

## \* KEYNOTE \*



### **Mary Palmer Dargan**

#### **Award-winning Landscape Architect & Consultant**

Hugh and Mary Palmer Dargan each practiced landscape architecture for over 50 years, creating award-winning designs for residential, institutional, and public spaces across more than 22 states and internationally. Now consulting, they continue to develop master plans and transformative environments through their design practice.

Their work has been widely published and recognized, and they are co-authors of influential books including *Timeless Landscape Design*, *The Early English Kitchen Garden*, and *Lifelong Landscape Design*. Both are deeply committed to education, having taught extensively at universities and through professional programs, with Mary Palmer also serving as a professor at Clemson University.

Leaders in historic restoration and therapeutic garden design, they have contributed to major organizations such as the Southern Garden History Society and The Garden Conservancy. Their lifelong collaboration—rooted in a shared passion for gardens—continues to shape landscapes and inspire audiences around the world.

**9:00 - 10:15 AM**

Session: [Lifelong Landscape Design: Environments for Health & Longevity](#)

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## MINI SESSIONS



### **Christopher Barrett Sheridan**

#### **Horticulturalist, Floral Design Instructor, & Aspiring Historian**

The Flower Sommelier is a horticulturist, floral design instructor, and aspiring historian, specializing in scented plants, heirloom flowers, romantic garden design, and Victorian floral traditions. Chris has been published in *American Gardener*, regularly offers immersive design workshops at Longwood Gardens, and lectures at national

events, including the Philadelphia Flower Show and the International Master Gardener Conference. A Harrison Fellow of the Historic Landscape Institute, he developed a series of Early American Garden Design programming to celebrate America's 250th anniversary. [www.flowersommelier.com](http://www.flowersommelier.com)

**10:30 - 11:30 AM**

Session: [Floating Flower Bowls](#)

**\*\*\*Purchase this list before the session for a follow-along experience\*\*\***

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## Marion Owen

**Master Gardener, Photographer, Entrepreneur & New York Times bestselling author**

Marion Owen is a master gardener, photographer, entrepreneur, and *New York Times* bestselling author. She was recently honored with a Women of Distinction award by Soroptimist International of the Americas. And that's just the tip of the carrot...

After eight years at sea as a seaman and merchant marine officer, Marion found a home in 1984 in Kodiak, Alaska. Switching her focus to the land, Marion became a master gardener and garden writer.

In addition to hands-on garden experience, Marion co-authored *Chicken Soup for the Gardener's Soul*, which spent three months on the New York Times bestseller list. Like the book's subtitle, "101 stories to sow seeds of love, hope and laughter," Marion embraces a win-win attitude in all she does.

In her published articles, the UpBeet Gardener newsletter (with subscribers in 50 countries), her award-winning UpBeet Gardener radio show (hear it at [www.upbeetcommunications.com](http://www.upbeetcommunications.com)), and on her [plantea.com](http://plantea.com) Web site, Marion covers small business how-to's, healthy living tips, organic gardening, world events and trends, and environmental issues.

**10:30 - 11:30 AM**

Session: [Guided Meditation for Gardeners](#)

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## **Beth McMahon**

**County Extension Agent, Gillespie County Office  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**

Elizabeth “Beth” McMahon graduated from Texas A&M University College Station in December 2010 with a double major in Rangeland Ecology and Management and Horticulture. She interned at the Grand Canyon National Park from February 2011 to July 2011 as one of their native plant nursery interns. Following this she was accepted into Oklahoma State University, where she got her Master of

Science working on propagation efforts of the Chickasaw Plum.

She joined AgriLife Extension as a research assistant at the AgriLife Extension Viticulture and Fruit Lab, leading interpretive native plant hikes at Enchanted Rock State Natural area on the weekends. She transferred to the Brazoria County Horticulture Extension Agent position in January 2015, then to the Gillespie County Horticulture Extension Agent position in late July 2016 where she is currently employed. Among her duties there Beth McMahon writes a local gardening column, leads home and commercial horticulture programs, and coaches the local 4-H Range & Plant ID team.

