

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

NEBRASKA NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION

NNLA WINTER CONFERENCE & NCNLP TESTING HELD IN LINCOLN

NNLA hosted two events this past January. On Wednesday, January 25th, NNLA held the winter edition of the Nebraska Certified Nursery & Landscape Professional (NCNLP) exam on UNL's East Campus. NNLA was again welcomed by UNL Agronomy and Horticulture to use a classroom in Keim Hall. Due to the cold temperatures the plant ID portion of the test was given using PowerPoint slides with plant photos as well as cuttings of plant material. NNLA had five people registered to take the test. Three of them were taking portions of the test over and two were taking the entire NCNLP test for the first time. At the end of the day NNLA welcomed one new member to the NCNLP program. NNLA plans to offer the exam again in early August at East Campus where they will be able to utilize the Maxwell Arboretum and Backyard Farmer Gardens for plant ID testing.



NNLA held its annual Winter Conference at UNL's Innovation Campus Conference Center the following Thursday and Friday, January 26th and 27th. NNLA was pleased to have a lot of interest from vendors for this year's event. This added to the positive and energized atmosphere of the conference. NNLA was planning on 110 members in attendance but ended up having around 150 total attendees. Good weather- cold but no new snow- made it easier for members to attend.

Thursday morning, attendees were welcomed by NNLA's President, Jason Kuehl. Weston Zimmerman, the co-founder of SynkedUP, was the first presenter. He shared the importance of knowing the overhead costs of doing business, which will be unique for each business. Weston's experience working in the landscape industry made him a great fit to create budgeting and business solutions tailored to the needs of the average landscape company.

Next, Auggie Rodriguez, the Director of Training and Development at Unilock Midwest, spoke to attendees about the challenges water can cause to hardscape projects. He shared tested solutions to make retaining walls, paver patios and paver driveways perform year after year. He explained the possible benefits of the open grade base installation method to areas prone to freeze and thaw cycles and in areas where it is difficult to get consistent compaction. Auggie also presented on Perma Edge and DriBond products and their use in hardscape installations.

Before lunch, Laura Fauber, the Director of National and Enterprise Sales at Greenius, was slated to speak. However, due to weather she was unable to travel to attend the conference in person. She shared her presentation with the winter conference attendees as a webinar on Wednesday, February 8th. Her session covered the 5 steps to build and sustain high-performing teams. Laura also shared more about the partnership between NNLA and Greenius.

Continued on page 4...

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the Date!*

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THE NNLA MISSION: TO ADVANCE THE NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NETWORKING, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND CERTIFICATION TO INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF COLLECTIVELY GROWING THEIR BUSINESSES.

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Brett Schroer, NNLA President



Hello friends,

Spring is quickly approaching and the beginning of a new season is upon us. More than ever before it seems that there is less seasonal down time between busy seasons. Winter is always a great time to exhale, catch up on projects that have been put on the back burner, and catch up with friends and colleagues that we don't often see enough. Hopefully you have had a chance to rest, regroup, and prepare for the challenges ahead. Our most recent event was this year's winter conference which was well

received and a great time to catch up with so many of you. I for one was excited to see the return of the networking social hour after the conference and am already looking forward to it next year!

I am deeply optimistic about the coming year. Spring is full of new energy and expectations of what's to come, the excitement can be infectious as the landscape comes to life again. There seems to still be plenty of work on the books and construction continues, albeit at a slower pace. Although we will all continue to keep a wary eye on the economy and signs of a long term slow down there are positives that come from the current state of the industry. I think everyone would agree that the record sales years from 2020-2022 were both exhilarating and exhausting at the same time. Growth is always a good thing; however unhealthy growth is not sustainable nor in the best interest of our industry. 2023 looks to return strong numbers throughout the spring and summer but possibly more measured growth than that of the previous three years. Slower growth will allow us to combat the challenges that arose from such staggering sales, supply chain disruptions, product shortages, and labor. While I have no concrete answers for our labor shortages, I do think what we can expect a mild reduction in demand to allow the supply side to start catching up. Evergreen shortages in particular continue to be felt across the industry and will not be rectified soon.

In my humble opinion labor will continue to be the single largest challenge that we face. Postsecondary horticulture programs continue to decline across the country and overall enrollment is down. The inability to hire the appropriate amount of people and the struggle to attract younger generations to our industry affects us all. We must continue to find new and innovative ways to both get more done with less and promote the benefits of our industry to entice new workers. People are what make this industry so uniquely special. The sharing and exchange of ideas, skills, and information passed from one generation of skilled craftsmen to the next is a rare thing in our technological age. Thank you to all of you who continue to teach and inspire younger generations to pursue horticulture. Mechanization and innovation will continue to be critical in keeping up with demand in light of a shrinking labor force. As I stated earlier I am deeply optimistic about the coming year and wish you the very best this season.

Brett Schroer
NNLA President

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Continued from page 1...

