GREEN & GROWIN' 27

Schedule at a Glance

EDUCATION: January 18-20, 2027
Sheraton Greensboro at Four Seasons

Monday, January 18

8:30 AM-5:00 PM Specialty Sessions

12:00-12:50 PM Lunch

Tuesday, January 19

7:30-8:30 AM Check-in & Coffee

8:30 AM-3:50 PM Education Sessions

11:30 AM-12:50 PM Keynote Lunch: Ryan Watkins, HortMentor

Wednesday, January 20

7:30-8:30 AM Check-in & Coffee

8:30 AM-3:50 PM Education Sessions

11:30 AM-12:50 PM Keynote Lunch: Brie Arthur, Brie Grows

MARKETPLACE: January 21-22, 2027
Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center

Thursday, January 21

9:00 AM-5:00 PM Green & Growin' Marketplace

Friday, January 22

9:00 AM-2:00 PM Green & Growin' Marketplace

MEETINGS & EVENTS

Wednesday, January 20

7:30-8:15 AM Certified Plant Professional Breakfast, by invitation only. Email cpp@ncnla.com if you are a CPP and did not receive an invitation. —*Sheraton: Blue Ash*

7:30 PM NCNLA Annual Member Meeting & Industry Awards Ceremony —*Sheraton: Guilford ABC*

8:30 PM President's Reception —*Sheraton: Guilford ABC*

Thursday, January 21

7:30 AM Past President's Gathering —*Sheraton*

4:30-6:00 PM NC State University Horticulture Science Alumni & Friends Reception —*Coliseum*

Friday, January 22

11:30 AM-12:30 PM Women in the Green Industry Meeting —*Coliseum*

SPECIALTY CLASSES

Schedule is subject to change.

MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 2027

TIME	LOCATION	COURSE
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Auditorium II	**Certified Plant Professional Review** Matt Jones, Colby Griffin, Sam Marshall, Rhiannon Goodwin, *NCSU* *Approved:*
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Biltmore	**Designing the Environmentally Responsive Landscape: A Nature-Inspired Approach** Dr. Richard Ludwig *Approved:*
8:30 AM - 12:00 PM	Auditorium III	**Beyond the Plants: An Interactive Workshop on Workforce Risk, Safety, and Retention** Amy Rochkes, Jane Chadwell, *Gap Connections* *Approved:*
1:00 - 5:00 PM	Auditorium III	**The Art & Science of Pruning: From Size Control to Topiary** Bryce Lane, *Horticulturist* *Approved:*

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2027

TIME	LOCATION	COURSE
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Auditorium II	**CPP Exam**
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM	Auditorium III	**NC Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training School** *Approved:*

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2027

TIME	LOCATION	COURSE
8:30 - 11:30 AM	Auditorium III	**NC Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training School** *Approved:*
1:00 - 5:00 PM	Auditorium III	**NC Commercial Pesticide Applicator Exam**

NCNLA applies for continuing education units (CEUs) from various state and national entities, For CEU status updates, visit www.greenandgrowin.com.

CEU Opportunities The NCNLA applies for continuing education credits from the following entities:

- **LC** Landscape Contractor License (NC) — Technical CEU
- **LCB** Landscape Contractor License (NC) — Business CEU
- **LA** Landscape Architect License (NC)
- **IC** Irrigation Contractor License (NC) — Technical Irrigation CEU
- **ICB** Irrigation Contractor License (NC) — Business CEU
- **PA** Pesticide Applicator License (NC)
- **ISA** International Society of Arboriculture — Certified Arborist
- **CPP** Certified Plant Professional

Please note that Marketplace attendees will not be able to earn CEUs by walking the trade show floor. In lieu of offering this credit, we will continue to seek credit approval for the sponsored demonstrations.

Monday, January 18, 2027

CPP Review

Auditorium II

Time: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Approved:

LA-7.5; ISA-2.0 Certified Arborist, Urban Forest; ISA-1.0 BCMA-Practice, Science; CPP-7.5

Speaker: Rhiannon Goodwin, Colby Griffin, Matt Jones, Sam Marshall, NCSU

Description: Whether you're gearing up for the final push to become a Certified Plant Professional (CPP) or are simply exploring the depth of horticulture knowledge required, this review may be for you. The instructors have decades of combined ornamental experience, and several have been teaching CPP-based programs for years. You will be in good hands. To take full advantage of this review, NCNLA strongly recommends you purchase, read, and study the CPP manual before attending the review. The review will focus on plant identification using images and questions will be answered related to the CPP study manual. Is this review for you? If you have put in the work to prepare for the exam on your own but need some guidance through the final push – this is for you! If you are not familiar with the depth of horticultural knowledge required to become a CPP and want to learn how to prepare for the exam – this is for you! If you are just beginning to study for the exam and are seeking guidance on how to create your own study plan to take the exam in the future – this is for you!

Monday, January 18, 2027

Designing the Environmentally Responsive Landscape: A Nature Inspired Approach

Time: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

Biltmore

Approved:

LC-5.0; LA-7.5; CPP-7.5

Speaker: Dr. Richard Ludwig, Horticulturist

Description: This full-day, hands-on workshop is for green industry professionals wishing to create landscape designs that are stunning and earth-friendly. This course focuses on weaving ecologically sound concepts into traditional residential design. In addition, this class provides basic graphics instruction to communicate ideas efficiently and boldly on paper. By centering around an in-depth, hands-on understanding of curvilinear based drift designing, this class will prepare you to create native plant displays and gardens that are both visually pleasing and environmentally conscious. All drafting equipment and supplies are included.

Monday, January 18, 2027

Beyond the Plants: An Interactive Workshop on Workforce Risk, Safety, and Retention

Time: 8:30 AM – noon

Auditorium III

Approved:

LCB-3.0; LA-3.5; ICB-3.0; PA-0.5 H,L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Amy Rochkes Jane Chadwell, GAP Connections

Description: Labor and workforce challenges continue to be one of the biggest operational risks facing landscape, nursery and greenhouse operations. Worker safety, communication, documentation, H-2A and H-2B regulations and rules, supervision, and workforce retention all directly impact operational continuity, productivity, insurance exposure, customer expectations, and business sustainability. This interactive workshop is designed for owners, managers, supervisors, and HR/compliance personnel who want practical tools, not theory. Using real-world scenarios, peer discussion, operational self-assessments, and hands-on exercises, participants will work through common workforce management and safety challenges facing horticulture operations today. The session focuses on practical systems that improve communication, reduce preventable risk, strengthen workforce culture, and help operations prepare for increasing customer and regulatory expectations. The workshop is intentionally candid, practical, and operations-focused rather than legalistic or lecture- heavy. Participants will leave with actionable ideas, simple tools, and a stronger understanding of how workforce management and compliance connect directly to operational resilience and long-term business success.

