



Grow Native Massachusetts *presents*

EVENINGS WITH EXPERTS: 2019

A Public Lecture Series at the Cambridge Public Library ~449 Broadway

First Wednesdays
February through May
7:00-8:30 p.m.
Free and open to all.



 **February 6**
The Challenge and Promise of Restoring Urban Landscapes
Steven Handel
Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolution, Rutgers University

Degradation of our urban areas by human activity is driving the need to rebuild native habitats. But potential restoration sites are often small and heavily altered, and questions about the feasibility of renewal abound. Can these landscapes be designed and managed to support functioning ecosystems? Which target sites are practical, especially in this time of rapid climate change? Ecologist Steven Handel has researched these issues for much of his career. His work—including projects at Freshkills Park, Brooklyn Bridge Park, and other coastal sites—illustrates the surprising transformations that are possible. Come learn about urban ecological restoration in a world that desperately needs it. *Dr. Steven Handel is currently a Visiting Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, and editor of the journal, Ecological Restoration.*

 **March 6**
Sugar, Sex, and Poison: Understanding the Vital Powers of Plants
William Cullina
Executive Director, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

Are we humans masters of the world, or are plants really the ones in charge? What they lack in locomotion, they compensate for in structure and chemistry. Botanist Bill Cullina explains how plant life is at the center of a carefully balanced natural economy that is critical to our ecosystems. Plants photosynthesize and power the food chain. They make pollen, nectar, and fruits to nourish animal partnerships that aid them with vital services such as pollination and seed dispersal. And although eaten by others, plants are far from helpless, having evolved a dizzying arsenal of poisons, spines, camouflage, and other means to deter herbivores. Join us for a deep dive into these fascinating ecological dynamics; this knowledge is key to sound horticulture. *William Cullina is a nationally known author of numerous acclaimed books about native plants and horticulture.*

 **April 3**
More than Just the Buzz: Finding Real Solutions to Native Pollinator Declines
Robert Gegeer
Assistant Professor of Biology, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

For two decades, pollinators have been declining in abundance, species, and geographic distribution at an unprecedented rate worldwide. While media attention has focused on the domesticated European honeybee, the decline of native species poses a major threat to global biodiversity due to the keystone role that pollinators play in terrestrial ecosystems. Biologist Rob Gegeer explains the beautifully complex interactions between plants and the insects that pollinate them—intricate ecological systems that we are only beginning to understand. Discover how data about pollination ‘networks’ can help develop effective conservation strategies, and learn the practical actions you can take to support these vital insects. *Dr. Robert Gegeer is the founder of the Bee-cology Project, which uses citizen science to collect important ecological data on native pollinators.*

 **May 1**
A Grassland Restoration Tale of Weeds, Wildlife, and Renewal
Jenna Webster
Senior Designer, Larry Weaner Landscape Associates

Restoring weed-dominated habitats is a complex process, and even more so in public landscapes with diverse constituencies. Come learn how Larry Weaner Landscape Associates negotiated these challenges in their restoration plan for a 100-acre grassland at Croton Point Park in New York. Located atop a capped landfill, this site provides vital habitat for imperiled bird species. Jenna Webster and her team sought stakeholder input, utilized scientific research, and synthesized crowd-sourced ecological data, to create a thoughtful restoration plan now under construction. This case study gives us valuable lessons for land restoration on sites both large and small, particularly for protecting specialized habitat for native wildlife. *Jenna Webster is co-curator of the New Directions in the American Landscape conference, and teaches ecological design at the Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware.*

More Info:
www.grownativemass.org

Thank you to our program partners for their support of this series: Cambridge Public Library, Mount Auburn Cemetery, and the Boston Society of Landscape Architects.

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Every garden matters ~ Every landscape counts®