Lunch was held back in the convention hall where attendees were able to network and meet with vendors. After lunch the Annual NNLA Meeting took place. Members were updated on the exciting work being done by the Marketing Committee and NCNLP Committee. During the awards portion of the meeting NNLA was able to honor the lifetime contributions of Addie Kinghorn to the horticulture industry in Nebraska. She was given the NNLA Hall of Fame Award. Lee Olson received the Distinguished Landscape Professional Award in recognition of his years in the landscape design industry. Julie Van Meter was awarded the Distinguished Nursery Professional Award and thanked for her years of dedicated service to the horticulture industry through her time at the Nebraska Department of Agriculture and as an advisor to the NNLA Board of Directors. Sheila Schrader received the NCNLP of the Year Award for her ongoing contributions to the NCNLP Committee. Jim Locklear of Lauritzen Gardens was awarded the Gold Leaf Nursery Award. This award is given to a group or individual who has actively shown outstanding support to the NNLA and the nursery and landscape industry in

Nebraska. Brett Schroer was elected as the incoming President of NNLA. Lee Olson was selected to take his place as Vice President. Aaron Oltmans was reelected to another term on the Board of Directors. The Board also welcomed Joel Kayser who was elected for his first term.

After lunch, Jim Locklear presented on the conservation vision of Lauritzen Gardens. He shared an overview of the gardens as they are today as well as their plans for continued growth and improvement of the botanical center. Jim also gave an overview of the conservation and ecological stewardship efforts at Lauritzen Gardens. The gardens have become an important site for insects as well as migrating bird populations which has been shown through their ongoing biodiversity surveys. Laurie Stepanek, head of the Nebraska Forest Service Forest Health Program, presented on herbicide damage to off-target trees and shrubs. She discussed some of the complex issues of herbicide use around landscape trees including properties of chemicals, impacts of weather, the herbicide sensitivity of individual plants and applicator error.

The last speaker on Thursday featured Robert Clark with Bailey Nurseries. He shared recent and new First Editions Plant Releases from Bailey Nurseries. Robert explained that the current goal of the breeding program is to create cultivars that are compact and upright to fit the smaller lots of new construction homes. One such plant is the Fiber Optics buttonbush which, at approximately 5-6 feet wide and tall, is smaller than the straight species but a little larger and more compact than the Sugar Shack cultivar. Attendees were then invited to walk over to the Scarlet Hotel for a reception. Around fifty of the attendees enjoyed this additional opportunity to network while enjoying the view from the Barred Owl rooftop bar.

Friday began with a brief welcome by incoming President Brett Schroer. The first speaker of the day was Corby White, Product Manager with Helena Agri-Enterprises. He discussed all of the possible factors that could impact a spray application of fertilizer, herbicide or fungicide. Corby focused much of his talk on the impacts of water pH as well as water hardness on spray applications. He discussed the benefits of surfactant and adjuvants and the importance of “building your tank” when it comes to adding each chemical or additive in the proper order. Corby stressed the importance of checking water pH throughout the year in different conditions such as drought.

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Continued from page 4...A raffle was held to raise funds for the NNLA scholarship program. Vendors and members donated items to be used as prizes in the raffle. NNLA raised over \$600 for the scholarship fund through the raffle. Thank you to all who participated in the raffle and who donated to the scholarship fund. This year, one NNLA scholarship was awarded to Keely Conrad of York who is attending the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and will graduate in December of 2024.



Next, Erin Kubicek, the Environmental Health Educator for Lincoln Transportation and Utilities' Watershed Management Division presented alongside Andy Szatko, with the City of Omaha Stormwater Program. They collaborated to speak about purposeful landscapes which make the most of stormwater, using it onsite, slowing it down and spreading it out before it makes its way to the storm drain. Andy and Erin showed examples of green infrastructure projects throughout Omaha and Lincoln, including rain gardens and bioswales. They explained that there is a need for professionals to maintain these green infrastructure features which could be a good niche for some landscape contractors to fill.

As the last speaker of the conference, Bob Henrickson, the Horticulture Program Coordinator with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, presented on edible landscaping. He explained that edible landscaping is becoming something more and more homeowners are asking for in their landscapes. There are many native, edible plants that also look great in the landscape throughout the seasons. Bob shared many trees and shrubs that would be great options to add to yards across the state. He also spoke about how there is so much more to be made out of fruit and berries other than jams or jellies. Bob encouraged attendees to think about homemade wine, tinctures, pies and breads.

NNLA is excited to see how the attendees will take what they learned at the Winter Conference and use it to grow and improve their businesses. Educating members is an important part of the mission of NNLA and to the growth of nursery and landscape industry in Nebraska. A big thanks again to the event sponsors and to the people and organizations that made this event possible.