Monday, January 18, 2027

The Art and Science of Pruning: From Size to Topiary

Time: 1:00–5:00 PM

Auditorium III

Approved:

LC-4.0; LA-4.0; ISA-4.0 Certified Arborist, Urban Forest, BCMA-Practice; CPP-4.0

Speaker: Bryce Lane, Horticulturist

Description: Pruning is both a science and an art, grounded in scientific principles and creative practice. This workshop is designed to equip landscape professionals with all the necessary information about pruning they need, including theory, tools, technique, & timing, so they will know exactly why, how, and when to prune all plants in the landscape. We will also look at some unique and historical pruning techniques that landscape professionals might consider doing more of in the landscapes they create and maintain. These topics include topiary, pollarding, espalier, coppicing, pleaching, and formal hedge pruning.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027
Wednesday, January 20, 2027

NC Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training School

Time: Tuesday: 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM; Wednesday: 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

Auditorium III

Approved:

LC-4.0; CPP-7.5

Speaker: Dr. Wayne Buhler, Esther Morris, Marcus Williams, Ashley Troth, NCSU; Elizabeth Farmer, NCDA&CS

Description: Registration will close on Friday, January 8, 2027, to allow time to receive study manuals prior to the start of class. To purchase pesticide manuals, visit pesticidemanuals.com. Private applicators need only the NC Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual. Those attending the Ornamental and Turfgrass session must purchase both the Core Manual and the Ornamental and Turfgrass Pest Management Manual. Please allow sufficient time to receive and read the manuals before attending the training. The school takes place over a 1 1/2-day period and reviews pesticide material (manuals) so that attendees may be better prepared to take the NCDA&CS pesticide exams. NC State Extension Specialists, County Extension Agents, and NCDA&CS Pesticide Inspectors present lessons from the Pesticide Education Program's manuals and answer questions or offer clarification on issues that applicators face. Tuesday, January 19 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM (Core Safety Training and NC Laws; lunch included) Wednesday, January 20 8:30 AM – 11:30 AM (Ornamental and Turfgrass Training; lunch included) 1:00 PM – 5:00 PM (NC Pesticide Applicators Licensing Exam – administered by NCDA&CS) This 1½-day course conducted by NC State Extension prepares prospective applicators for the private and commercial applicator certification exams. We strongly recommend that study manuals are read and reviewed before the course. Course registration fee includes lunch on Tuesday and Wednesday. Test fees are not included and must be paid by check or money order only directly to NCDA&CS at time of testing.

2027 License Requirements

Proof of Attendance Forms

Within 30 days of the show ending, attendees will receive an email with instructions on how to access their proof of attendance forms for all sessions where their badge was scanned prior to entrance. Once received, NCNLA encourages all attendees to confirm their attendance is recorded correctly.

The information provided below was extracted from the corresponding licensing boards' websites, for current licensing requirements, please contact your licensing board.

NC Landscape Contractors

- All licensed landscape contractors must personally complete seven (7) hours of Board Approved Continuing Education per year. Three (3) of seven (7) CE credits must be "landscape (technical)" credits and two (2) of seven (7) must be "business" credits. The remaining two (2) may be either landscape or business.
- For more info, visit nclclb.com

NC Irrigation Contractors

- Licensees are required to earn ten (10) continuing education credits each year, six (6) irrigation and four (4) business.
- For more info, visit nciclb.org

NC Landscape Architects

- In order for a licensee to qualify for license renewal as a Landscape Architect in North Carolina, the licensee must have completed ten (10) contact hours of approved continuing education within the previous renewal period.
- For more info, visit ncbola.org

NC Pesticide Applicators

- The type of credit each session is approved for is listed under the individual session (D, L, etc.)
- The number of credits needed varies by the license category.
- For more info, visit ncagr.gov

Out of State Pesticide Applicators

- Several of our pesticide credits have been approved by out-of-state licenses. Please contact education@ncnla.com to confirm the approved sessions for non-NC licenses.

International Society of Arboriculture

- The type of credits each session is approved for is listed under the individual session (Certified Arborist, Municipal Specialist, etc.)
- For more info, visit isa-arbor.com

NC Certified Plant Professionals

- CPPs are required to earn eight (8) continuing education credits every two years.
- For more info, visit ncnla.com/CPP

GREEN& GROWIN'27 Education

GENERAL SESSIONS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19, 2027

7:30-8:30 AM: Check-in & Coffee

TRACK	BUSINESS OPERATIONS	LANDSCAPE OPERATIONS	TREE CARE	PESTS, WEEDS, & DISEASES
Location	*Guilford D*	*Guilford E*	*Guilford F*	*Guilford G*
8:30 - 9:20 AM	**Rules of Engagment: A Guide to Better Communication — And Better Relationships! — With Everyone Who Is Important to Your Business** David Fellman, *DFA* *Approved:* ■▲	**Creating & Caring for Sustainable Landscapes** Bryce Lane, *Horticulturalist* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**Elm Zigzag Sawfly** Delaney Serpan, *NCSU PhD candidate* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**Tip the Scale in a Fight Against Scale Insects** Dr. JC Chong, *Sepro* *Approved:* ●●●●▲
9:30 - 10:20 AM	**How to Successfully Value and Sell a Business** Andreas Schuhmacher, *A Neumann & Associates* *Approved:* ■■▲	**Landscape Design Basics: Time-Saving Tips** Ryan Watkins, *HortMentor* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Emerald Ash Borer** Dr. Kelly Oten, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**Invasive Weed Identification and Control** Melinda Roberts, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●●▲
10:30 - 11:20 AM	**Learning from Workers: What Worker Interviews Reveal About Strong Agricultural Operations** Amy Rochkes, Jane Chadwell, *Gap Connections* *Approved:* ■■▲	**Spotted Lanternfly Rising in NC: History & Practical Management Strategies** Patrick Anderson, *Rainbow Ecoscience* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**When Tree Care Goes Wrong** Laurie Reid, *City of Charlotte Arborist* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**An Introduction to Common Arthropod Pests and the NC State Plant Disease and Insect Clinic** Dr. Matt Bertone, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●●●▲
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	**Lunch & Keynote:** *Guilford ABC* • *Lunch available on a first-come, first-served basis*			
12:00 - 12:50 PM: Keynote Presentation	 **Ryan Watkins, HortMentor** ***Cultivating a Life of Legacy*** *Approved:* ■■▲			