**10:30 - 11:30 AM**

Session: [What Exactly is a Wildflower?](#)

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## BREAKOUTS

(in chronological order)



### **Peggy Singlemann**

**Horticulturalist, Arborist, Sustainable Landscape Designer, and Co-Producer**

Peggy Singlemann is one of Virginia's most respected horticulture experts, known for her enthusiasm and talent for teaching gardeners at every level. For many, she is a familiar face as the longtime host and co-producer of the award-winning VPM/PBS program Virginia Home Grown. A sought-after speaker, she also coaches gardeners through her business, RVA Gardener LLC. In addition to earning a

Certificate in Sustainable Landscape Design from Cornell University in 2024, Peggy was featured in Virginia Living Magazine in April 2025.

Peggy is celebrated for her 38 years at Richmond's Maymont, where she restored major gardens, championed sustainable landscaping, and documented the historic arboretum. Her career long contributions have earned numerous honors, including a 2022 Virginia General Assembly commendation, the 2016 Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association's Nurseryman of the Year award, and recently, The Garden Club of America's Zone VII 2025 Communication Commendation.

Certified as an ISA arborist, VNLA horticulturist, and VSLD landscape designer, Peggy continues to share her passion for gardening nationwide not only through Virginia Home Grown VPM but on podcasts such as TVJerry and GardenDC, the podcast about Mid-Atlantic Gardening. Sign up for the monthly newsletter at [www.vpm/vhg](http://www.vpm/vhg) for more information from Peggy and the co-hosts of Virginia Home Grown, VPM/PBS.

**11:15 AM - 12:15 PM**

Session: [Echoes in the Garden, A Restoration Journey](#)

*This session will not be recorded per request of the speaker.*

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## **Shea Ann DeJarnette**

### **4-H Youth Development Extension Agent North Carolina Cooperative Extension**

Shea Ann DeJarnette is the 4-H Extension Agent in Robeson County North Carolina. She has served in this roll for more than 23 years and has implemented the Junior Master Gardener Curriculum for more than 20 years in her county.

A self professed technology nerd, Shea Ann is an accomplished professional with a wealth of experience in youth development, communication, and community engagement.

Her dedication to fostering the growth and well-being of young people is evident through her long-standing commitment to 4-H and various community organizations.

**11:15 AM - 12:15 PM**

Session: [AI in the Garden](#)

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## **Andreea Botezatu**

### **Assistant Professor and Extension Program Specialist – Enology Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**

Dr. Andreea Botezatu is Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in Enology at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Her work brings together wine chemistry, sensory science, education, and industry outreach, with a focus on helping both professionals and consumers better understand the science and culture of wine.

She is also the host of [The Wine Lab](#) podcast, where she explores wine through conversations that connect chemistry, history, flavor, and the human experience.

**11:15 AM - 12:15 PM**

Session: [Wine, Rest, and the Art of Being Human](#)

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## Christopher Barrett Sheridan

**Horticulturalist, Floral Design Instructor, and Aspiring Historian**

The Flower Sommelier is a horticulturist, floral design instructor, and aspiring historian, specializing in scented plants, heirloom flowers, romantic garden design, and Victorian floral traditions. Chris has been published in *American Gardener*, regularly offers immersive design workshops at Longwood Gardens, and lectures at national

events, including the Philadelphia Flower Show and the 2025 International Master Gardener Conference. A Harrison Fellow of the Historic Landscape Institute, he developed a series of Early American Garden Design programming to celebrate America's 250th anniversary.

[www.flowersommelier.com](http://www.flowersommelier.com)

**1:00 - 2:00 PM**

Session: [Tussie Mussie Workshop](#)

**\*\*\*Purchase this list before the session for a follow-along experience\*\*\***

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## Andy Wilcox

**Horticulture and Garden Writer, Flower Farmer, and Master Gardener**

Andy Wilcox, known as That Garden Writer Guy, is a horticulture and garden writer with more than 30 years of gardening experience. He specializes in writing engaging, research-based content that solves gardening problems, helping readers understand the why behind sound gardening practices.