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BEST TREES AND SHRUBS FOR ATTRACTING BIRDS

Justin Evertson, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, plantnebraska.org



The yard around your house may seem like it belongs just to you, but that’s not quite the truth. Even the most private, enclosed backyard is home to a whole range of other creatures, from insects and butterflies to birds and mammals. We may not want neighbors camping out there, but most of us love to have birds nesting or stopping by. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, bird watching is the number one sport in North America, and it’s a sport that can be pursued from infancy to old age. What trees are most likely to attract birds to our landscapes? Not surprisingly native trees offer the most extensive resources for native birds. It’s a mutually beneficial relationship, with trees supplying shelter, food and habitat and birds in turn helping trees spread far beyond their static boundaries.

If you’re thinking about planting some trees this year, here are some potential “bird magnets,” listed roughly by seasonal appeal and, for many, the particular species of birds that relies on them. Many of the early spring-fruiting trees are timed perfectly to help birds with the non-stop demands of feeding their young. For spring through summer, here are some great food sources:

- **Cherry, Prunus—grosbeak, northern flicker and white-throated sparrow**
- **Chokeberry, Aronia - Chokecherry, Prunus virginiana**
- **Coralberry, Symphoricarpos—upwards of 14 species eat coralberry, including American robin**
- **Cucumber tree, Magnolia acuminata—bright red berries in late summer and very easy-to-grow**
- **Dogwood, Cornus—especially our native roughleaf dogwood**
- **Elderberry, Sambucus—red-headed woodpecker, eastern bluebird, cardinal**
- **Juneberry or serviceberry, Amelanchier—one of the best early food sources for a wide range of birds**
- **Maple, Acer—cardinal, bobwhite, grosbeak**
- **Oak, Quercus—turkey, bobwhite quail, bluejay, rufous-sided towhee (dwarf chinkapin oak is a great choice)**

Some of the best late winter food sources for birds are actually unpalatable earlier in the season, needing to freeze and thaw several times before birds will eat them:

- **Crabapple, Malus—choose from smaller-fruited types that retain fruits into winter**
- **Hackberry, Celtis—cardinal, northern flicker and northern mockingbird**
- **Hawthorn, Crataegus—including our native downy hawthorn**
- **Persimmon, Diospyros virginiana—bobwhite, eastern bluebird**
- **Sumac, Rhus—more than 30 species eat these persistent fruits**
- **Viburnum—cranberrybush, blackhaw and our native nannyberry are great choices**

Conifers offer late season food and, just as important, valuable shelter during harsh winter months when deciduous trees have lost their foliage: fir, juniper, pine, spruce and redcedar. But keep in mind that redcedar is an alternate host for rusts on hawthorn and crabapple and should not be planted near them. And keep in mind that leaving some leaves and litter underneath trees not only provides nesting material but also shelters insects as an additional food source.

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NNLA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: LAND ESCAPES

To promote our members and learn about each other, NNLA will begin highlighting members with a spotlight feature in the NNLA newsletter, Facebook page, and website. To participate, go to the NNLA webpage (nnla.org) and under member benefits you will find a button to click to complete a form.

For this issue's member spotlight, we visit with Kristin Hain of Land Escapes.

Tell us about your business' background and history. How did the company start and where it is today? Describe your path to get here.

It all started back in 1996 when I (Kristin Hain, Land Escapes' owner) was working in a local coffee shop and had recently discovered a love for plants and gardening. One morning a customer visiting for his daily coffee fix overheard me talking about plants and asked if I'd be interested in helping out with his home landscape maintenance. I accepted the job and the rest is history! Little did I know then that the paid hobby would turn into such a great business and I'm so grateful for the positive word-of-mouth referrals from so many of our clients over the years. Through these referrals over the years, we've grown substantially to what we are today! I never intended to get into landscaping back then, I have never been to college and have no formal horticultural education, just a passion for plants and creating something unique and beautiful. I did work very part-time, seasonally at a local bedding plant production nursery (they're no longer in business) for a few years at in the early-mid 1990's which helped with my annual plant knowledge. I started with doing everything by myself (for the first 7 years before hiring my first employee), worked out of an old SUV that I would toss a shovel and trowel into the back and bungee a wheelbarrow onto the roof until buying our first truck and trailer in 2004....to where we're at today with 5 trucks, 5 trailers, 10+ employees during peak season, 2 managers, 1 designer, and a 1 acre property that I just purchased in 2019 that we operate out of. Now we're so busy (and I'm not as physically capable as I used to be), that I'm primarily running operations in the office and entrusting our incredible team members to handle most of the jobsite work. It's been quite the ride and I'm very proud of what I've built over all these years.

What are you known for or what is your niche?

We choose to remain specialized in the services we offer rather than spread our-selves too thin trying to do everything and lose quality of work in the process. We may not provide every service, but we're really GOOD at what we do! We specialize in ornamental landscape maintenance, landscape remodels, new landscape design and installation, landscape material installation (mulch, flagstone, rock, edging, etc.), seasonal containers, fall harvest displays, holiday lighting and interior and exterior decorating. We also have our own nursery which enables us to bring in more unique plant selections from growers across the country rather than being bound to local offerings. We pride ourselves in creating unique landscape designs using plants that have great contrast in colors and textures throughout the season rather than a monotonous sea of green.