TRACK	GREEN-TECH	LANDSCAPE OPERATIONS	TREE CARE	PESTS, WEEDS, & DISEASES
Location	*Guilford D*	*Guilford E*	*Guilford F*	*Guilford G*
1:00 - 1:50 PM	**AI in the Green Industry: Smarter Tools. Stronger Businesses. Greener Results.** Brent Jones, *Turf Sights* *Approved:* ■●■●●▲	**Got Ticks? Tips and Tricks to Stay Bite-Free on the Job** Dr. Viva Kobbekaduwa, *DHHS* *Approved:* ■●●▲ *Applied for:* ●	**Managing Diseases of Landscape Trees: An Integrated Approach** Dr. Inga Meadows, *Bartlett Tree Lab* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**What's Hiding in the Bushes? Diseases of Popular Landscape Shrubs in North Carolina** Mike Munster, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●●●▲
2:00 - 2:50 PM	**Choosing the Right AI Tool** Dr. Jun Yang, *NC A&T* *Approved:* ■■●●▲ *Applied for:* ●	**How a Quick Sketch or Design Can Double Your Sale** Ryan Watkins, *HortMentor* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Building Resilient Urban Trees** Patrick Anderson, *Rainbow Ecoscience* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**Aquatic Plant Management for Southeastern Lakes and Ponds** Jessica Baumann, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●▲
3:00 - 3:50 PM	**AI for the Green Industry Professional** Eric Jones, *Turf Teacher* *Approved:* ■●●●●▲	**Lawn Alternatives** Emily Morrison, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Historic Tree Care at Biltmore Estate** Bill Hascher, *Biltmore Estate* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**Hornets and Beetles and Moths, Oh My! Monitoring for New Invasive Pests in NC** Dr. Greg Wiggins, Josie Pashe, *NCDA&CS* *Approved:* ●●●●▲

This is an Education schedule preview and is subject to change. The final schedule will be featured online and available in the on-site showbook.
NCNLA applies for continuing education units (CEUs) from various state and national entities. For CEU status updates, please visit www.greenandgrowin.com.

Business Operations – Guilford D

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Rules of Engagement: A Guide to Better Communication – And Better Relationships! – With Everyone Who Is Important to Your Business

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved:

ICB-1,0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: David Fellman, DFA

Description: Engagement is a magic word in business. You want employees who are engaged with you, not just showing up every day and working for a paycheck, but understanding and working with you toward your goals. You want customers who are equally engaged, which helps you to maximize the value of each customer relationship, and you must engage with prospects in order to turn them into customers in the first place. Finally, you want suppliers who are true partners, not just people/companies who sell you things. So how does this happen? Better communication, perhaps involving a different approach to communication. This fast moving session will help you to understand the Rules Of Engagement in the modern marketplace.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

How to Successfully Value and Sell a Business

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved:

LCB-1.0; ICB-1.0; CPP 1.0

Speaker: Andreas Schuhmacher, A Neumann & Associates

Description: Selling a business is a milestone decision—and achieving the best outcome requires planning well before a sale is on the table. This session introduces a proven framework for valuing, positioning, and successfully selling a business in today's market. Participants will learn how to establish a defensible valuation, protect strict confidentiality, and target qualified buyers who can close with confidence. The session also covers current market conditions, common seller pitfalls, and practical strategies around pricing, preparation, and process that can significantly improve deal certainty and results. This session is ideal for business owners, executives, and professionals interested in exit or succession planning and understanding what drives enterprise value.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Learning from Workers: What Worker Interviews Reveal About Strong Agricultural Operations

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved:

LCB-1.0; ICB-1.0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Amy Rochkes, Jane Chadwell, GAP Connections

Description: Every year, GAP Connections speaks directly with thousands of agricultural workers across the United States. These conversations provide valuable insights into communication, training, supervision, workplace culture, and operational practices. This session shares common themes and lessons learned from worker feedback and highlights practical actions that can improve workforce stability and operational performance. Key Topics: Common communication breakdowns, Characteristics of high-performing operations, Small changes that build trust, and Lessons for supervisors and managers.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

AI in the Green Industry: Smarter Tools. Stronger Businesses. Greener Results.

Time: 1:00–1:50 PM

Approved:

LCB-1.0; LA-0.83; ICB-1.0; PA:1.0 H,L,N,O,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban Forest, BCMA-management; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Brent Jones, Turf Sights

Description: Artificial intelligence is rapidly changing how businesses work, but knowing which AI tools to use—and where to use them—is becoming just as important as understanding AI itself. This session explores practical ways landscape and green industry professionals can put AI to work in their businesses today.

Attendees will learn the difference between generic AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Grok, and topic-driven or purpose-built AI tools that work with specific knowledge, trusted data sources, and business workflows. Through real-world green industry examples, the presentation will demonstrate how AI can help contractors research regulations and pesticide labels, create marketing and social media content, organize and analyze business information, automate routine tasks, and turn industry expertise into more powerful business tools.

Rather than focusing on AI theory, this session focuses on practical applications showing how AI can help green industry professionals see more, know more, do more, and ultimately grow more. The goal isn't to replace the contractor's experience and expertise, but to demonstrate how AI can amplify it.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Choosing the Right AI Tool: Comparing AI Models for Landscape Applications

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; ICB-1.0; PA-1.0 H,L,N,O,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban Forest, BCMA-management; CPP-1.0

Applied for:

Speaker: Dr. Jun Yang, NC A&T

Description: This presentation will concentrate specifically on the application of AI tools within landscape-related workflows. We will compare multiple AI models and platforms through landscape-specific tasks, demonstrating where each performs well and where its limitations become important. Examples will include site research and analysis, concept development, landscape visualization, plant-related information, environmental assessment, and design communication. The session will offer a side-by-side evaluation of different AI tools and explain how landscape professionals can select an appropriate model for a particular task. It will also address output accuracy, reliability, hallucinations, data limitations, and the continued importance of professional knowledge and judgment.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

AI for the Green Industry Professional

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved:

LCB -1.0; LA-0.83; IC-1.0; PA-1.0 H,L,N,O,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban Forest, BCMA-management; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Eric Jones, Turf Teacher Inc.

