



2024 Convention
Gatlinburg, TN
March 19-20, 2024



“Springtime in the Smokies”

“REWILDING”

Nature has the power to heal itself and to heal us if we let it. That’s what rewilding is all about; restoring ecosystems to the point where nature can take care of itself. This talk will focus on the succession planting of native and non-native plants to create lower care, high impact landscapes. We will explore some large vibrant public landscapes and find principles homeowners can use in their own landscapes. The importance of cues to care and the creation of dynamic four-season landscapes will be discussed.



Dr. Andy Pulte grew up in the nursery industry in Grand Island, Nebraska. He received his Ph.D. in plant sciences from the University of Tennessee, where he is now on the faculty in the same department. His current responsibilities include teaching and advising, and he also coordinates UT’s plant sciences undergraduate program. Additionally, he speaks regularly to diverse groups and travels extensively to feed his passion for people and plants. Over his career, he has contributed to a variety of gardening publications and hosted a gardening radio show. He is also an internationally certified arborist. Andy gardens in a residential community north of Knoxville. He seeks out unusual plants for his home garden that inspire questions from those who visit. He and his wife, Beccy, have two outdoor-loving young boys who are always looking for their next adventure.

WILDFLOWER ID

Meet **Tom Harrington**, Volunteer Interpreter in-Park for Great Smoky Mountains National Park, hiker, wildflower enthusiast and originator of GSMA's wildflower reports. After over 30 years of chasing wildflowers, he is just as eager to see them as he was when he started. He has volunteered in Cades Cove since April 2000. He is a native resident of Knoxville, TN, and a graduate of East Tennessee State University. Tom is a retired insurance agent and a U. S. Army Veteran.



HYDRANGEAS: THE ULTIMATE GARDEN AWAKENING PLANT!

[Dr. Sue Hamilton](#) is a recently retired horticulture professor and director of the University of Tennessee (UT) Gardens, the State Botanical Gardens of Tennessee. For 37 years, Dr. Sue taught ornamental horticulture and advised students and was the founding director of UT's Public Horticulture undergraduate and graduate program. She has co-authored the book "*The Best Garden Plants for Tennessee*" and has been a contributor to various magazines including *Fine Gardening*, *Tennessee Home*, and *Tennessee Gardener*. During her tenure at UT, Dr. Sue co-hosted a weekly *Garden Talk* radio show for 15 years, wrote a monthly gardening newspaper column for seven years, and led several garden trips throughout the United States and Europe. She is also the recipient of several awards including the UTK Chancellor's Honors Women of Achievement Award, UTIA William T. Miles Memorial Award for Community Service, UT CASNR W.S. Overton Faculty Award for Outstanding Student Development, Gamma Sigma Delta Teaching Award, and the Perennial Plant Association Academic Award. Dr. Sue now lives in Townsend and enjoys working in her garden and traveling.



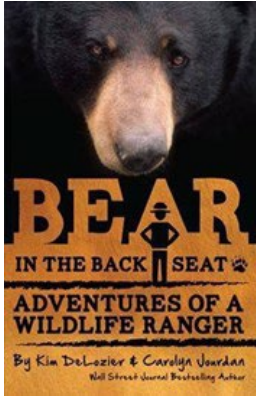
WELCOME HOME GEORGE WASHINGTON

[Dean Norton](#) began employment at Mount Vernon Estate on June 23, 1969, and never left. After receiving a degree in horticulture from Clemson University, he began his horticultural career as the estate's boxwood gardener in 1977. He was promoted to horticulturist in 1980 and is responsible for applying the latest plant science and management techniques of horticulture in a historic setting. For the past 43 years, Dean has devoted considerable time to researching 18th century gardens and gardening practices and contributed to several on site garden restorations. Dean has served on several Historic Properties Boards including the Historic Properties Committee of Clemson University. He is an accomplished and compelling speaker that entertains while informing and has traveled across the country and internationally presenting to Garden Clubs and professional organizations. He has received awards for conservation from the DAR and the Garden Club of America, as well as the Garden Club of America's Elizabeth Craig Weaver Proctor National Medal given for exemplary service and creative vision in any field related to the Garden Club of Americas special interest. He is a past president of the Southern Garden History Society, a recipient of the American Horticultural Societies Professional Award, an honorary member of the Garden Club of Virginia and, most recently, received a Presidential Appointment to serve on the Committee for the Preservation of the White House.