What are some highlights of serving your community?

We have been serving the Lincoln, NE and surrounding community since 1996 and have built many strong, long-term relationships with our clients. We have incredible client retention and sometimes joke that we only lose maintenance clients for 3 reasons: they move out of town, move into assisted living, or pass away. We have numerous regular clients today who we've worked for almost as long as we've been in business. We cherish these relationships and always welcome new ones! *Continued...*



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What awards or recognition has the business received?

* NE Dept. of Labor Licensed Nebraska Contractor! * All-professional crew with over 70 years combined experience! * We meet or exceed city and state licensing and certification requirements! * Outstanding member of multiple industry and local organizations including: Home Builders Association of Lincoln; Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association; Western Nursery & Landscape Association; National Association of Landscape Professionals, American Hort & the National Holiday Decorative Association! * Bronze A+ Accredited Member of the Better Business Bureau since 2007! * NE Dept. of Agriculture Licensed Nursery Stock Dealer! * HBL Certified Holiday Decorators - we are holiday lighting & decorating professionals! * Multiple local HOA awards for our holiday decorating & lighting designs! * 1st place "Best Landscaping Company" - Lincoln Journal Star Best of Lincoln - 2022 * KFOR Best Of Lincoln Award Winner for Landscaping - 2019! * 1st Place - Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association Seasonal Container Design Award Winner - 2018! * Multiple crew members hold Commercial Pesticide Applicator Licenses! * Multiple crew members hold First Aid & CPR Certifications!

What are you passionate about professionally?

Plants and people! I (Kristin, owner) have a great love of plants which is why we're here to begin with. I like to joke that I ran out of room in my own yard so had to start working in others to be able to plant more things. Seriously though, plants and their ongoing maintenance is our heartbeat, but everything we do is done with a focus on attention to detail, doing things the right way (not cutting corners), and I also work hard to develop each employee to be the best they can be personally and professionally. We invest in the personal and professional development of our leadership team throughout the year, so they can better train our crew members and serve our community with our day-to-day work.

What is your favorite way to spend a weekend?

Staying in bed past 8:00 am (sadly, I'm usually still awake)! Hanging out with my husband or going on fun little road trips. In summer we like to go to Woodcliff lake or down to Weston, MO or the Ozarks to visit family and relax. Also love cuddling with our cats, but that's anytime, not just on weekends.

Anything else you would like to tell people about yourself or the company?

I consider our employees and clients to be an extension of my family. I live and breathe this business and am always looking for ways to improve my own leadership and professional skills. I'm so grateful for the incredible employees who make up our leadership team and allow us to grow beyond what I could handle by myself. Integrity, honesty, communication and creativity are extremely important to me, and I try to make sure those things are spread across all aspects of the company.

Land Escapes Inc

Kristin Hain

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NEW NEBRASKA CERTIFIED NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL

Tim Dungan, Liner/Grower and Sales, Great Plains Nursery

WHAT FACTORS MOTIVATED YOU TO BECOME CERTIFIED?

I think the practical aspects of the different sections of the NCNLP certification lend credibility when I interact with customers and with other professionals in the horticultural industry.

WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATIONAL/WORK BACKGROUND?

My Bachelors degree is in Chemistry and my first career was 29 years of pharmaceutical research and development for over-the-counter products such as Theraflu and Excedrin. When my job was moved out of state as a result of a merger, I took the opportunity to go back to school to pursue my Masters in Horticulture. While pursuing that degree, I worked at two different retail garden centers in Lincoln prior to joining Great Plains.



NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANNOUNCES NEW ENTOMOLOGY AND PLANT PEST PROGRAM MANAGER

Hello! My name is Natalia Bjorklund, and I am the new Entomology and Plant Pest Program Manager for Nebraska Department of Agriculture. I have experience and education in both horticulture and entomology. I started my career with landscape maintenance/install, worked at botanic gardens around the country, UNL Extension, and then most recently the Entomology department where I focused on pollinators and landscape ornamentals. Originally from central Nebraska, my husband, a diesel mechanic, and I, along with our dog, reside in Lincoln while we search for that elusive affordable acreage.

I started with NDA in late February, so am just settling in. If you ever have any questions, my contact information is natalia.bjorklund@nebraska.gov, and phone numbers are (402) 471-6847 (office), and (402) 429-2484 (work cell).

2023 NNLA AWARDS

Several awards were presented during the 2023 NNLA Annual Meeting. Those presented awards include:

2023 Gold Leaf Award - Jim Locklear & Lauritzen Gardens

The Gold Leaf award is given to a group or individual who has actively shown outstanding support to NNLA and the nursery and landscape industry in Nebraska. Sheila Schrader provided the following introduction for Jim.

Jim Locklear and Lauritzen Gardens have done just that. Their mission statement states that "Lauritzen Gardens is a living museum of unique four-season plant displays, maintained to the highest standards consistent with environmental stewardship. It provides memorable educational and aesthetic experiences for all." Lauritzen Gardens is also engaged in statewide and regional conservation work which we had the pleasure of hearing about during Jim's presentation at the conference.