Description: Work Smarter. Save Time. Increase Profitability. Prepare for What's Next. Artificial Intelligence is changing the Green Industry—and contractors, designers, turf professionals, irrigation specialists, growers, and business owners need to understand how to put it to work. AI for the Green Industry Professional is a practical, real-world look at how AI is already being used across landscaping, turfgrass, irrigation, horticulture, and the broader Green Industry. Discover how AI can help professionals estimate projects, create landscape concepts, improve customer communication, generate proposals, streamline scheduling, analyze properties, manage irrigation, identify turf and plant problems, improve marketing, automate repetitive office tasks, and make better business decisions. The class also explores emerging technologies including AI-assisted estimating, autonomous mowing, drone property analysis, smart irrigation, disease diagnostics, predictive maintenance, AI-generated landscape renderings, and voice-based field reporting. As importantly, attendees will learn where AI can go wrong—and why professional knowledge, field experience, and human judgment remain essential.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Creating & Caring for Sustainable Landscapes

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban Forest, BC-MA-management; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Bryce Lane, Horticulturist

Description: Plants have an amazing ability to make things better. As landscape professionals we strive to create the best environment for the plants we grow, and when we landscape with sustainability in mind, we use plants to create a better ecosystem for nature, for people, and for the world. This talk focuses on ecological, and sustainable approaches to landscaping that improve our outdoor living spaces by reducing waste, recycling, repurposing, and re-thinking the way we design and care for plants in the landscape.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Landscape Design Basics: Time-Saving Tips

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Ryan Watkins, HortMentor

Description: Learn concepts of landscape design in this introductory class tailored for industry professionals. Dive into the 4Ts and DS4, two powerful methods that streamline plant selection while guaranteeing results your clients will rave about. Whether you're new to design or looking to sharpen your skills, this class offers practical strategies that will elevate your projects and boost your success.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Spotted Lanternfly Rising in NC: History & Practical Management Strategies

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 G,I,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban Forest, BCMA-practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Patrick Anderson, Ecoscience

Description: Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) continues to march through the US creating a sticky mess and reducing tree vitality in its wake. During this session we'll discuss the history, biology, and current impact of SLF in the US and North Carolina. This session will include the latest research on controlling SLF, and practical management solutions for landscape managers.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Got Ticks? Tips and Tricks to Stay Bite-Free on the Job

Time: 1:00–1:50 PM

Approved:

LCB-1.0; PA-1.0 B,G,H,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban Forest, BCMA-management; CPP-1.0

Applied for:

Speaker: Dr. Viva Kobbekaduwa, DHHS

Description: Tickborne diseases are on the rise in North Carolina, driven by the expanding range of disease transmitting ticks. Join us for an engaging session covering the "what, when, and where" of ticks and tickborne diseases in our state. We'll dig into tick ecology and behavior, where landscape crews are most likely to encounter ticks, and which species pose the greatest risks in North Carolina. You'll also learn simple, effective strategies for reducing tick exposure including practical ways to lower tick numbers in the areas where you work and to prevent tick exposures. Discover how small changes in daily practices can significantly reduce the risk of tick bites and help prevent tickborne diseases, keeping you and your crew safe.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

How a Quick Sketch or Design Can Double Your Sale

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Ryan Watkins, HortMentor

Description: Boost sales by providing clients with a basic, hand-drawn visual of their space. This simple, yet effective tool can be utilized by sales associates to illustrate recommendations and assist clients with understanding how to accomplish their landscape goals. In this session, attendees will learn how to integrate sketching into the sales process. Participants will understand how using this method increases buyer confidence and decisiveness, and why matching the client's vision with yours often results in increased sales.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Let's Talk About Lawn Alternatives

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved:

LC 1.0; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Emily Morrison, NCSU

Description: Traditional turfgrass lawns are such a prevalent part of our modern landscaping practices. However, to have a "perfect" looking lawn, there is a lot of maintenance and inputs involved including mowing, watering, fertilizing and using pesticides for weed and insect control . Most turf lawns provide little to no benefit to pollinators and wildlife, and can lead to air and water pollution. In this talk we will explore alternative types of lawns and other landscaping practices that provide beauty and function for us and for wildlife and beneficial insects.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Elm Zigzag Sawfly

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 G,I,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Delaney Serpan, NCSU

Description: This talk will provide an overview of native and invasive defoliators in North Carolina, including elm zigzag sawfly. Learn about the identification and management of key pests in landscape settings.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Emerald Ash Borer

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 G,I,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Kelly Oten, NCSU

Description: This session will provide an overview of emerald ash borer (EAB), including identification of the insect and signs of infestation, its life cycle and impact on ash trees, and current management and control strategies. Participants will learn about pesticide options, proper application considerations, and integrated approaches for protecting ash trees from EAB damage.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

When Tree Care Goes Wrong

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 G,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-management; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Laurie Reid, City of Charlotte

Description: Sometimes we care for our trees a little too enthusiastically and the attention we believe is helping can actually cause harm. In this session, we will explore common practices that can adversely affect tree health, structural integrity, and longevity. Upon completion of this session, participants will be able to identify practices that contribute to tree decline or premature mortality and implement appropriate tree care strategies to promote long-term tree health.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Managing Diseases of Landscape Trees: An Integrated Approach

Time: 1:00–1:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 G,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Inga Meadows, Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories

Description: Oak wilt, bacterial leaf scorch, and Phytophthora root and crown rot are among the most significant diseases affecting oaks and other shade trees in urban landscapes and can be misdiagnosed due to their similar symptoms. This session will review integrated disease management strategies for these diseases of trees in the urban environment while engaging participants through interactive polling and discussion.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Building Resilient Urban Trees

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Patrick Anderson, Rainbow Ecoscience

Description: Trees across the world have experienced significant decline due to extreme weather events, invasive pests, and general neglect. Trees in our urban and peri-urban landscapes provide immense value to we humans in the form of reducing pollution, health benefits, and increasing property values. To preserve these trees' resiliency, we must understand the primary drivers of decline and implement actionable solutions. Join us as we explore strategies to improve tree resilience, enhance soil health, and mitigate the impacts of secondary pests and diseases, ensuring a healthier future for our trees.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Historic Tree Care at Biltmore Estate

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 G,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Management; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Bill Hascher, Biltmore Estate

Description: The Biltmore Estate holds the largest home in the United States and spans 8,000 acres, hosting a diverse canopy of historic trees. Hear from Biltmore Estate Arborist Operations Manager about caring for and preserving historic trees on one of the most popular tourism spots in North Carolina and how to adopt the techniques.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Tip the Scale in a Fight Against Scale Insects

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 G,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. JC Chong, Sepro

Description: Armored scales, soft scales, bark scales, and dozens of other scale insect species are the Number 1 pests on landscape trees and shrubs. This presentation will introduce attendees to the most common scale insect species, their biology, and the best ways of controlling them with insecticides and biological tools before they become a big problem.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Invasive Weed Identification and Control

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 H,L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Melinda Roberts, NCSU

Description: This presentation highlights common invasive plants that are threatening our local ecosystems, key identification markers and practical control strategies that combine manual removal with targeted herbicide applications. Emphasizing early detection, this session guides habitat restoration through proper plant selection and management.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