LIVING WITH BEARS

[Kim DeLozier](#) grew up living and working on his family's farm in eastern TN raising cattle, hogs, tobacco, hay and chickens. Since his childhood, he always loved the outdoors and animals and wanted to find a job that reflected that interest. Kim graduated from the University of Tennessee with a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science. He began his career with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in 1978 working as a wild boar hunter and later served as the Park's Wildlife Biologist. Kim retired in 2010 after 32 rewarding years of service. During his career, Kim's involvement primarily focused on nuisance black bear management, wild boar control, white-tailed deer management, small animal management and re-introduction efforts for elk river otters, peregrine falcons and red wolves. He received the North Carolina Governor's Achievement Award for Wildlife Conservationist of the Year. Kim currently works for the Appalachian Bear Rescue, leading their "BearWise" effort in managing human/bear conflicts. He co-authored two books, *Bear In The Back Seat I & II*. The first book is a *Wall Street Journal* bestseller.



FIREFLIES AND OTHER INTERESTING INSECTS IN THE SMOKIES

[Dr. Becky Nichols](#), Entomologist, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Dr. Nichols has been an entomologist at Great Smoky Mountains National Park since 1997. Her primary responsibilities are to implement the monitoring program for aquatic macroinvertebrates in the parks' numerous streams, and to work on the [All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory](#) (ATBI), which is an effort to identify all species in the park. Both projects are ongoing and have resulted in a much greater understanding of the park's diverse habitats. The ATBI has involved collaborations with numerous taxonomists from around the US and from other countries to help document the numerous life forms in the park.



Becky received a BS degree in wildlife biology from Washington State University, an MS degree in entomology from Texas Tech University, a PhD in entomology from Texas. the University of Missouri. She has held an appointment as an Adjunct Faculty member in the Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, University of Tennessee, since 2003.



TOUR OF NPN TWIN CREEKS NATURAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION CENTER (2 hours)

Dr. Becky Nichols and Park Volunteer, Janie Bitner, will lead the tour of Twin Creeks. The Center currently houses the park's natural history collections. The Smokies collection provides reference materials for researchers and staff. It is also a resource for All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI), a project which strives to document every species in the park. The collections comprise a rich legacy of scientific information vital to understanding the Smokies internationally renowned biological diversity. Listen to their podcast, [Smoky Signals](#), on Apple.

WORLDS AWAY: GLOBAL TRENDS IN FLORAL DESIGN

From unusual structures to exciting floral combinations to uncommon use of plant material, this program will introduce Deep South designers to floral trends from around the world. **Janet Switzer** won her first blue ribbon for floral design at age six in the junior division of a local NGC flower show and has been a competitive flower arranger and avid design student ever since. She was named "Flower Arranger of the Year" for California an unprecedented three times and has exhibited the top design at numerous national and international shows over the past 20 years. Her work has been frequently featured on floral design websites, in social media, and in Visions of Beauty calendars—including a design honoring NGC President Linda Nelson at the California Garden Clubs convention. Miss Switzer is an NGC Accredited Master Judge who regularly travels to international competitions and studies with top design instructors, including a week-long intensive with Gregor Lersch at his workrooms in Bad Neuenahr, Germany, alongside instructors and competitors from 14 countries. She is also a *New York Times* bestselling author and speaker whose books are published in 41 languages. Miss Switzer lives in Franklin, Tennessee.

