About our speakers

GERARD DONNELLY is the President and CEO of The Morton Arboretum, near Chicago, Illinois. He led the establishment of the Chicago Region Trees Initiative and the creation of the ArbNet professional network of arboreta, and has spearheaded partnerships to advance the goals of the Global Trees Campaign. Gerard has held leadership roles with the American Public Gardens Association and the Directors of Large Gardens network, and currently serves on the board of Botanic Gardens Conservation International, chairing its International Advisory Council. Trained as a botanist and forest ecologist, he holds a Ph.D. from Michigan State University.

ED IKIN is Head of Landscape and Horticulture at Wakehurst, Kew’s wild botanic garden in Sussex, England, curating their 535-acre estate. He was previously General Manager for National Trust London, Head Gardener at Nymans (National Trust) and Assistant Head Gardener at Chelsea Physic Garden. Ed holds the Royal Horticultural Society’s Master of Horticulture award, has a B.S in Biology and M.A. in Garden History, and is a trustee for London Parks & Gardens Trust.

JANE KILPATRICK is an Oxford-educated freelance historian and garden writer who believes that gardening is about people. In her books, she focuses on the lives of the people who discovered and introduced many of our garden plants. She believes that knowing the stories of the people behind the plants we grow adds another dimension to our appreciation of our gardens. Jane is the author of Gifts from the Gardens of China (2007) and Fathers of Botany (2014).

THOMAS MOLNAR is an Associate Professor in the Plant Biology Department at Rutgers University. He is responsible for a long-running program dedicated to the research and breeding of hazelnuts and woody ornamental landscape plants. The focus of the hazelnut program is breeding plants resistant to the Eastern filbert blight. The woody ornamental program is primarily focused on dogwoods, building upon decades of previous work at Rutgers. Thomas earned both a B.S. in Plant Science and Ph.D. in Plant Biology from Rutgers University.

ABBY VAN DEN BERG is a Research Associate Professor at the University of Vermont (UVM), Proctor Maple Research Center in Underhill, VT, and has been conducting research on maple tree physiology and maple syrup production since 2001. Her current research includes the long-term effects of tapping on tree growth and health, practices to maximize sap yields, the effects of processing technologies on syrup composition and flavor, and developing tapping guidelines and best practices for birch sap collection and syrup production. Abby earned her Ph.D. in Plant Biology from UVM in 2007.

MICHAEL YANNY and his wife Lori own JN Plant Selections, LLC, in Milwaukee, WI. This is a new plant development company that concentrates on developing tough, hardy, woody plants for the cold regions of the world. Prior to Michael’s business venture, he worked for 35 years at Johnson’s Nursery, also in Wisconsin, as their plant propagator. It was while he was at Johnson’s Nursery that he selected and introduced numerous woody plants. Michael is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin with a B.S. in Horticulture.
Woody Plant Conference

Friday, July 20, 2018
Lang Performing Arts Center, Swarthmore College

7:30 – 9:00 Registration and Coffee

7:45 – 8:45 Early Riser Tours of Scott Arboretum

9:00 – 9:10 Welcome – Claire Sawyers, Director, Scott Arboretum


Wakehurst is Kew's wild botanic garden: 535-acres of woodland, meadows and water, complementing fine ornamental horticulture.

The Great Storm of 1987 was a dramatic moment in Wakehurst's history, felling 10,000 trees in one night. From this disaster came an inspired response: The Temperate Woodlands of the World, evolving the forests of Asia, North America and the Southern Hemisphere, filled with trees wild-collected by Wakehurst Horticulturists. Ed will explore the power and potential of large-scale, naturalistic woody planting, the power it has over our psyche and the genetic potential that can be embedded within the collection, connecting to Kew's global plant conservation program.

