information and updates.

Growing Our Community Forests

Trees provide tremendous benefits to our communities, but they are facing significant challenges right now.

Every neighborhood, city and town has a community forest, providing residents with a multitude of benefits, such as cooling shade, wind reduction and noise abatement. Healthy community forests also increase property values, attract more residents and businesses to the area, improve air and water quality, aid in better stormwater management, improve resident's physical and mental well-being, reduce crime and store excess carbon, which helps mitigate climate change.

Oh, and by the way, they also produce the oxygen we need to breathe—can't forget that one!

Together, all the trees and plants in a community forest have a huge impact on the beauty, livability and economic vitality of our urban environments. But urban forests are facing unique and serious challenges to their health and longevity right now.

Challenges to Healthy Community Forests

People, Knowledge and Time. We spend a lot of time indoors these days, relying on air conditioners to keep us comfortable. But not too long ago—possibly your grandparents or great-grandparents generation—people didn't have air conditioning and depended on shade trees to keep them cool in summer. They planted trees, learned how to care for them and realized that tree benefits outweigh any mess or risk.

Climate change is making our Earth warmer; in fact, Earth's average temperature in 2024 was the warmest recorded since the beginning of modern recordkeeping in 1801. Planting trees is one simple way to fight back against a changing climate.

Urban Growing Environment. Community forests grow surrounded by buildings and hard surfaces. In addition, urban soils are usually poor following construction, making it difficult for trees to grow and shortening their lives. Growing areas are often limited, too, reducing tree root growth and overall tree health.

This difficult growing environment is often paired with disinterest in trees by homeowners and commercial developers. Communities with a healthy, thriving urban

forest promote tree planting to homeowners and develop policies for tree planting and maintenance by commercial developers.

Misperception of Risk. Large older trees are often seen as hazards, while the tremendous benefits they provide to the environment are undervalued. Instead of regular monitoring and maintenance pruning to mitigate risk, trees are removed and often not replaced.

Dwarfing of Tree Height. When large trees are removed, they are frequently replaced with small ornamental trees or narrow columnar trees. Medium to small maturing trees (20-40 feet in height) are also a growing preference for many homeowners, commercial developers and roadway plantings. This reduced urban leaf canopy provides fewer benefits than larger shade trees.

Lack of Diversity. Whether through choice, lack of knowledge or lack of selection, in urban plantings a small number of tree species become favorites and are used too frequently, reducing urban forest diversity.

One guideline, called the 30-20-10 rule, helps communities broaden diversity by inventorying their current tree species and adjusting future plantings to not allow more than the following:

- 30% of trees from one family
- 20% from one genus
- 10% of any single tree species

Urgency for Planting

In recent years, communities have lost trees to storms, drought, flood, insects (emerald ash borer) and disease (Dutch elm disease). But trees take time to grow and reach the size at which they can provide significant benefits, so we need to get busy planting trees now!

As the saying goes, "The ideal time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, but the second best time is now."

Sarah Browning is the District Forester for the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum.



Feature Tree: *Common Hackberry*

It may not be the most popular or the most attractive of our Nebraska native trees, but the common hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), is an important species, especially for our butterfly population. In fact, according to Creighton University biology professor and conservationist Dr. Ted Burk, hackberry supports more butterflies than any other native tree in Nebraska. While many other tree species support Lepidoptera, most of these species are moths. Hackberry, on the other hand, supports tawny emperor, mourning cloak, question mark, American snout and the hackberry emperor, among others, all of which are butterflies.

"We seldom see these butterfly species in our gardens because they don't feed on nectar, but on tree sap, fruit and bird droppings," said Omaha Master Gardener Steve Rothe. But just because we don't see them doesn't mean they aren't there.

Hackberry trees mature at 40-60 feet tall with a 40-60-foot spread. They thrive in moist, well-drained soil and in full sun, but can tolerate some shade, as well as a wide variety of soil conditions, including dry and poor soils. Hackberry also tolerates wind and urban pollutants well, making it a good choice for a street tree.

As it matures, hackberry bark can take on a distinctive corky texture. The tree also produces a fruit crop of berry-like drupes that turn a deep purple color and are attractive to a variety of birds, including woodpeckers and cedar waxwings, and other wildlife.

The next time you're shopping for a tree to plant, think of the butterflies and plant a hackberry.



Save the Date

Visit our events page at plantnebraska.org/events for more information.

June

Wildflower Week Events

Celebrate the uniqueness and beauty of Nebraska's wildflowers with us during the first week in June. See the back page for a full list of NSA events and visit plantnebraska.org/wildflower-week for events held statewide.