2023 Hall of Fame Award - Addie Kinghorn, NCNLP

The Hall of Fame award is given to a member of the NNLA who was instrumental in advancing the NNLA and the nursery and landscape industry and who has been active in the nursery or landscape industry for 20+ years. NNLA nominated Addie for the Liberty Hyde Bailey Award in October 2022 as she has made significant lifetime contributions in Nebraska's horticultural field through teaching, communications, plant exploration, business, and leadership. She did not receive this national award but was very fitting to receive the NNLA Hall of Fame award. On behalf of NNLA, Ann Wickenhauser introduced Addie at the Annual Meeting.

Addie's pure love of the horticulture industry is truly infectious by all who know her. She is an avid collector of plants and if it was possible to propagate and share a plant, Addie would find a way and share why the plant was important to her. Throughout her career, she helped everyone she met appreciate the importance of the industry and has been a female pioneer in what is traditionally a male-dominated industry.

Addie Kinghorn has become one of the foundational members of the Nebraska Nursery and Landscape Association (NNLA). Addie was one of our earliest Nebraska Certified Nurserymen (NCN), has served as a member of the NCN committee, as the chairperson, and received the honor of being named NCN of the year in 2001. An honorary membership was given to Ms. Kinghorn in 1998 by the NNLA. Addie also served on the board of directors for six years from 2010-2016.

Ms. Kinghorn worked as an instructor in the Horticultural Department of Metro Community College (MCC) for over thirty years. Addie's passion charged students to become the best at what they wanted to do – landscape designer, turf maintenance, greenhouse manager, or simply a home gardener. Her love for the industry and thorough teaching methods instilled the importance of plants in sustaining our environment and creating a more enriching place to live. Many students voice appreciation of her teaching approach. Addie would combine the class curriculum with her years of plant and business experience to share her real-world views. She was willing to share her failures, as well as her successes, hoping students would not repeat any failures. Addie received the American Horticultural Society 2012 American Great Gardeners National Teaching Award. *Continued...*

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

Continued...

Considered an expert on perennials she was often asked to consult on projects and was a sought-after speaker. When the green industry began offering more perennials to their customers, many in the industry considered this a new trend. However, Addie was already well versed as she was *always learning about plants that were underutilized or rarely considered*.

The Nebraska Nursery and Landscape Association is stronger and its members more educated because of Ms. Kinghorn and her involvement. The Nebraska green industry owes its success to Addie's significant influence – it is rare to find someone within the industry that has not met Addie somewhere along their career.

2023 Distinguished Nursery Professional Award - Julie Van Meter, NCNLP

NNLA defines that recipients of the Distinguished Nursery Professional Award should be active role models for the industry and their communities, active in the nursery and landscape industry for 10 or more years and a member of NNLA. Jason Kuehl provided the following introduction for Julie.



From being the boots on the ground Nursery Inspector to moving up to the head of the Nebraska Department of Agriculture many of us have had the pleasure of working with Julie Van Meter over the years and her professionalism and dedication to the state and to the Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association. NDA and NNLA have a long-standing partnership and Julie has long been an advocate and supporter of Agriculture, Horticulture and NNLA. She has also been a valued advisor to the NNLA Board and unfortunately with her new responsibilities she will no longer be serving in that advisor capacity.

In November, we received the sad news that Julie had resigned from her position as Program Manager and State Entomologist after 20 plus years to pursue a new opportunity with the United State Department of Agriculture as a National Policy Advisor. I am sure she will do well in her new position and that she will continue to make a positive impact with this new challenge. Congratulations my friend, you deserve everything your hard work and dedication shall provide, and they are fortunate to have you. Best of luck from all of us and stay in touch!

2023 Distinguished Landscape Professional Award Lee Olson, NCNLP, Landscape INK

NNLA defines that recipients of the Distinguished Landscape Professional Award should be active role models for the industry and their communities, active in the nursery and landscape industry for 10 or more years and a member of NNLA. Sheila Schrader provided the following introduction for Lee.



Lee Olson meets and exceeds all of these requirements. He has been in the landscape industry for over 25 years and has over 21 years of landscape design experience. He does custom landscape design and rendering for his clients. Lee has been an active member of NNLA since the mid-90s. He is the backbone of the NCNLP certification program, helping to facilitate testing and promote the value of being certified for over 12 years.

2023 Distinguished Nebraska Certified Nursery and Landscape Professional Award Sheila Schrader, NCNLP - Schrader Landscape Design

The Distinguished Nebraska Certified Nursery and Landscape Professional Award is presented to a current NCNLP who exhibits the ideals and standards associated with the NCNLP professional status and is active in advancing the NCNLP program. Lee Olson provided the following introduction for Sheila.

