



# 26th ANNUAL LAHR SYMPOSIUM NATIVE PLANTS: INSPIRING NEW DIRECTIONS

The 26th annual Lahr Symposium looks at the work of six landscape architects, authors, and gardeners who were inspired by native plants to change course and pursue unique callings. From journalist turned naturalist to researcher transformed into native fruit aficionado, these individuals found that native plants can have an irresistible effect. Learn from them how native plants can foster creativity in the garden and inspire new insights into nature and landscape design.

## SPEAKERS

**Peggy Bowers** is a professional horticulturist, specializing in the design and maintenance of public gardens. She is currently the Garden and Greenhouse Manager at the Mount Vernon Estate and has previously worked at Dumbarton Oaks and the American Horticultural Society's River Farm, where she oversaw the installation of their new meadow habitat. She has a passion for native plants and the wider natural world and is an active advocate of environmentally friendly gardening practices. Outside of her official duties, she designs environmentally conscious gardens for homes and schools, volunteers with invasive plant programs, and assists the Lost Dog and Cat Rescue Foundation.

**Melanie Choukas-Bradley** is an author and naturalist who has written three books about the D.C. area flora, including *City of Trees: The Complete Field Guide to the Trees of Washington, D.C.* and two books about the history and plant life of Sugarloaf Mountain. Her knowledge of local plant life has led her to be a regular contributor to the *Washington Post* and a guest on the *Diane Rehm Show*, *All Things Considered*, and the *Kojo Nnamdi Show*. Current projects include a new book about Rock Creek Park, teaching wildflower classes, guiding nature trips, and serving on the board of the Maryland Native Plant Society.

**Kevin Conrad** serves as Curator of the Woody Landscape Plant Germplasm Repository (WLPGR), which is managed by the National Arboretum. His team evaluates, conserves, and distributes woody plants considered to have value or potential use in the cultivated landscape. His career also has included nursery work, teaching at local universities, and serving the Arboretum as an acting Collections Curator, and Herbarium Collections Manager. Since 2005, he has guided the WLPGR in collecting and conserving plants native to the eastern U.S., with emphasis on genera including *Fraxinus*, *Magnolia*, *Stewartia*, *Hamamelis*, *Cotinus*, *Cladrastus*, and *Callicarpa*.

**Pierre Moitrier** is a professional gardener at Designs for Greener Gardens, the company that he owns and operates with his wife. After leaving his native France 12 years ago with a degree in Sustainable Rural Land Use, Pierre arrived in the U.S. and immersed himself in the world of gardening. He quickly developed a passion for creating artistic garden structures from native plant materials. His special talent is designing and building unique hardscapes for the garden, including stonework and creative woodwork using native *Juniperus virginiana* in its rough form. His work has been featured in the *Washington Post*, *American Nurseryman*, and on *Home and Garden TV*.

**Thomas Rainer** is a registered landscape architect, teacher, and writer living in Arlington, Virginia. He is a passionate advocate for an ecologically expressive design aesthetic that does not imitate nature, but interprets it. His planting designs focus on creating a modern expression of the ground plane with a largely native palette of perennials and grasses. Thomas has designed landscapes for the U.S. Capitol grounds; the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial; and The New York Botanical Garden; as well as over 80 other gardens from Maine to Florida. He teaches planting design for George Washington University and writes an award-winning blog, *Grounded Design*.

**Dr. Lee Reich** is an avid farmdener (more than a gardener, less than a farmer) who turned from plant and soil research with the USDA and Cornell University to writing, lecturing, and consulting about a range of garden-related topics. He is the author of several books including *Uncommon Fruits for Every Garden*, *Landscaping with Fruit*, and *The Pruning Book*. He writes a garden column for the Associated Press that appears from coast to coast. His farmden has been featured by *The New York Times* and *Martha Stewart Living*, and he has won awards from *National Gardening* and *Organic Gardening* magazines.

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**MARCH 31, 2012**  
— presented by the —  
**US NATIONAL ARBORETUM**  
in BELTSVILLE, MARYLAND



LAHR SYMPOSIUM  
U.S. National Arboretum  
3501 New York Ave., NE  
Washington, DC 20002-1958

Official Business

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Join us in Beltsville!** This year the Lahr Symposium and Plant Sale will be held at the Agricultural Research Service's bucolic 6,600-acre campus in Beltsville, MD. See inside for complete details, including maps and directions.

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# Schedule of Presentations

**8:30 Registration and Early-bird Plant Sale**

**9:30 Welcome and Introduction**  
Joan Feely, U.S. National Arboretum

**9:40 *Turning to Natives***

**Melanie Choukas-Bradley** will tell the story of how the native plants of the Washington area transformed her life. Arriving in the D.C. area as a young journalist more than 30 years ago, she was instantly struck by the magnificence of the city's trees. Her professional life turned from journalism to the exploration and documentation of the fascinating flora of the Washington region. She will describe her journey as an author and teacher devoted to promoting the unique botanic legacy of the nation's capital, and share her passion for the distinct beauty of Washington's native trees and wildflowers.

