**2024 State MG Conference Seminar Sessions Available for Advanced Training Credit**

**Friday, May 31, 2024**

**Advanced Training Sessions will be available at the 2024 State Master Gardener Conference** to be held in Hot Springs, May 30-31, and June 1. On May 31, there are 24 educational sessions offered for conference attendees. Of these 24 classes, Master Gardeners may attend any, or all, of the following 5 classes (6 hours), which are offered as advanced training. To receive advanced training hours for these classes, Master Gardeners must register their attendance upon entry to a specific class. (The available Advanced MG Classes are denoted on the registration with an asterisk (\*).) These classes may also be attended by those not seeking advanced training hours.

**Bill Randel,** “**I Never Met a Tree I Didn’t Love”**

You will Learn to Identify and appreciate the trees in your yard (love your trees), their place and importance in the environment. Bill Randel is an expert at tree identification and will help you improve your own skills in this class. He is known as a humorist/storyteller, who conducts educational hikes, with emphasis on trees and shrubs, for Diamond Lakes Arkansas Master Naturalists. He is active in the Arkansas Native Plant Society and is a retired data systems engineer who also holds a BA in Biology from Hendrix College and a MS in Plant Ecology and Plant Biochemistry from Western Kentucky University. He taught at National Park College for 10 years during his “retirement”. (This is 2 session class)

**Regine Skelton, “Trees Serving Pollinators”**

As modern landscapes change, pollinators fight to survive, and they need our help. Trees are just as critical for pollinators and support an even greater diversity of butterflies and moths than herbaceous plants. Native oak trees support pollinators throughout the year in a number of ways, but especially by providing winter shelter and habitat. **Regine Skelton**, Forester II, and is the Registered Forester #1492 for Garland and Clark Counties. She received her degree from Steven F Austin State University, Austin, TX, where she specialized in fire management. At the Arkansas Forestry Commission, she serves as the urban representative for the six-county district. She has received several awards serving in the Arkansas Forestry Association American Tree Farm System Program as a regional chair and inspector.

**Linda Palmer,** **“Champion Trees of Arkansas”**

Learn all about the giant trees located throughout Arkansas. The champion tree project began in 2007 when she viewed the list of Arkansas's largest examples of each species of tree, determined by the Arkansas Forestry Commission. Traveling more than 15,000 miles to photograph the trees, Palmer has to date created 28 large scale portraits of champion Trees and her traveling exhibit of the same name has been exhibited in 21 venues throughout Arkansas. Collecting oral histories and keeping a journal of her adventures inspired Palmer to envision her first book and formed the basis for AETN's award winning documentary "CHAMPION TREES."

**Scott Beuerlein, “Good Trees for Bad Places”**   
Laugh and learn about tough trees. Trees in this talk are survivors. They chuckle at incorrect planting technique, scoff at mulch volcanoes, mock bad pruning cuts, and smirk at poor maintenance practices. They ask for poor soil. They taunt droughts. They are sometimes even found growing out of old toilets in piles of rubble from burned-out crack houses. Sure, some of the usual suspects, but also a bunch you probably don't know or didn't realize. Enjoy this romp through trees so ornery they'll resist the worst that is hurled at them and be there to shade your children's children. Scott is Manager of the Botanical Garden Outreach at the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden Cincinnati, Ohio. He is responsible for the Zoo's Botanical Garden, educational programs, various plant trialing programs, horticulturist in charge of plant trials, plant records and labeling, organizing, and running three large educational symposiums--Plant Trials Day, Effective Urban Sustainable Landscape Strategies Symposium, and Native Plant Symposium.

**Melanie Rudolf, “Benefits of Prescribed Fire in Native Plant Communities”**

Melanie is a Terrestrial Restoration Ecologist at The Nature Conservancy in Arkansas. She will be discussing a history of ecology and fire of Arkansas, plants and ecosystems response to fire, and how prescribed fire can be used to restore and benefit natural ecosystems. Her work includes plant community monitoring, scientific research, fire ecology, and ecosystem restoration. She holds a Bachelor of Specialized Studies in Environmental Biology and Sustainability, and a Master of Science in Environmental Studies. Her graduate research focused on the effects of invasive species on ecosystem structure and function in wetlands.