Spring Plant Sales

Friday Plant Sales

June 13 & 27 | 12:30-4:30 p.m.
UNL East Campus Greenhouses
2150 N. 38th St., Lincoln

Saturday Plant Sale

June 14 | 9 a.m. to 12 noon
UNL East Campus Greenhouses
2150 N. 38th St., Lincoln

East Campus Discovery Days

Saturday June 14 (also July 12 & August 9)
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
East Campus Mall on UNL's East Campus
More information: discoverydays.unl.edu

Plant Sale at Fontenelle Forest

Saturday, June 21 | 9 a.m. to 12 noon
Camp Brewster, 1313 Bellevue Blvd. N, Bellevue

Pollinator Party Mini Plant Sale at Schramm Education Center

Saturday, June 21 | 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
21502 NE 31, Gretna

July

Garden Walks

Lincoln: July 8 | 5-8 p.m.
Omaha: July 15 | 5-8 p.m.
More information at plantnebraska.org/garden-walks.

Member Appreciation Week

July 21-25
Visit plantnebraska.org/member-appreciation for details.

October

Plants & Pints

Tuesday, October 21
More information soon at plantnebraska.org/plants-pints.

New Staff Members Join NSA

Sarah Browning, District Forester

In her role as district forester, Sarah will work with community leaders and a variety of stakeholders to implement grant-funded projects related to tree planting, care and removal and forestry workforce development. She will also be responsible for developing recommendations, providing plant suggestions, conducting project evaluations and developing strategies to achieve Nebraska Forest Service (NFS), NSA and client goals.

Sarah comes to NSA with 40 years of experience in horticulture, the last 26 devoted to environmental education as an Extension Educator with Nebraska Extension. She earned a Master of Science degree in horticulture from the University of Nebraska and a Bachelor of Science degree in horticulture from Northwest Missouri State University, has been a certified arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture since 2010 and is a member of the Nebraska Arborist Association.



John Woodworth, Assistant Conservation Forester

John Woodworth recently started at NSA and NFS as an assistant conservation forester for eastern Nebraska. John will help to coordinate and deliver programs for the Urban and Community Forestry grants, including tree removal, planting and care and forestry workforce development. He will work closely with communities to coordinate these projects, ensuring that grant requirements are met and that the projects are successful.

John graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2022 with a Bachelor of Science degree in fisheries and wildlife. During his time at

UNL he was employed as a student worker with NSA, helping Bob Henrickson in the greenhouse. After completing his degree, John was employed as a horticulturalist at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo, and now we are lucky to have him back at NSA!

NSA Welcomes New Affiliate Sites

We are thrilled to welcome two new Landscape Steward Affiliate Sites and an Accredited Arboretum to the statewide network: Cody Park in North Platte, Hawley Hamlet in Lincoln and Westview Arboretum at Westfield High School in Bennington.

With our network of more than 100 Accredited Arboreta and Landscape Steward Affiliate Sites, NSA aims to "take the arboretum to the people" across the state, inviting all Nebraskans to explore the purposeful beauty offered by trees, gardens and greenspaces.

For more information about how your public greenspace can become an NSA affiliate site or arboretum, visit plantnebraska.org/what-we-do.



From left to right: NSA Sustainable Landscape Specialist Sarah Buckley, Westview High School Curriculum Specialist Rachael Arens and NSA Member & Affiliate Coordinator Toby Burnham

Trees for the *Future*

A new pilot program helps Nebraska towns grow their own tree nurseries.



Above: Chad Kleveland cares for a young dormant tree in Beatrice's community nursery. Below: Planting the community nursery in Valley.

The Nebraska Statewide Arboretum recently launched a pilot program to help Nebraska towns grow their own community nurseries. The program provides young trees and supplies, giving local communities a chance to plant trees in public spaces as part of a long-term greenspace strategy. The program, which was made possible by a grant from the Nebraska Environmental Trust, has funded nurseries in Beatrice, Eustis, Valley and Crete.

Hanna Pinneo, executive director of the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, said the organization recognized a need for affordable access to supplies in a time when the cost of trees is rising.

"Especially for our small communities, they really have to decide where they're going to invest limited funds," Pinneo said. "When you're spending money on removing trees, community members don't want to spend more to plant trees, but there are a lot of reasons we want to make sure we're replanting for the overall viability of our communities."

The new nursery at Evergreen Home Cemetery in Beatrice has more than 30 young trees. Once the trees are mature, they will be planted at the cemetery and at Beatrice High School and Elementary School. The cemetery and high school are affiliate members of NSA.

Chad Kleveland, sexton at Evergreen Home Cemetery, said they were initially interested in the program to start building a stock of trees to replace aging trees in the cemetery.

"Every year we were planting some trees, and every year we were losing trees," Kleveland said. "We thought it made sense to be able to help the community and help ourselves at the same time."