A flower farmer and Master Gardener, practicing forester, and conservationist, Andy frequently writes and leads outreach and educational programs for a variety of topics and groups. His work appears in *Horticulture*, *Old Farmer's Almanac*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *Greenhouse Grower*, *Mother Earth News*, and other publications where he shares his expertise and personal gardening experiences. He can be reached at [andy@thatgardenwriterguy.com](mailto:andy@thatgardenwriterguy.com).

**1:00 - 2:00 PM**

Session: [Creating Engaging Website, Blog, and Social Media Content without Burning Out Volunteers](#)

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## **Nancy Ross Hugo**

### **Garden Writer and Author**

Nancy Ross Hugo lives, gardens, and plants trees in central Virginia. She is the former garden columnist for the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Education Manager at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, and author of five books, including *Remarkable Trees of Virginia*, *Seeing Trees*, and *Trees Up Close*. Nancy has been combining her love of nature with her love of the written word for decades,

writing for *Virginia Forests*, *American Forests*, *Horticulture*, *The American Horticulturist*, *Fine Gardening*, *Virginia Living* and anyone else who would hear her appeals to cherish trees.

Today, she will share her passion for “The Incredible Osage Orange,” a species (*Maclura pomifera*) that captured her imagination in the 1970s and never let go.

**1:00 - 2:00 PM**

Session: [The Extraordinary Osage Orange](#)

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## **Brie Arthur**

### **Author, Horticulturist and Garden Communicator**

Brie Arthur is a bestselling author, horticulturist, and garden communicator who inspires gardeners to reimagine their landscapes with creativity, purpose, and sustainability. A native of southeastern Michigan and a Purdue University graduate in Landscape Design and Horticulture, Brie has spent over two decades transforming spaces and sharing her expertise. She authored *The Foodscape Revolution* and *Gardening with Grains*, bringing fruits, vegetables, and even grains into beautiful, functional gardens. A longtime contributor to the Emmy-winning PBS series *Growing a Greener World*, she makes horticulture accessible, practical, and fun for every gardener.

Brie is a Soil<sup>3</sup> ambassador, advocating for healthy soil and sustainable practices, and engages a growing online audience through her YouTube channel, Brie the Plant Lady. A past president and current International Delegate of the International Plant Production Society Southern Region, she connects with horticulture professionals worldwide. Recognized for her dedication to inspiring new gardeners, Brie leads hands-on workshops and virtual programs that celebrate learning, creativity, and the joy of growing.

**3:30 - 4:30 PM**

Session: [Bountiful Containers: Small Space Foodscaping](#)

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## **Marianne Wilburn**

### **Author, Podcaster and Opinion Columnist**

Marianne Willburn is an author, podcaster, and opinion columnist who champions the pursuit of curiosity, courage, and joy in garden building. Podcasting each Friday with Leslie Harris at The Garden Mixer, she is a contributing editor at *GardenRant.com*, and her work has been featured in *The New York Times* & *The Wall Street Journal*, as well as major national magazines and podcasts such as *Cultivating Place* and *A Way to Garden*.

Marianne has also been a newspaper columnist for over a decade and is the recipient of eight Gold and Silver Media Awards from Garden Communicators International (formerly GWA). Her most recent book, *Tropical Plants and How to Love Them*, received a Gold and Silver 2022 Media Award for both writing and design and was shortlisted by the Garden Media Guild (UK) for the Peter Seabrook Practical Book of The Year in 2021. She is also the author of *Big Dreams, Small Garden*.

In 2013, she began gardening intensively and exhaustively on ten acres in a rural corner of Northern Virginia and shares her gardening life at Instagram @marianne.wilburn, and on her podcast with Leslie Harris, The Garden Mixer.

**3:30 - 4:30 PM**

Session: [Garden Maintenance for Real Life: Smart strategies for rebalancing the load](#)

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