An Introduction to Common Arthropod Pests and the NC State Plant Disease and Insect Clinic

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 L,N,O,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Matt Bertone, NCSU

Description: Arthropods (insects, mites, etc.) can cause damage to landscape and nursery plants. In this presentation, Dr. Bertone will discuss the identification and biology of some common pests of ornamentals in North Carolina. He will also describe identification services provided by the NC State Plant Disease and Insect Clinic (PDIC), a laboratory that can help diagnose unknown pests encountered in the field.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

What's Hiding in the Bushes? Diseases of Popular Landscape Shrubs in North Carolina

Time: 1:00–1:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Science; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Mike Munster, NCSU

Description: Some plant maladies are easily diagnosed in the field, while others can be diagnosed only with laboratory testing. Some cause only minor aesthetic damage, while others can kill the host plant. Some are restricted to a single kind of plant, while others have a wide host range. This presentation will explore the diversity of diseases on our woody shrubs in North Carolina landscapes.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Aquatic Plant Management for Southeastern Lakes and Ponds

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; PA-1.0 A,L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Jessica Baumann, NCSU

Description: The Southeastern region of the United States is home to a diverse array of aquatic and wetland plants, including both native and nuisance species. While native species provide beneficial ecosystem services, nuisance species can present a host of negative impacts to both the ecosystem and anthropogenic uses of a lake or pond. Management efforts are often implemented to control these unwanted species, however effective strategies vary depending on the targeted species. This presentation is designed to help guide managers by presenting nuisance species commonly found in the Southeastern US, introducing common management practices, and providing tips on how to develop appropriate aquatic plant management programs.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

Hornets and Beetles and Moths, Oh My! Monitoring for New Invasive Pests in NC

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 G,I,L,N,O,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Greg Wiggins, Josie Pashe, NCDA&CS

Description: What should you be looking for when you're out in the landscape? This presentation will highlight several invasive pests of importance to North Carolina that could impact trees, nurseries, and landscapes. Topics will include how these pests are monitored, what signs and symptoms to watch for, and how early detection can help prevent new pests from becoming established. The presentation will also take a closer look at Yellow-Legged Hornet and ongoing efforts to monitor for and remove this new threat in North Carolina. Learn what to watch for and how you can help with early detection.

Tuesday, January 19, 2027

KEYNOTE — Cultivating a Life of Legacy

Time: 12:00–12:50 PM

Approved:

LCB-1.0; ICB-1.0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Ryan Watkins

Description: This keynote challenges leaders to recognize that they will leave a legacy—whether by design or by default. It walks through the past, helping participants reflect on how their experiences, choices, and wounds have shaped their current reality; the present, where they assess key areas of life and leadership to identify what's working and what's holding them back; and the future, where they clarify vision and begin pruning distractions to focus on what truly matters. The talk concludes by calling leaders to take clear, actionable steps—aligning their daily habits, time, and energy with the legacy they ultimately want to leave.

GREEN& GROWIN'27 Education

GENERAL SESSIONS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2027

7:30-8:30 AM: Check-in & Coffee

TRACK	BUSINESS OPERATIONS	LANDSCAPE OPERATIONS	IRRIGATION	TURF MANAGEMENT	GROWERS
Location	*Guilford D*	*Guilford E*	*Guilford F*	*Guilford G*	*Auditorium II*
8:30 - 9:20 AM	**The Next Chapter - Small Business Succession Planning** Paige Moody, *Arbor Enterprises* *Approved:* ■■▲	**Water-Wise Approaches to Landscape Design and Maintenance** Preston Montague, PLA, ASLA *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**Smart Water Tech & Controller Innovations** Bobby Jackson, *The Toro Company* *Approved:* ●▲ *Applied for:* ●	**Integrative Turfgrass Management** Dr. Ray McCauley, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Weed Management Practices and Costs in Field Nursery Production** Sam Marshall, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●▲
9:30 - 10:20 AM	**Spring Pre-Game for Landscapers: Get Ahead of Client Upsells** Katie Elzer-Peters, *The Garden of Words, LLC* *Approved:* ■▲	**Landscaping for Wildlife and People** Dr. Annabel Renwick, *Duke Gardens* *Approved:* ●●●▲	**Filtration for Landscape Irrigation & Grounding** Kurt Thompson, *IrriTech Training* *Approved:* ●▲ *Applied for:* ●	**Turfgrass Insect Management** Dr. Terri Billeisen, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●▲	**In the Zone: Managing the Root Zone in Container Plants for Optimal Growth** Dr. Kristopher Criscione, *Virginia Tech* *Approved:* ▲
10:30 - 11:20 AM	**Savvy Socializing: Secrets of Exceptional Networkers** Jeff Corbett, *Corbett Communications Inc.* *Approved:* ■▲	**Building Resiliency in The Landscape** Bryce Lane, *Horticulturalist* *Approved:* ●●●●▲	**GPM, TDH, and NPSH: Pump Curve Acronyms You Need to Know** Don Davis, *SiteOne Landscape Supply* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Turf Rescue: How to Spot, Stop, and Overcome Common Lawn Ailments** Dr. Jim Kerns, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●▲	**I Like It, I Love It, I Want Some More of It: Great but Rarely Grown and Little-Known Native Perennials** Tony Avent, *Plants Delights Nursery* *Approved:* ●▲ *Applied for:* ●
11:30 AM - 12:00 PM	**Lunch & Keynote:** *Guilford ABC* • *Lunch available on a first-come, first-served basis*				
12:00 - 12:50 PM: Keynote Presentation	 **Brie Arthur, Brie Grows** ***Foodscaping for the Future: Designing Edible Landscapes in North Carolina*** *Approved:* ●▲ *Applied for:* ●				