This year's award goes to someone who has been working diligently in the advancement of the NCNLP program. She has taken a lead role in the revisions of the testing manual and has been an asset to the committee. Sheila Shrader joined the NNLA board in November of 2019, she is in her second term and has served as Treasurer since 2021. She became an NCNLP in February of 2020 and joined the NCNLP committee later that year.

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

WHAT IS A NEBRASKA CERTIFIED NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONAL? WHO CAN BENEFIT AND HOW TO BECOME CERTIFIED



The Nebraska Certified Nursery and Landscape Professional program was started in 1982 and is comprised of sixty-six industry leaders from across the state. These individuals strive to elevate themselves within the horticulture industry through certification and knowledge to better assist their clients and set themselves apart from their competitors.

“I love to continue my education in any way that I can. I feel that becoming a NCNLP and a NNLA member will open doors to networking and learning from others in the industry.”

The consumers will benefit from having more NCNLPs in the industry, as they will have a knowledgeable professional to contact for their projects. Landscape businesses will have educated employees to install their jobs and work with their clients. Garden centers will benefit by having employees who understand the needs of the industry and can offer professional advice to the consumer. You will benefit by increasing your knowledge and having a group of likeminded peers to collaborate with and learn from.

The certification process features a comprehensive three-part test, which covers plant identification, landscape design, and the NCNLP manual. The plant ID test is composed of fifty plant samples. The plant samples will vary from live specimens in the landscape, plant photos, and cuttings from the landscape. The landscape design portion of the test is composed of

written questions, design work, and landscape calculations (take offs). This test will focus on knowledge gained from the manual, right plant right place, and basic design skills. Finally, the manual section of the test is composed of written and multiple-choice questions that are taken from the NCNLP manual over a broad range of topics which would be familiar to an expert in the horticulture industry. Members who are unable to pass any of the three parts of the test will be eligible to retake the test sections at future dates. The successfully passed sections will be recognized toward full certification for two years after the original testing date.

The testing is traditionally held twice a year; once in the summer and another offering in the winter. To get more information or to purchase your study manual visit the NNLA website at nnla.org/certification.

In order to maintain certification, NCNLP certified members will need to pay an annual renewal fee with proof of five hours of yearly continuing education. These hours can be maintained by attending Nebraska Nursery and Landscape Association events, other state association events, webinars, and other industry training events.

“Many of the people I hold utmost respect for in this industry are NCNLPs. This was both a great learning experience and refresher course for me. It’s also fun to see so many people with the same passion for horticulture, and how each person applies this passion and experience in their respective career fields.”

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NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

BATTLE PLAN: PREPARE FOR THE PREDICTED RECESSION WITH THESE TIPS FROM DR. CHARLIE HALL

By Kate Spirgen, Garden Center Magazine / January 2023 | www.GardenCenterMag.com

A recession is looming later this year with a housing market correction on the horizon. But with several years of stellar sales under its belt, the industry is positioned to weather the economic storm with the right preparation and retail maneuvers.

Dr. Charlie Hall, professor and Ellison Chair at Texas A&M University, predicts a 90% chance of a recession in 2023, but doesn't expect it to hit until the second half of the year. So there's still time to prepare for the upcoming recession economy, which economists predict will be much milder than the U.S.'s last recession in 2008. "I don't think it's going to be very deep," he says.

Looking at fundamental indicators like GDP and unemployment rates, Hall says we're not in a recession yet, but there are definite signs that one is on the way. For example, the four-week moving average was 227,250 for the week ending Dec. 10, down 3,000 from the previous week's revised average. "Once that number goes above about 400,000 for the week, in terms of that four-week moving average, that's a pretty good indicator we're in recession," Hall says.

The Chicago Fed National Activity Index is also outside of the recession range, Hall says. It turned negative in October, but as of print time in late December, it was not in the range economists believe indicate the beginning of a recession, according to Hall.

Another key indicator is the yield curve between 10-year treasury notes and the federal funds rates or treasury bills with shorter maturity dates. "Certainly there's some inversion there and that's a telling of recession coming down the path," Hall says. "There are some other indicators that are still not in the recession rage. So while it may, in some respects, feel like a recession, it's not."

We spoke with Hall about his economic predictions for 2023, what they mean for the garden retail industry and how garden centers can prepare for a recession.

Garden Center magazine: What is the cause of the impending recession and how severe will it be?

Charlie Hall: This will be a correction that's probably promulgated from the housing market correction more than anything else. Although as the Fed starts raising rates, not only do mortgage rates go up, but business start pulling back in terms of investment. They don't hire as many people and consumers start pulling back. They save a little more because it makes sense from a financial standpoint for them to do so. *Continued...*

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TOOLS & EQUIPMENT

In addition to our current job posting webpage, a 'Tools and Equipment' page will be located on the NNLA website as an exclusive benefit to members to list tools an equipment they would like to advertise. The webpage will be viewable by the public but only members will be able to list items.

To place your ad, simply send the NNLA office an email at jennifer@youraam.com. Include all pertinent information and attach a photo if appropriate. Ads will be listed for 30 days, and the posting of ads will not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by NNLA.

NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

Continued... That's why I don't necessarily foresee a deep recession. Because the corrections, the fundamentals, the employment within the economy right now, are fairly sound. The job market is still relatively strong. The Fed has got to kill off several million more jobs. That's not their intention — they're trying to combat inflationary pressures. But that's just the effect of higher interest rates. Companies don't invest as much in equipment and people.

INDUSTRY IMPACT

By calculating the index of prices growers pay for necessities like media, containers, plant protection products, fertilizers, propagated materials, labor and other inputs growers use to grow flowers, shrubs and trees, Hall is able to identify trends in spending. In 2021, growers' input costs increased 10.1% over 2020, and he estimates there was an 8% increase in 2022 over 2021. This year, he's projecting another 3.6% increase year over year. As growers' input costs rise, they'll be increasing prices to cover them which, in turn, means garden centers are going to need to increase prices to consumers to maintain margins.

GC: With inflation leaving consumers with less disposable income, are you expecting gardeners and plant-lovers to slow their spending on lawn and garden items? What does this mean for the overall health of the industry?

Continued...

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Thank you for your continued support of the Nebraska Nursery and Landscape Association! As a way to promote our members and learn about each other, NNLA will begin highlighting members with a spotlight feature on the NNLA Facebook page, website, and in the NNLA newsletter/emails. In order to participate, you must complete and submit the Member Spotlight form.



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NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

Continued... CH: Inflation is still relatively high. We've been seeing some improvement on inflation, but it has not come down as quickly as most people would like. But you've got to remember that it takes about six to nine months for any monetary policy that's implemented to really take effect.

SPENDING PROJECTIONS

As we all know, the pandemic gave the industry a shot in the arm as consumers spent more time than ever at home. While that was good news for garden centers in the short term, it may slow purchasing in 2023, as homeowners have already improved their landscapes and gardens. On the other hand, economic downturns generally lead to higher sales for garden centers as consumers find ways to have fun at home instead of traveling.

GC: What factors are you considering when it comes to lawn and garden spending in 2023?

CH: During the pandemic, folks were staying at home and looking out the window saying, 'Geez, my landscape sucks. I've got to do something,' because they were spending more time at home and looking at those landscapes so much more.

So did they pull their purchases forward in time and now they say, 'You know what? I'm good. I don't need as much lawn and garden activity this year because I've done so much in the last couple of years.'

I don't know whether that's the case or not, but that's the question that comes to my mind.

But the counter to that is: Are they going to be spending more on lawn and garden products and services because it is going to be kind of a downturn? We know that historically, any downturn has been a shot in the arm for us because people are staying at home instead of traveling to Disney and so forth.

So the question is: Will the effect of consumers spending more time at home during a recession outweigh the effect of 'forward in time' purchases over the past two years?

VALUE PROPOSITIONS

With less money for discretionary spending during times of inflation and recession, consumers may be more judicious with their spending in 2023. And as input costs rise, garden centers will need to increase their prices to consumers this year to maintain profitability. So will customers be willing to pay those higher prices?

It all comes down to price elasticity, Hall says. If demand is inelastic, suppliers can raise prices, sell fewer units and maintain margins. That's exactly what happened in 2022, when retailers saw decreased customer counts, but higher average tickets.

So while the forecast may look somewhat difficult, it's key for IGCs to rely on their retail skills.

GC: How can garden centers prove their worth and stay competitive in 2023?

CH: Generally, service ranks very high in the mix in terms of [customers' considerations]. There's a service and value trade-off that people make. They expect quality, although there are some shoppers that go to certain venues because they get greater value and they're willing to sacrifice some quality. So the garden center has got to understand its role within its trade area.

Secondly, they've got to exercise some cost resilience. They've got to be mindful of their cost of goods. While they may not be able to do as much on the cost of goods side, they can certainly manage their SG&A (selling, general and administrative expenses) side. So they've got to make sure that doesn't get out of whack.

Lastly, they've got to lead with the value proposition. They've got to convince folks of why we're so important in their lives. Coming out of the pandemic, the mental health issues we've seen arise from people not socializing and all the constraints and the pressures that the pandemic put on people, particularly women.

Mental health is a big topic across the country so we've got to lead with the value proposition that not only are plants, flowers, shrubs and trees aesthetically pleasing, but they have economic value and they have environmental value. They have considerable health and wellbeing value to our lives.

So we've got to lead with that. We've got to lead with why they should buy from us and why they should buy in the first place. You've got to start with the why.