10:10 – 10:35 Break: Book and Raffle Ticket Sales


The Rutgers University Woody Ornamental Breeding Program began in 1960 under the direction of Dr. Elwin Ortman, whose focus was largely Hollies and dogwoods. In total, nearly 40 cultivars were released from his program, of which many have become standards in the landscape industry. Starting in 2008, efforts were bolstered to develop novel pink-bracted kousa dogwoods as well as to incorporate the existing Rutgers hazelnut breeding program into one cohesive tree program. Recent breeding efforts, interesting plants in the pipeline, and new and upcoming cultivar releases will be discussed.

11:25 – 12:15 Fathers of Botany – Jane Kilpatrick

In this presentation Jane will discuss the discovery of Chinese plants by European missionaries, focusing particularly on the part played by four great French missionary-botanists.

12:15 – 1:15 Lunch: Book and Raffle Ticket Sales

1:15 – 2:05 Opportunistic Plant Selection – Michael Yanny

Developing and introducing new plant cultivars is often thought of as an advanced horticultural pursuit by scientists in white lab coats or persons with a high-level understanding of plant genetics. Michael will show you that this isn’t always the case. Anyone can select a new plant cultivar. It is just a matter of understanding and recognizing the plant selection opportunities when they present themselves. He will tell stories about the many introductions he has selected and how they have presented themselves to him over his 35+ years as a nurseryman.

2:05 – 2:50 Sustainable Tapping Guidelines for Modern Maple Sap Collection Practices – Abby van den Berg

Back when gravity was used to collect maple sap, a set of voluntary tapping guidelines was developed. Since then, tapping equipment and procedures have advanced, more than doubling extraction rates. Research conducted by the University of Vermont Proctor Maple Research Center has resulted in updated tapping guidelines and best practices that will ensure sustainable, long-term annual sap collection from maple trees – benefitting both the trees and the producers.

2:50 – 3:15 Break: Last Chance to Buy Books and Raffle Tickets

3:15 – 3:25 Raffle Winner Announcements


Trees provide a wide array of essential benefits to people, communities, and the environment, but they face myriad threats in our local communities and across the globe. Arborists, botanical gardens, and other conservation organizations are taking action to plant, protect, and preserve trees in urban forests, in seed banks and conservation collections, and in nature. To be successful, these initiatives need the support and participation of individual citizens, professionals in the green industry, business, and other organizations to ensure that trees continue to help sustain a high quality of life on Earth.

4:25 – 4:30 Closing Comments

4:30 – 5:30 Reception: Mix and mingle with speakers and horticulture professionals. An additional $20 fee is required. Space is limited.

5:45 Last Shuttle to Springfield Mall Parking Lot

Conference Highlights

• Talks by noted horticulturists and designers
• Free admission to co-sponsoring institution gardens July 21 and July 22

The following CEUs have been applied for

International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborists
• Landscape Architects • PA Certified Horticulturists

Registration Form

Registration fee includes lunch, refreshment breaks, and free admission to co-sponsoring institution gardens, July 21 and July 22.

To pay by credit card, register online at: woodyplantconference.org

To pay with a check, mail your registration form(s) to:
Continuing Education, Longwood Gardens,
P.O. Box 501, Kennett Square, PA 19348-0501

Please make checks payable to Longwood Gardens, Inc.

Register early and save! Deadline for early registration is June 22.
Pre-registration is required; no walk-ins, please.

Name: ____________________________ Organization: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________ City: ____________________________ State: ____________________________ Zip: ____________
Phone: ____________________________
Email: ____________________________

Lunch is included with your registration.

Three lunch options will be available, including both a vegetarian and a gluten-free choice. It is not necessary to choose your lunch at the time of registration.

I’d like to attend the following:

☐ Reception: $20. Space is limited.

REGISTRATION FEE: Register early and save!

☐ $99 per person if postmarked by June 22, 2018

☐ $129 per person if postmarked between June 23 & July 13

Registration fees less a $30 processing fee will be refunded if cancellations are made by July 13. No cancellations will be accepted for refunds after that date.

Deadline for early registration is June 22.
Pre-registration is required; no walk-ins, please.

Like us on Facebook!

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