TRACK	EXPLORING REGIONAL PLANTS	LANDSCAPE OPERATIONS	IRRIGATION	TURF MANAGEMENT	GROWERS
Location	*Guilford D*	*Guilford E*	*Guilford F*	*Guilford G*	*Auditorium II*
1:00 - 1:50 PM	**The Benefits and Challenges of Landscaping with Native Plants in North Carolina** Dr. Annabel Renwick, *Sarah P. Duke Gardens* *Approved:* ●●●▲	**Better Business Starts with Safety** Maggie Denning, *AgroMedicine* *Approved:* ■●■●●▲	**Hello, Irrigation Controller. Meet the Weather Channel.** Don Davis, *SiteOne Landscape Supply* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Herbicide Programs for Weed Management in Warm- and Cool-Season Turfgrasses** Gram Grant, *NCSU PhD candidate* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Talking Tough: Breeding Resilient Plants** John Nix, *NCSU PhD candidate* *Approved:* ●▲
2:00 - 2:50 PM	**A Wildening: Bringing Ecology Home** Preston Montague, PLA, ASLA *Approved:* ●●●▲	**Guardians of the Garden: Mastering Critter Control** Brie Arthur, *Brie Grows* *Approved:* ●●■▲	**Grounding and Lightning Protection for Irrigation Systems** Kurt Thompson, *IrriTech Training* *Approved:* ●▲ *Applied for:* ●	**Pests and Management of Tall Fescue in the Landscape** Payton Perkinson, *NCSU PhD candidate* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Root Causes & Leaf Clues: A Grower's Field Guide to Plant Diagnostics** Stacey Jones, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●▲
3:00 - 3:50 PM	**Go Native! How to Landscape with Native Plants** Sarah Christas, *Cari Rosenbalm, NCSU* *Approved:* ●●●▲	**Managing Green Stormwater Infrastructure** Savannah Roth, Syan Smoot, Dr. Vini Taguchi, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●●▲	**Flow Sensing & Master Valves** Todd Dovel, Becky Plesnicar, *Smith Turf & Irrigation* *Approved:* ●▲ *Applied for:* ●	**Saving Money in Turfgrass Management** Dr. Ray McCauley, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●▲	**Nursery Insect Scouting and Trapping** Danny Lauderdale, *NCSU* *Approved:* ●●▲

This is an Education schedule preview and is subject to change. The final schedule will be featured online and available in the on-site showbook.
NCNLA applies for continuing education units (CEUs) from various state and national entities. For CEU status updates, please visit www.greenandgrowin.com.

Business Operations – Guilford D

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

The Next Chapter – Small Business Succession Planning

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved: 

LCB-1.0; ICB-1.0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Paige Moody, Arbor Enterprises

Description: You've built a wonderful small business and now it's time to step down or retire. What does that look like and how do you go about it? This course will discuss when to start, who to talk to, and the strategies that will make a successful and smooth transition to the next chapter.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Spring Pre-Game for Landscapers: Get Ahead of Client Upsells

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved: 

ICB-1.0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Katie Elzer-Peters, The Garden of Words, LLC

Description: Want to have a super smooth and profitable spring? Pre-game your customer communications. You can use your past sales and service history to pre-stage your customer emails by building campaigns in your email program that are ready to send! Not doing customer emails? Fix that and see your profits grow. Listen, Learn and work on your own plan of attack. Leave this session with 4 upselling topics, a crash course in setting up email marketing for your business, and a calendar to batch prepare your pre-season and in- season communications.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Savvy Socializing: Secrets of Exceptional Networkers

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved: 

ICB-1.0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Jeff Corbett, Corbett Communications Inc.

Description: People do business with those they know, like, and trust—and face-to-face networking remains the most effective way to build all three, and it's also how you establish yourself as a professional known for exceptional, customer-driven service. "Savvy Socializing" is a highly interactive, enjoyably-intense networking laboratory where you'll practice meeting new people, remembering names, exchanging business cards the right way, and crafting conversations that feel natural, meaningful, and memorable. You'll take home a boatload of proven networking tips and techniques you can plug in and start using immediately!

Exploring Regional Plants – Guilford D

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

The Benefits and Challenges of Landscaping with Native Plants in North Carolina

Time: 1:00-1:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Annabel Renwick, Sarah P. Duke Gardens

Description: Landscaping and gardening in England are very different from North Carolina; however many southeastern US native plants are routinely used in British gardens. The late summer and fall blooming perennials are truly appreciated in northern Europe as they extend the flowering season. When there are so many wonderful native plants to choose from in North Carolina, why are so few grown and managed in our landscapes? Having gardened in North Carolina for over 17 years Annabel understands the many environmental and cultural challenges to gardening. Annabel will talk about her experience of working with a wide range of native plants with emphasis on the amazing diversity of native shrubs, and will speak to the use of these plants for native hedges.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

A Wildening: Bringing Ecology Home

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Preston Montague, PLA, ASLA

Description: Join landscape architect and artist Preston Montague for a detailed look at his experience creating large-scale, seed-focused, habitat-forward landscapes as the inaugural artist-in-residence at Dix Park, Raleigh's beloved 308-acre central park. Working closely with park staff and maintenance crews, Preston developed immersive outdoor artworks using naturally occurring plant species of the Southeast, innovative horticultural products, and planting strategies tailored to the realities of municipal maintenance. Designed as a follow-up to his 2023 presentation, Experiments in Piedmont Prairies, this session explores the planning, site preparation, and seed-based establishment of perennial plant communities while sharing lessons learned from designing landscapes that function simultaneously as public art, wildlife habitat, and resilient conservation infrastructure.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Go Native! How to Landscape with Native Plants

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Sarah Christas, Cari Rosenbalm, NCSU

Description: Native plants are increasingly requested by clients, but creating a successful native landscape involves more than simply choosing native species. This session will explore practical ways landscape professionals can incorporate native plants into attractive, functional designs while considering site conditions, plant selection, biodiversity, and client expectations.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Water-Wise Approaches to Landscape Design and Maintenance

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-A,L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BC-MA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Preston Montague, PLA, ASLA

Description: This session focuses on creating landscapes that better capture, store, and slowly release water, keeping rain where it falls and allowing landscapes to remain functional, attractive, and ecologically valuable with less mechanical input. Join landscape architect Preston Montague for a practical look at designing and managing water-wise landscapes that reduce dependence on supplemental irrigation by making better use of the water already available on site. This presentation explores how plant selection, conditions like soil compaction, surface materials, grading, microclimates, maintenance expectations, and conventional aesthetics can either increase or reduce long-term water demand. Participants will consider strategies for improving infiltration, holding water in the soil, reducing evaporation and runoff, grouping plants by water need, and retrofitting existing landscapes so they can better withstand drought and seasonal stress.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Landscaping for Wildlife and People

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Annabel Renwick, Sarah P. Duke Gardens

Description: As North Carolina becomes more populated and urbanized, it's important that we not only coexist with native wildlife but that we should also help it to thrive. In the past 20 years there has been a drive towards creating pollinator gardens and more recently gardening for wildlife using native plants. Unfortunately, many native plant gardens have a reputation of being unruly and unattractive which sends the wrong message to homeowners, and those responsible for municipal landscaping as well as corporate and educational campuses. As a result of visitor feed-back at Sarah P. Duke Gardens, Annabel designed a backyard wildlife garden in 2022. The garden was designed not only to support wildlife by incorporating plants that offer food to a wide range of creatures but also shelter and water. Two additional criteria were; i) the plants used in the garden could be found and purchased by landscapers, homeowners, and/or renters, and ii) the landscape should be attractive to people. The importance of managed and natural landscapes for the survival of wildlife is well documented, as is their value to the health and wellbeing of the people. Annabel will talk about the work she and her team have carried out by creating attractive landscapes for wildlife.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Building Resiliency in the Landscape