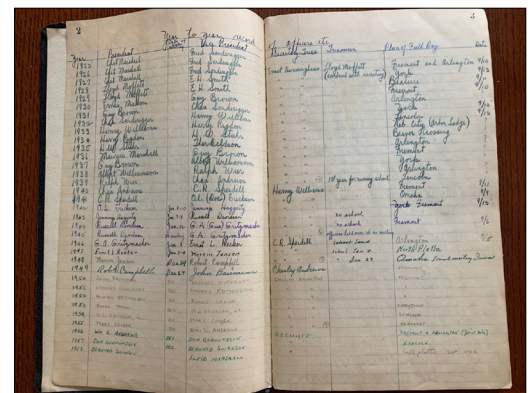
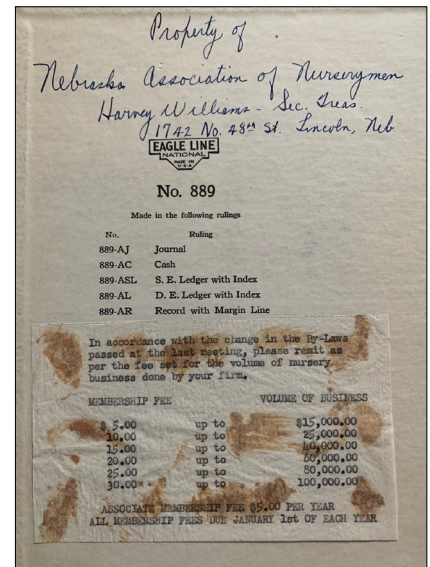
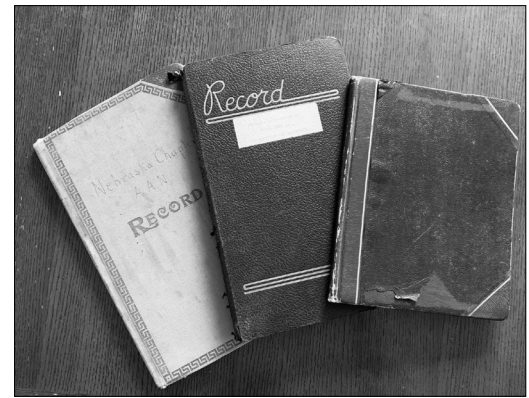
NEBRASKA NURSERY NEWS

NNLA ARTICLE ON HISTORIC BOOKS FOR NEWSLETTER

By Sheila Schrader

The NNLA Board of Directors recently held an in-person board meeting in Omaha, NE. Terri James, extension education at UNL who sits as an advisor to the Board, brought some fascinating pieces of NNLA history to share with the group. Kim Todd discovered three books which hold both hand-written and typed annual meeting notes from between 1925 and 1958. During that time frame the Nebraska Nursery and Landscape Association was known as the Nebraska Association of Nurserymen. The covers and spines of the three books are aged and show signs of wear which is no surprise due to the fact they are all nearly 70 to 100 years old. The pages inside have begun to yellow and fray on the edges. However, the penmanship is as neat and legible as it was decades ago. The books possess that unique musty scent one can only find when visiting a library and pursuing through the classics section.

The book first dated January 6th, 1925 features a description of the very first field day. It was held on Friday, September 10th, 1926. It was hosted by the “nurseries of Plumfield and Marshall Brothers.” One of the sites they visited was “full of excellent trees, shrubs and delicious fruits of all kind.” They discussed writing articles on the planting of plant material and its care to the Nebraska Press Association to appear in the state newspapers. There is a note in the description of the January 19, 1940 annual meeting that “attendance was cut short due to heavy snows and 20 degree below zero weather.” On the inside cover of the book which is dated as September 9th, 1941, there is a note listing the fees for membership to the group. The fees ranged from \$5.00 for up to \$15,000.00 in yearly business to a whopping \$30.00 for up to \$100,000.00 in business. The first page details the Fall Field Meeting which was held in Omaha at Marshall’s nursery on Center Street and there were almost 100 nurserymen and guests in attendance. The day included lunch as well as “refreshments and discussion.” The secretary mentioned a special thank you to the Omaha Police Force for a motorcycle escort! Turning the page, one finds the yearly record of the president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, and the location of that year’s field day from 1925 through 1958. Notably, Ernest Herminghaus served as secretary-treasurer for 14 consecutive years. A treasurer’s report from 1946 listed total expenses for the organization for the entire year as \$115.85 which included hosting a meal for 35 members at the Cornhusker Hotel. The 1955 winter meeting featured several speakers over two days, a “Smorgasbord Style” banquet, as well as the showing of a few informational films all accompanied by question and answer sessions. They had updates from the Public Relations, Membership, Research and Spray committees with nothing to report from the Plant American or Legislative committees. There is no shortage of amusing anecdotes and notes held within these books as well as a wealth of knowledge and history.



JOB OPENINGS

As a member benefit, NNLA will post job openings to our website for no cost. To view current posting, go to nnla.org/resources/job-openings-2/. If you have a current posting, notify NNLA if you want it removed or updated.

To list an opening, email jennifer@youraam.com with the information to be posted.

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These books serve as a wonderful time capsule for what it was like in the horticulture industry between 1925 and 1955. The NNLA Board hopes to display these books and many other pieces of memorabilia at the 100 year anniversary of NNLA in 2025. In the meantime, please reach out to a member of the Board of Directors with any interest in looking at the books.



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