



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wild Ones MN Annual Design with Nature Conference 2020

Where Have All the Fireflies Gone? *Gardening in Challenging Times*

(Minneapolis, MN, November 19, 2019)

Where Have All the Fireflies Gone?
Gardening in Challenging Times

Exploring what we can do—as gardeners and educators—in our own small corners of the world to nurture, strengthen and sustain the complex and fragile web that connects soil, plants and animals.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2020, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

University of St. Thomas

James B. Woulfe Alumni Hall, Anderson Student Center
2115 Summit Ave (at Cretin), St. Paul, Minnesota 55105

Register now www.designwithnatureconference.org

Early-bird registration saves \$15, ends Wednesday, January 29, 2020.

Registration closes Saturday, February 15, 2020 or when sold out.

Conference Speakers

Neil Diboll

Prairie Nursery President and Consulting Ecologist

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KEYNOTE: Genetic Diversity of Plant Breeding Stock and Preserving Its Integrity

The fields of agriculture, silviculture, and horticulture have historically focused on selecting “superior” plants to serve the needs of food production, lumber and fiber production, and the human fascination with bigger, longer-blooming, and more colorful ornamental plants. Only recently has the discipline of ecology entered into mainstream gardening. Ecological gardeners tend to be more concerned with creating low maintenance, sustainable, native gardens that provide not only enjoyment for the gardener, but also preserve native plant gene pools while creating habitat for birds, butterflies, pollinators, and other creatures.

Properly designed and installed, native plant landscapes require little if any watering, fertilizing, or pesticides. With increasing concern over water usage in the landscape, excessive toxins and nutrients in the environment, and the decline of pollinators, diverse native plant gardens can serve as attractive alternatives to higher maintenance, more expensive traditional landscapes. [\(more\)](#)



Neil Diboll, a pioneer in the native plant industry and recognized internationally as an expert in native plant community ecology, has guided the growth of [Prairie Nursery](#) for 30 years. He has dedicated his life to the propagation of native plants and their promotion as uniquely beautiful, ecologically beneficial and sustainable solutions for landscapes and gardens. [\(more\)](#)

Thelma Heidel-Baker

Entomologist, Environmental Educator, Organic Farmer

Diversifying Your Landscape: Creating a Place for Beneficial Insects

Insects are a vital component to the health of any plant community. Pollinators have recently – and rightly so – caught the attention of the public eye as we hear about

pollinator declines and the necessity for pollinators in food production. Pollinators are essential, but beneficial insects extend far beyond only pollinators. Whether pollinator, predator, decomposer or herbivore, every insect fills some special role. Here we will delve into the importance of several beneficial insect groups with Thelma as she brings her knowledge and expertise as an entomologist to the conversation. As a scientist, she spent many years studying and observing beneficial insects in both natural and agricultural landscapes. She will also draw on her experience as a conservation-focused organic farmer and what it means to manage land and create places for many different types of organisms through plant diversity. We will consider the delicate balance that exists with beneficial insect communities and native plants as well as dig deep to explore healthy soils and the role of beneficial insects at ground level.



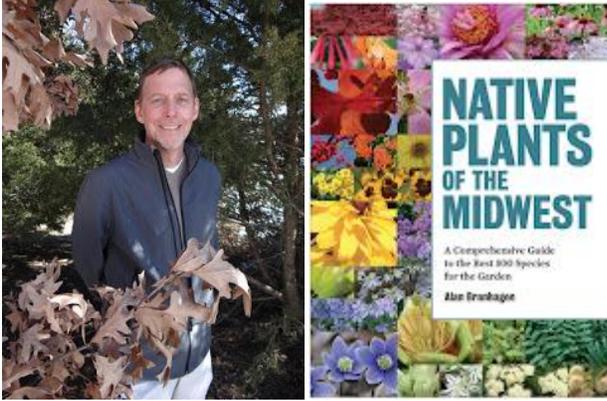
Thelma Heidel-Baker is an entomologist, beneficial insect conservation expert, environmental educator, and organic farmer. Thelma has over 15 years of extensive research experience in biological control and integrated pest management (IPM) for agricultural cropping systems and specializes in supporting beneficial insects within all types of agriculture. She most recently worked for [The Xerces Society](#) to promote beneficial insects and creation of habitat on farmland nationwide. [\(more\)](#)

Alan Branhagen

MN Arboretum Director of Operations

Looking Forward to Livelier Landscapes

This program is a guide for those who wish a life enriching experience of a native plant-based landscape. It's for people who want to live in an aesthetic that captures their spirit of our place in the Upper Midwest and not the ubiquitous traditional landscape of anywhere U.S.A. A guide to a place they can celebrate the wonder of the wild, where the local flora and fauna flourish -- filled with bird and insect songs, busy bees and other bugs. It's a program that stirs one's imagination with the inherent beauty of plant forms, foliage and flowers that contribute a symphony to our senses through each season. [\(more\)](#)



Alan Branhagen is Director of Operations at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and previously held the position of Director of Horticulture at Powell Gardens, Kansas City's botanical garden. *Native Plants of the Midwest: A Comprehensive Guide to the Best 5000 Species for the Garden* by regional plant expert Alan Branhagan, features the best native plants in the heartland and offers clear and concise guidance on how to use them in the garden. ([more](#))

About this Conference www.designwithnatureconference.org

The *Design with Nature* conference is produced and hosted by volunteer members of Wild Ones chapters in Minnesota, attracting native plant enthusiasts from around the Upper Midwest. It offers insights into topics impacting the native plant movement and encourages us to embrace the connection of native plants to the ecological health of our communities. The conference has been growing along with the advancement of both the design and practice of naturalized landscapes; 2020 marks the 20th year of this annual event.

About Wild Ones www.wildones.org

Wild Ones' mission is to promote environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities. What is that really saying? Wild Ones educates people on the importance of native plants, for the health of the environment and everything living in it. Wild Ones' goal is to get more native plants in the ground in all landscapes – homes, businesses, schools, and along roadways.

A volunteer-driven organization, there are currently seven Wild Ones chapters in Minnesota. All Wild Ones meetings are free and open to the public.

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