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BC-MA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Bryce Lane, Horticulturist

Description: One of the keys to creating an environmentally stable, and "eco-friendly" landscape is to build one that is resilient. What does that mean? This talk focuses on the things we can do as horticultural professionals to select & care for plants that are beautiful, recover quickly from difficult situations, handle stress successfully, and are resistant to many of the biotic and abiotic conditions that arise. Come learn about how to create a sustainable, biodiverse, and environmentally friendly landscape

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Better Business Starts with Safety

Time: 1:00-1:50 PM

Approved:

LCB-1.0; LA-0.83; ICB-1.0; PA-1.0 A,B,G,H,I,K,L,M,N,O,T,D,X,K(SA),K(PU); ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forestry, BCMA-Management; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Maggie Denning, AgroMedicine

Description: This presentation focuses on recognizing and preventing heat stress in agricultural workers while providing essential skills for responding to emergencies. Participants will learn practical strategies for heat-stress prevention, CPR and first aid response, and proper AED use. The session emphasizes timely action, workplace preparedness, and life-saving techniques that can help protect agricultural workers in the field.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Guardians of the Garden: Mastering Critter Control

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; LA-0.83; ICB-1.0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Brie Arthur, Brie Grows

Description: Tired of critters munching on your garden dreams? Say farewell to the frustration and join Brie Arthur for expert solutions that work. Together, we'll tackle the challenge of mammal browsing head-on. From crafty deer to mischievous rabbits, we're breaking down how to reclaim your garden paradise. Brie will share the do's and don'ts of critter control, plus tips on repellents, budget- friendly fencing, and using your favorite veggies as secret deterrents. Get ready to fortify your garden against invaders and transform frustration into triumph. Let's Keep the Animals Out and make your garden truly yours!

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Managing Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved:

LC-1.0; IC-1.0; PA-1.0 A,H,L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Savannah Roth, Syan Smoot, Dr. Vini Taguchi NCSU

Description: Stormwater control measures (SCMs) like bioretention cells, ponds, and wetlands are often mistaken for ordinary landscaped features, but they require specialized care to keep functioning. This session brings together three members of NC State's Stormwater Engineering Group to cover what that care looks like in practice and what new research is being done in the green infrastructure field.

Irrigation – Guilford F

Coordinated by the Carolina Irrigation Association

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Smart Water Tech & Controller Innovations

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved:

IC-1.0; CPP-1.0

Applied for:

Speaker: Bobby Jackson, The Toro Company

Description: Hardware choices directly impact overall irrigation system efficiency. Led by technical specialist Bobby Jackson, this session covers best practices in equipment selection, proper setup, and installation procedures across landscape and turf applications. By the end of this course, you will be able to: Evaluate how specific hardware choices affect overall system performance and water efficiency. Apply proper installation procedures for key landscape and turf irrigation components. Implement practical system setup methods to optimize efficiency across diverse field scenarios.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Filtration for Landscape Irrigation & Grounding

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved:

IC-1.0; CPP-1.0

Applied for:

Speaker: Kurt Thompson, IrriTech Training

Description: The water source for an irrigation system cannot be counted on to be "clean" enough to avoid causing problems with the proper functioning of the system's components. Filtration is often overlooked because the principles of landscape irrigation filtration products can be hard to understand. This session uses common residential and commercial scenarios to understand, select, install, and service filters that effectively prevent and/or solve problems.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

GPM, TDH, and NPSH: Pump Curve Acronyms You Need to Know

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved:

LA-0.83; IC-1.0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Don Davis, SiteOne Landscape Supply

Description: Summary: Pump selection requires a strong understanding of the dynamic and environmental variances at your specific jobsite. Knowing the industry lingo helps you make the right choices on your next project. Objectives: By the end of this course, you will be able to: Understand the key parts of a compound pump curve Evaluate flow and pressure variances that determine pump sizing Recognize the environmental factors that affect pump performance

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Hello Irrigation Controller, Meet the Weather Channel

Time: 1:00–1:50 PM

Approved:

LA-0.83; IC-1.0; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Don Davis, SiteOne Landscape Supply

Description: Summary: Cloud-based irrigation management gives you access to a unique water- management tool: weather data! Keep your landscape at its peak health while minimizing water waste and maximizing client satisfaction. Objectives: By the end of this course, you will be able to: Recognize the connectivity options for internet weather integration Understand how varying platforms use weather data for scheduling decisions Learn the characteristics of your irrigation system that weather data can't fix

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Grounding and Lightning Protection for Irrigation Systems

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved:

IC-1.0; CPP-1.0

Applied for:

Speaker: Kurt Thompson, IrriTech Training

Description: Protecting the electrical components in an irrigation system has many different requirements than protection for people and property. Relying on the grounding of a building is not enough defense against the common transient voltage spikes or the super high voltage and frequency of lightning strikes to which an irrigation system is exposed. This highly interactive session gives the residential or commercial irrigation designer, contractor, or manager the understanding of physical properties lightning and electrical surges as well as the industry best practices to provide some protection for controllers, wire, decoders, and solenoids The training uses real-world examples to apply the science of irrigation using innovative and proven methods

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Flow Sensing & Master Valves

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved:

IC-1.0; CPP-1.0

Applied for:

Speaker: Todd Dovel, Becky Plesnicar, Smith Turf & Irrigation

Description: Flow meters, mainlines, and safety shutdowns work together to create an automated defense system against water waste and site damage. Knowing how to properly select and integrate these components helps contractors catch leaks before they cause major property destruction. By the end of this course, you will be able to: Identify the primary components and operating principles of flow sensors and master valves Configure system safety shutdowns to automatically respond to mainline ruptures and leaks Evaluate flow data to optimize system efficiency and prevent costly landscape damage"

Turf Management – Guilford G

Coordinated by the NC Sod Producers

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Integrative Turfgrass Management

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved: ●■▲

LC-1.0; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Ray McCauley, NCSU

Description: Turfgrass pests detract from turfgrass aesthetics and function, which can cost practitioners thousands of dollars to correct. Long-term, successful control of turfgrass pests requires an integrated approach that marries correct cultural and pest management practices. The use of integrated pest management programs will be emphasized in this presentation to ensure proper identification, adequate control, minimal damage, and acceptable aesthetics. This presentation will address common turfgrass pests of North Carolina as well as their control by utilizing integrated pest management practices.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Turfgrass Insect Management