**10:40 Refreshment Break**

**11:00 *Native Fruit Revival***

Often, when people decide to grow fruits, they choose to plant apples, peaches, pears, or other familiar market fruits that reflect our European garden heritage. Why not revive the enthusiasm for Native American fruits? They are often better adapted to our growing conditions, and they enhance our landscapes with their distinct ornamental and ecological qualities. **Lee Reich** will explore the beauty, the variety of flavors, and the cultivation of delicious native American fruits including persimmon, pawpaw, beach plum, lingonberry, blueberries, and others.

**12:00 Lunch and Plant Sale**

**1:15 Concurrent Sessions – Select one among:**

**2:20 *Contemporary Planting Design using Native Plants***

This lecture offers a critique of the traditional horticultural approach for designing with native plants and suggests an alternative: composition based on artful interpretations of native plant communities, where a designer abstracts the visual essence of native plant communities in order to create modern interpretations, conveying the community's sense of place and visual harmony. **Thomas Rainer** will look at how he selects appropriate native communities as inspirations for designed landscapes and examines how to read a community, identify patterns, and artfully replicate those patterns in gardens. Above all, the talk will focus on creating bold, modern designs that celebrate the beauty of natives.

**3:30 Adjourn**

## A. *Bridges to Nature*

Many gardeners strive to preserve a connection with nature and to ensure that "sustainability" is more than just a buzzword. Learn how conservationist and horticulturist **Peggy Bowers** accomplishes this. While tending some of the nation's premiere landscapes, Peggy also works with local schools, community groups, and homeowners to create gardens that have a positive impact on the natural world. Using examples of her work at the award-winning teaching gardens at Hollin Meadows School, the new meadow at the American Horticulture Society's River Farm, and her experience with invasive plant management programs, she will share how she turns her inspiration into action.

**B. *South Farm Tour*** – Note: The tour leaves from the front of building #003 at 1:00 pm.

Learn how the National Arboretum works with the Woody Landscape Plant Germplasm Repository (WLPGR) program to ensure the conservation of important woody native plant species. In recent years, this project has focused on plants native to the eastern U.S. with emphasis on *Fraxinus*, *Cotinus*, *Stewartia*, and *Viburnum*, and others. Take a behind-the-scenes tour of the propagation area and production fields with curator **Kevin Conrad** at the Arboretum's primary WLPGR facility, a 60-acre site called South Farm, and learn how this program ensures the conservation of important woody native species. Note: This tour is entirely outside and will be held rain or shine.

## C. *Sticks and Stones – a Garden's Bones*

The first time he saw a rustic fence made of *Juniperus virginiana*, eastern red cedar, **Pierre Moitrier** fell immediately under its spell. He was compelled to start building with this wonderful material and found a true outlet for his creativity. Drawing inspiration from nature, his travels, and the charm of old villages in France, he began creating unique garden structures. His presentation will take you from harvest to construction, showing how to transform a mere pile of cedar twigs into intricately detailed benches, fences, arbors, and gazebos. Walk out inspired and ready to build your own rustic cedar structure!

# Directions and Map

Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC)  
Building #003  
10300 Baltimore Blvd, Beltsville, MD 20705

## Driving Directions

From the Capital Beltway (I-95/I-495), take EXIT 25 onto Route 1 North (Baltimore Avenue). Once on Route 1, take a left at the second light onto South Drive, directly across from the National Agricultural Library. Immediately turn right onto Circle Drive.

## Public Transportation

Metro to College Park station and take Bus 86. Get off at Ikea Center Way. Walk 2 blocks north to BARC.

## Free Parking

Parking is available along Circle Drive. If these spaces fill look for signs for additional parking.



# Registration Form

Registration fee: \$89 (\$71 FONA\* members)  
Registration includes lunch.

**To register:** Register online with credit card or check at [www.usna.usda.gov](http://www.usna.usda.gov) or send this form with check payable to the US National Arboretum:

3501 New York Ave. NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Attn: Event Registration

NAME

AFFILIATION

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE

E-MAIL

Please select one concurrent session:

- A. *Bridges to Nature*  
 B. *South Farm Tour*  
 C. *Sticks and Stones – a Garden's Bones*

Please check your lunch preference:

- Regular lunch  
 Vegetarian lunch

All registrations will be confirmed by mail or e-mail. **Sorry, no cancellation refunds will be given after March 21, 2012.**

For more information please call 202-245-4521.

*Symposium proceeds support the Lahr Internship in the Fern Valley Native Plant Collection*

\* FONA refers to Friends of the National Arboretum. For information, see [www.fona.org](http://www.fona.org) or call 202-544-8733.

**Friends of the National Arboretum**  
***Native Plant Sale***

Opens to Lahr registrants at 8:30 am.  
Opens to the public at 9:30 am. Closes at 2:00 pm.  
Many vendors accept cash and checks only.  
A portion of the sale proceeds supports the  
Fern Valley Native Plant Collection