

2025 WINTER SYMPOSIUM  
56TH CVNLA SHORT COURSE  
PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION  
**HOMES AND HABITATS**

FEBRUARY 12, 13, 14, 2025



**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

8:30 AM

**REGISTRATION OPENS FOR IN-PERSON ATTENDEES**

8:45 AM

**ZOOM WEBINAR OPENS FOR VIRTUAL ATTENDEES**

9:00 AM

**WELCOME**

9:10 AM

**CULTURAL CONTROL: AN IPM TOOL FOR PEST AND DISEASE MANAGEMENT**

**Jessie Ward, Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories**

Improving landscape conditions for trees and shrubs can be a powerful tool to manage pest and disease, but one that often goes overlooked. Practical solutions for cultural control of current and emerging pest and disease will be presented and plant health will be discussed as a factor to consider in long term landscape management.

10:10 AM

**BREAK**

10:20 AM

**SUPPORTING RESILIENT FORESTS AND COMMUNITIES IN A TIME OF CHANGE**

**Kasey Yturralde, USDA Forest Service**

Urban trees support human health and well-being by cooling our neighborhoods, reducing stormwater, and absorbing pollution. Trees are also impacted by a changing climate and associated impacts such as drought, extreme heat, and storm events. This presentation will cover the challenges facing communities in supporting climate resilience of urban forests and provide examples of tools and case studies addressing climate vulnerability assessment, tree species selection, and adaptation implementation.

11:20 AM

**LUNCH & NETWORKING BREAK**

12:30 PM

**A CELEBRATION OF ECCENTRICITIES - FAMOUS PLANT PEOPLE AND THEIR PLANTS**

**Tony Avent, Juniper Level Botanic Garden and Plant Delights Nursery**

Behind every plant we grow is a unique plant person and a great backstory. Most often, both nurserymen and customers have no idea who the people are behind the plants, who have allowed us to have such an amazing array of diversity in our gardens. In addition to plants, we collect plant people and their amazing tales, and look forward to sharing some favorites from our four decades in the industry.

1:30 PM

**BREAK**

1:40 PM

**TINY HOMES FOR TINY INSECTS - ADVANCES IN INSECT GALL DEVELOPMENT**

**Sarah Melissa Witiak, Virginia State University**

Insect galls are unique plant organs that only develop in response to an insect's specific chemical signal. While we have not yet identified the signals that induce these structures, progress has been made to identify some of the important developmental programs that are co-opted by insects to form the galls that provide shelter and nutrition. This talk will cover insect gall morphology, diversity, and the relationship of gall development to fruit and seed formation.

2:40 PM

**BREAK WITH SNACKS**

2:55 PM

**CHASING THE BLOOM IN THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS**

**Don Hyatt, American Rhododendron Society**

The Southern Appalachian Mountains have one of the richest and most diverse floras in the world. This presentation focuses on the sequence of bloom of native plants and wildflowers in this very scenic region. Recent weather has changed this area for the near future, but we can look forward to its recovery.

3:55 PM

**ADJOURN**

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## **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025**

### SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

#### **Jessie Ward**



Jessie is a Research Associate with the Bartlett Tree Research Laboratories working with Dr. Chris Riley on research, education, and outreach in the Mid-Atlantic. She holds a bachelor's degree in Biology from JMU and a master's degree in Forest Resources from Penn State. She spent over 5 years as a production arborist and plant health care specialist at Bartlett in Richmond, VA before joining the lab team this year.

#### **KASEY YTURRALDE**



Kasey Yturralde is a National Program Specialist with the USDA Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program in the Washington Office. Her work focuses on delivery of the Urban and Community Forestry Program, increasing equitable access to trees and green spaces in communities across the county. Kasey worked for eight years in Washington, DC as a municipal urban forester and a forest health and community outreach specialist. She led forest health monitoring efforts to enhance resiliency of the District's urban forest and managed community outreach and education programming in city parks and schools. Kasey is an ISA Certified Arborist and has a PhD in Forest Science from Northern Arizona University where she studied acoustic behavior in bark beetles.



## TONY ADVENT



Tony founded Plant Delights mail order nursery & Juniper Level Botanic Gardens in Raleigh, NC, and writes a daily blog about plants in the garden at [JLBG.org](http://JLBG.org) Tony is a plant explorer, plant breeder, and plant collector and conservationist, who has taken over 100 botanizing trips around the world, and has grown over 80,000 different kinds of plants.

## Sarah Melissa Witiak



Sarah Melissa Witiak is an Associate Professor of Biology at Virginia State University, where she teaches plant biology and works with students and the city of Petersburg to improve local urban ecology. Trained as a plant developmental biologist at Penn State, she is interested in questions of plant form, especially the mechanisms that insects deploy to bend plants to their needs as well as plant strategies to manipulate insects.

## DON HYATT



Don Hyatt earned his Masters degree in Computer Science from Virginia Tech and spent most of his 33-year professional career in Fairfax County Public Schools as a Computer Science teacher. Having started his first garden at the family home in Northern Virginia when he was only three, Don claims to be a "plant person" at heart rather than a computer scientist. The spectacular private garden he developed over 60 years (pictured to the right) has been on many garden tours. Don's Bachelors degree was in Horticulture with a double major in Biochemistry from Virginia Tech and he has always been active in the plant world despite his career as a computer science teacher. Don is active in the American Rhododendron Society in Atlanta, GA, as well as the Azalea Society of America.