Evergreen Home Cemetery and Beatrice High School intend to collaborate on maintaining and replanting the nursery. Colton Husa, a teacher at Beatrice High School, said he hopes it can be an educational tool for students.

"It's going to be great being able to not only get trees from out here, but also show students the real-world experience of how it's done and how they keep the nursery up," he said.



This article was written by Kristina Jackson and originally published in Nebraska Today.

Traveling This Summer?

Visit a garden with your NSA Membership!

Did you know that with your NSA membership, you get free or reduced admissions (and other discounts) at more than 300 botanical gardens in North America? Next time you're planning a trip, visit the American Horticultural Society's website —ahsgardening.org—to search for gardens participating in the reciprocal agreement. Here are some of our staff members' favorite gardens to visit:

Sarah Buckley, Sustainable Landscape Specialist

The Japanese Tea Garden in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park

This is the first botanical garden I remember visiting and will always be special for that reason—not to mention that tea and gardens are two of my favorite things in one place. It's a small garden—just a few acres—so it can get crowded on a weekend. For the best experience, arrive when they open on a weekday.

The garden was built for the World's Fair and then managed by a Japanese landscape architect who lived on site as caretaker until WW II. The rebuilding of the relationship between San Francisco and Japan through the sister city program with Osaka is an important part of the garden's legacy today.



John Woodworth

Assistant Conservation Forester Brooklyn Botanical Garden

I loved visiting the BBG because it's a magical plant palace tucked away in the big bustling city. It is a diversity hotbed, containing plants from around the globe. In addition to the exotic exhibits like the lilac collection, Shakespeare-esque English cottage garden, and Mediterranean herb collection, this public garden does an exemplary job of showcasing native trees and perennials.



Chrissy Land, Western Community Forester

The Gardens on Spring Creek, Ft. Collins, Colorado

The Gardens on Spring Creek are for the real plant nerds of the Front Range Region. They use the gardens as a test site for many of the Plant Select cultivars and varieties. Even though we visited on one of the hottest days of the summer, there was plenty of shade for us to hop from one whimsical spot to another. The metal art display was the perfect addition! They also have a butterfly house that is absolutely on my bucket list for next time.



Justin Evertson

Green Infrastructure Coordinator Morton Arboretum, Lisle, Illinois

I really enjoy Morton Arboretum because it's a great place to see an amazing variety of trees and shrubs, most of which we can grow in eastern Nebraska. The Morton Arboretum also has a great children's garden that's fun to explore.



Want to learn more about some of the gardens that participate in the reciprocal agreement? Listen to Episode 86, "Favorite Gardens Visited," of our Bloom Box: Growing Deeper podcast. Listen to Bloom Box: Growing Deeper anywhere you get your podcasts or via our website at plantnebraska.org/podcast.

Get Involved

JOIN US for events, talks, podcasts and plant sales.

BECOME A MEMBER.

We are a nonprofit organization that relies on memberships and donations to make our many programs and resources possible. More information at plantnebraska.org.

Connect with Us!



facebook.com/NeArb



[@nebraskastatewidearboretum1890](https://www.youtube.com/@nebraskastatewidearboretum1890)



[@nebraskastatewidearboretum](https://www.instagram.com/nebraskastatewidearboretum)

Sign up for our e-newsletter at plantnebraska.org.

plantnebraska.org

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum
102 Keim Hall
P.O. Box 830964
Lincoln, NE 68583-0964

Non Profit
U.S.
Postage
PAID



NEBRASKA STATEWIDE
Arboretum



INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Wildflower Week 2025

Come explore Nebraska's beautiful wildflowers with us in western Nebraska on June 4-7. All events are free and open to the public. More information and registration for these events, plus additional statewide Wildflower Week events, is available at plantnebraska.org/wildflower-week.

Wednesday, June 4

Volunteer Planting in the Village of Morrill
6-8 p.m.
F.O.M.O. Park
30436 Lucille Ave., Morrill
Meet at the marquee in F.O.M.O Park.

Thursday, June 5

Wildflower Hike at Chimney Rock
9-11 a.m.
Meet at Chimney Rock Museum.

NSA Members & Friends Gathering

6:30 - 9 p.m.

Papa Moon Vineyards & Winery, Scottsbluff

Friday, June 6

Ribbon-cutting: Scotts Bluff County
Pollinator Garden
10 a.m.
Scotts Bluff County Courthouse, Gering

Plant Talk & Sunset Wildflower Hike

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area, Gering
Park permit required for entry (available for purchase at the park entrance).

Saturday, June 7

Plant Sale

8:30 - 11 a.m.

Community Ever Green House, Gering