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved: ●■▲

LC-1.0; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Terri Billeisen, NCSU

Description: In this seminar, participants vote from a list of turfgrass insect pests. We will review the top selected insects, their biology, monitoring strategies and management. Focus will be given to successful management approaches for cost-effective and environmentally-sound control.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Turf Rescue: How to Spot, Stop, and Overcome Common Lawn Ailments

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved: ●■▲

LC-1.0; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Jim Kerns, NCSU

Description: Diseases in the landscape can be challenging, and this presentation will cover the basics of the most common diseases in warm—and cool-season turfgrass lawns. It will focus on the newest management strategies and incorporate methods that have been successful for quite some time.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Herbicide Programs for Weed Management in Warm- and Cool-Season Turfgrasses

Time: 1:00–1:50 PM

Approved: ●■▲

LC-1.0; PA-1.0 H,L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Gram Grant, NCSU

Description: Weed management remains one of the most challenging aspects of maintaining high-quality turfgrass. This session will provide practical strategies for identifying problematic weeds, optimizing herbicide efficacy, and implementing effective control measures. Participants will learn about herbicide programs for managing annual bluegrass, crabgrass, goosegrass, sedges, and problematic broadleaf weeds in both warm- and cool-season turfgrasses.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Pests and Management of Tall Fescue in the Landscape

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved: ●■▲

LC-1.0; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Payton Perkinson, NCSU

Description: Tall fescue is the most popularly planted cool-season turfgrass in NC. Its good shade, heat, and drought tolerance and year-round green color make it highly desirable turfgrass especially in the Piedmont of NC. However, abiotic and biotic stress complicate its management especially during the summer. This presentation will address common tall fescue pests as well as management practices to maximize tall fescue success in Piedmont of NC.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Saving Money in Turfgrass Management

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved: ●■▲

LC-1.0; PA-1.0 L,N,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Ray McCauley, NCSU

Description: Cost-effective and environmentally sound pest control strategies will be covered in this presentation. Attendees will learn the correct product selection and control strategies to maximize their profits and environmental responsibility. Specific turfgrass pests and control options will be presented for landscape, golf, and sports turf settings.

Growers – Auditorium II

Coordinated by JC Raulston Arboretum

JCRaulstonArboretum

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Weed Management Practices and Costs in Field Nursery Production

Time: 8:30–9:20 AM

Approved: ● ▲

PA-1.0 H,L,N,O,D,X; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Sam Marshall, NCSU

Description: Weed management is an integral part of field nursery production, yet growers vary considerably in the weeds they target, how they manage them, and the herbicides they use. Through on-farm trials, land-grant university professionals can demonstrate efficacy of various herbicides (pre and post-emergent herbicides) and develop recommendations to help growers improve weed control. However, less is known about the costs associated with weed management programs growers use. This talk will present the results from grower interviews conducted across North Carolina and Tennessee in the summer of 2026 to assess weed management practices and associated costs, and compare current grower practices with Extension-based recommendations developed through on-farm trials. We will discuss some results from on-farm trials and future directions for research relative to weed management in ornamental field nursery systems.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

In the Zone: Managing the Root Zone in Container Plants for Optimal Growth

Time: 9:30–10:20 AM

Approved: ▲

CPP-1.0

Speaker: Dr. Kristopher Criscione, Virginia Tech

Description: The container rootzone is very dynamic because it relies on a perfect balance of irrigation, substrate, and fertilizer management. All three of these management programs are tailored towards generating healthy root systems. In this talk, you will learn practical and adoptable methods to improve your plant growth and development regarding soilless substrate engineering, modifying irrigation scheduling, and unique agrochemical applications.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

I Like It, I Love It, I Want Some More of It – Great, but Rarely Grown, and Little-Known Native Perennials

Time: 10:30–11:20 AM

Approved: ● ▲

LC-1.0; CPP-1.0

Applied for: ●

Speaker: Tony Avent, Plants Delights Nursery

Description: Folks currently get caught up in where a plant is "native", as opposed to how well it will perform, without spreading rampantly in the garden, and reducing biodiversity. Poison ivy, prostrate spurge, pokeweed, dogfennel, and Virginia buttonweed, are all regional natives, but most folks certainly don't want them in their garden. We'll focus on fabulous garden performers that happen to also be native, but are sadly missing and unknown in the commercial trade.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Talking Tough: Breeding Resilient Plants

Time: 1:00–1:50 PM

Approved: ● ▲

ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forest, BCMA-Science; CPP-1.0

Speaker: John Nix

Description: Plant breeding and improvement at the Mountain Crop Improvement Lab at NC State University is focused on providing solutions to issues for the green industry. This talk will focus on new variety releases that bring resilience, non-invasiveness, disease resistance, and more to our landscapes and nurseries.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Root Causes & Leaf Clues: A Grower's Field Guide to Plant Diagnostics

Time: 2:00–2:50 PM

Approved: ● ● ▲

PA-1.0 H,L,N,O,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forest, BCMA-Science; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Stacey Jones, NCSU

Description: Early and accurate diagnosis is critical for maintaining commercial crop quality and crop yield. This presentation provides growers with systematic diagnostic protocols for identifying abiotic and biotic plant disorders. Key topics include conducting in-house pour-through monitoring, active pest scouting strategies, and best practices for collecting and submitting lab samples for plant pathology and nutrient analysis. Finally, you'll learn how to analyze and synthesize this data to confidently pinpoint the root cause of crop issues.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

Nursery Insect Scouting and Trapping

Time: 3:00–3:50 PM

Approved: ● ● ▲

PA-1.0 L,N,O,D,X; ISA-0.75 Certified Arborist, Urban forest, BCMA-Practice; CPP-1.0

Speaker: Danny Lauderdale, NCSU

Description: Trapping and scouting methods for common nursery insect pests will be discussed. Specific scouting methods, materials, and timing for trapping and monitoring the most problematic emerging insect pests for nurseries will be the focus of the presentation.

Wednesday, January 20, 2027

KEYNOTE — Foodscaping for the Future: Designing Edible Landscapes in North Carolina

Time: 12:00–12:50 PM

Approved: ● ▲

LC-1.0; CPP-1.0

Applied for: ●

Speaker: Brie Arthur, Brie Grows

Description: As clients increasingly seek landscapes that are both beautiful and functional, foodscaping offers green industry professionals an opportunity to deliver high-impact designs that go beyond traditional ornamentals. In this keynote, NC based horticulturist Brie Arthur introduces the principles of foodscaping, intentionally integrating edible crops into ornamental landscapes to create spaces that are productive, resilient, and visually compelling.