Gardening in a Changing Environment

10th Annual SALT* Conference for Homeowners
("Smaller American Lawns Today")

Saturday, November 3, 2012
Olin Science Center Auditorium
8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

“Plants give us oxygen for the lungs and for the soul.” — Linda Solegato

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Dealing with Change

It is evident that our environment is gradually changing. Is there anything homeowners can do to fortify their home grounds to prepare for any environmental changes that may take place in the future? If storms threaten, oceans rise, or droughts come, is there anything you can do now to ensure the sustainability of your land? We wish we could give you a foolproof formula, but we cannot. We have, however, gathered together experts in the field who will share with you what they are doing now to maintain the sustainability of their land and what they have done when disaster has struck. They will show you how to make the best of a bad (or good) situation, and how to create lawns that will better withstand assaults from nature.

Ken Druse, award-winning garden writer and photographer will speak on "Natural Companions: Inspiring Combinations of Plants that Grow Together." His talk introduces heat and cold tolerant varieties of diverse species that will thrive in our part of the world. Ken's garden has gone through some difficult times recently, and you will travel with him through the trials of gardening in the "new environment." Along with garden photos, his presentation features unique botanical images created in collaboration with artist Ellen Hoverkamp using modern digital technology. The results reveal the vivid characteristics of favorite plants with amazing color, depth, and clarity. The New York Times called Ken "The guru of natural gardening," but he is best known for his eighteen books, a few of which will be for sale at the conference. He can also be found on his podcast the public radio show "Ken Druse Real Dirt," through their computers (kendruse.com), via iTunes, and on the home page of "Organic Gardening" magazine.

Karen Bussolini, trained as a painter, and had a career as an architectural photographer before specializing in garden photography, writing, lecturing, and eco-friendly garden coaching. Karen's talk, "Survival in the Darwinian Garden: Planting the Fittest," is an exploration of good, tough, well-adapted plants and gardeners' strategies for encouraging plants to survive beautifully in their gardens. Choosing plants that want to grow where we plant them is a good way to have a garden that provides more pleasure and less work. Karen is a NOFA (Northeast Organic Farmers Association) accredited organic land care professional. Her outstanding photographs have appeared in a multitude of magazines and books published throughout the world, and she was sole photographer for six books. Her latest publication (2011, Timber Press), "The Naturescape Workbook: How to Create a Garden with Nature as Your Guide" with author Beth Young will be available for sale at the conference.

Did you ever feel like the environment is being destroyed and there is nothing you can do about it? According to Carole Sevilla Brown, conservation biologist, there is something you can do! In her talk "Ecosystem Gardening for Wildlife," Carole will show you how you can make a difference by learning to make healthier choices in your garden. By using sustainable gardening practices, reducing the size of your lawn, conserving water, creating healthy soil, and learning which plants to avoid and how to choose the best plants for your specific garden, you will create a welcoming habitat for wildlife in your garden which will have immediate benefits for birds, butterflies, pollinators, and other wildlife in your ecosystem garden. Carole is an author, educator, speaker, passionate birder, butterfly watcher, and naturalist who travels around the country teaching people to garden sustainably, conserve natural resources, and create a welcoming habitat for wildlife. She created the popular website "Ecosystem Gardening," and her book of the same name will be released soon. She also founded and manages two team websites: "Beautiful Wildlife Garden" and "Native Plants and Wildlife Gardens."

Michael Dietz, a water resources educator, will speak on "A Rain Garden Grows in Connecticut" in which he will explain what rain gardens are and how to install one at your own home. Stormwater runoff from developed areas is a large source of pollution to our local waterways and, ultimately, the Long Island Sound. Rain gardens are a simple tool to reduce the impacts of stormwater runoff. He will begin with a brief background on how stormwater pollution occurs, and then provide details on how to install a residential garden, including sizing, planning, construction, planting, and maintenance. Mike works for the University of Connecticut and is responsible for running the CT NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials) program. His position is jointly held between the Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR) and the Connecticut Sea Grant College Program at the Avery Point campus. Mike received both his Master's and Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut.

DIRECTIONS

From I-95 Northbound: Exit 83, left at end of ramp onto Williams Street. Turn right onto Route 32 North at the first traffic light (top of hill, at Coast Guard Academy). Turn left into the college main entrance at the second traffic light.

From I-95 Southbound: Exit 84N at end of Goldstar Bridge (over Thames River between Groton and New London) which becomes Route 32. Turn left at second light into the main college entrance.

From I-395 Southbound: Left Exit 78 onto connector to Route 32 South. College entrance is about 2.5 miles south. Turn right into main college entrance at the seventh traffic signal.

After entering the college main entrance, proceed up the hill. At top of hill is the campus safety booth at which point, you must turn left or right. Olin Science Center is the first building on your right. You may park in any space marked “faculty and staff.” There are no parking restrictions on weekends. If parking is not readily available, turn left at the campus safety booth and follow that road to the South Parking Lot where there is plenty of parking.