



Mark Dwyer

Mark is a landscape architect with a degree in urban forestry whose passion for plants was inspired early on by his gardening mother and forester father. His career spans residential design and public horticulture, including leadership roles at Fernwood Botanic Garden and Rotary Botanical Gardens, where he served as director of horticulture for 21 years. Now owner of Landscape Prescriptions by MD and garden manager for the Edgerton Hospital Healing Garden, Mark finds joy in helping people create inspiring landscapes and in sharing his love of plants through education, photography, and hands-on gardening.

Julie Graesch

Julie has 19 years of experience as a biological scientist, practiced in laboratory, greenhouse, and field research as well as technical service support for the integrated pest management industry. She has been with BioWorks for 6 years and has previously held positions at BASF, Becker Underwood, and Iowa State University.

Chelsea Hartshorn

Chelsea is the co-founder of Threadleaf Design, a residential landscape design firm known for its collaborative approach with contractors and builders. She combines design expertise with a focus on efficiency, systems, and client experience. Chelsea also consults with landscape companies on integrating AI tools like ChatGPT to streamline proposals, estimating, and team communication. Her sessions help professionals apply technology in practical, actionable ways to save time and strengthen their business operations.

Sam Hoadley

Sam Hoadley is the Manager of Horticultural Research at Mt. Cuba Center where he evaluates native plant species, old and new cultivars, and hybrids in the Trial Garden. When Sam is not in the gardens he can be found working as a liaison with the mid-Atlantic horticultural and nursery community to help promote the use of beautiful and ecologically valuable plants from Mt. Cuba's evaluations. Sam grew up in East Granby Connecticut where his passion for plants and the natural world grew and led him to the pursuit of his degree in Sustainable Landscape Horticulture and at the University of Vermont.

Marcus Jansen

Marcus was raised in Quincy, Illinois and is an alum of the Iowa State University Department of Horticulture. He now resides in Batavia, Illinois and is a Product Manager for PanAmerican Seed of Ball Horticultural Company. In this role, Marcus oversees the Pro Landscape Performer Program and manages a portfolio of annuals and perennials in the PanAmerican Seed assortment, working to bring new plant varieties to growers and gardeners all over the world.

Jeff Joutras

Jeff Joutras is a founding member and Licensed Trainer with the Cialdini Institute for Ethical Persuasion as well as a Certified Coach, Teacher and Speaker with the Maxwell Certified Leadership Team. Jeff is also a trained DISC consultant helping individuals and teams identify their communication styles so they can better communicate and connect.

Jeff's background includes over 35 years of green industry experience in various executive leadership positions in both sales and operations management. He helps individuals and small to medium sized companies problem solve, improve productivity and get better results through his coaching, training and speaking services. Jeff's style is down to earth, practical and humorous. He is a graduate from the University of Wisconsin in Forestry and Business Administration.

Melinda Knuth

Dr. Knuth is an assistant professor at North Carolina State University in the Department of Horticultural Science. Dr. Knuth's research priorities are on consumer and market research experience by focusing on the interface between people and plants, helping the horticulture industry understand consumer preferences, perceptions, and motivations. Historically, Dr. Knuth has evaluated trade flows of horticulture products in the United States, estimating the economic impact of the North Carolina and United States green industries, assessed the supply chain in the cut flower industry, and estimated consumer acceptance of retail messaging.

Mike Mennenoh

With more than 30 years in the nursery industry, Mike Mennenoh brings extensive experience in both perennial production and leadership. Before joining Mariani Plants in 2008, he spent the first half of his career managing and growing at a perennial nursery. As General Manager, Mike leads a dedicated team committed to producing high-quality plants and fostering strong, lasting relationships with customers and vendors. His hands-on approach and focus on excellence have been central to Mariani Plants' continued success.

Fredric Miller

Dr. Fredric Miller is a senior research scientist at The Morton Arboretum, where he focuses on evaluating woody ornamental plants for susceptibility to native and exotic insect pests. His research supports the development of new plant species and cultivars for urban forests and landscapes, while also providing critical insights through the Illinois Cooperative Forest Health Program. In this role, he monitors insects, diseases, and abiotic disorders affecting both rural and urban forests, delivering timely pest and disease updates to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, urban foresters, and green industry professionals. His lab has also contributed to emerald ash borer management by evaluating parasitoids for biological control. Dr. Miller holds degrees in entomology from Iowa State University (PhD) and the University of Arkansas (MSc), and a BS in forest management from the University of Missouri. He is an active member of several professional organizations, including the Entomological Society of America, Illinois Arborist Association, International Society of Arboriculture, and Soil Science Society of America.

Heather Prince

Heather Prince has been a professional horticulturist for more than 25 years in numerous roles from public gardens to retail and wholesale to private consulting. She currently balances a busy freelance horticultural writing and teaching schedule with her role as email marketing manager for The Garden of Words.

Larry Weaner

Larry Weaner is the founder of Larry Weaner Landscape Associates and a nationally recognized leader in ecological landscape design. His award-winning work, spanning more than 20 U.S. states and the U.K., has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Landscape Architecture Magazine, and more. Honored by groups such as the American Horticultural Society, Garden Club of America, and the Association of Professional Landscape Designers, Larry is widely known for his innovative use of native plants and practical, environmentally sound design. He is also the author of Garden Revolution: How Our Landscapes Can Be a Source of Environmental Change (Timber Press, 2016), recipient of the American Horticultural Society's 2017 Book Award.

Mark Weathington

Mark Weathington is the director of the JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University where he is passionate in connecting plants to people to help them "plan - and plant for a better world." Mark scours the globe looking for plants and genetics to improve and diversify the landscape and shares those plants as widely as possible.

Michael Yanny

Mike is a long-time plant propagator and plant breeder best known for his work in association with Johnson's Nursery. He currently runs his own new plant development company, JN Plant Selections, LLC. He is best known for the many woody plant cultivars he has selected over the last 40+ years. Some include: Technito(R) Arborvitae, Firebird(R) Crabapple, Firespire(R) Musclewood, Spice Island(TM) Koreanspice Viburnum, Violet Uprising(TM) Manchurian Lilac, Lacette(TM) Fragrant Sumac, Pink-a-licious(TM) Spirea, Early Glow(TM) Buckeye, and Star Power(TM) Chinese Juniper.