



MID-ATLANTIC PLANT RESEARCH CONFERENCE AGENDA & TALK DESCRIPTIONS

8:30 AM—8:45 AM **Coffee & tea, registration**

8:45 AM —9:00 AM **WELCOME**
Dr. Tim Block, Director of Plant Science
Morris Arboretum & Gardens

9:00 AM—9:10 AM **WELCOME**
Steve Jones, President, Philadelphia Botanical Club

9:10 AM—10:10 AM **The Return of American Chestnuts to Eastern Forests**
Jared Westbrook, PhD, American Chestnut Foundation

The introduction of the chestnut blight fungus into from Asia into the U.S. killed billions of American chestnut stems throughout Appalachia in the first half of the twentieth century. Today, millions of American chestnuts persist as root collar sprouts, but the trees rarely reproduce before being killed again by chestnut blight. Over the last 40 years, the American Chestnut Foundation and academic collaborators have pursued multiple approaches to improve the blight resistance of American chestnut including hybridization of remnant American chestnuts with blight resistant Chinese chestnuts and genetic engineering. Come learn about the challenges and new opportunities in this multi-century effort to return American chestnuts to Eastern forests.

10:10 AM—10:25 AM **MORNING BREAK**

10:25 AM—11:25 AM **A Century of Change in the Dynamic Forests of the Mid-Atlantic: Trivia and Trends from the Nation's Forest Inventory**
Randall Morin, US Forest Service

This presentation will chronicle the National Forest Inventory of United States and discuss the status and trends in the characteristics of Mid-Atlantic forests including quantifying benefits provided and assessing threats to forest health and sustainability. Examples of how government, NGO, and industry users can utilize forest inventory information to address policy



and planning questions will also be shared. Randall Morin will cover how to access and use the suite of data, tools, and resources about the Nation's forest resources that are available to public.

11:25 PM –12:25 PM

Emerging and Continuing Fungal Threats to Mid-Atlantic Native Forests and Cultivated Landscapes

Matt Kasson, PhD, West Virginia University

This talk will address Dr. Kasson's research in fungal biodiversity discovery and analysis, and implications for Mid-Atlantic forests. We will look at mortality happening in different forest types across the region and discuss the way that historic threats to those forests are overlapping with newer and more recent threats that are contributing to declines. We will discuss what management strategies could be beneficial to forests under threat, using our understanding the fundamental biology and ecology of fungal pathogens to help provide us with a way forward.

12:25 PM—1:45 PM

LUNCH

1:45 PM—3:00 PM

**Mt. Cuba Center's Natural Lands Forest Research:
Growing New Forests and Managing Understory Diversity**

Nate Shampine, CERP, & Elan Alford, PhD, Mt. Cuba Center

Mt. Cuba Center manages and conducts research on more than 1,000 acres of natural lands that are distinct from our 68-acre native plant garden. In this presentation, practitioners and researchers from Mt. Cuba Center will share a brief overview of the goals of reforestation efforts and breadth of forest research occurring in the Center's natural lands. They will discuss collaborative research programs focused on building new forests, and new research aimed at managing invasive shrubs encroaching on a forest terrestrial orchid species, *Galearis spectabilis*.

3:00 PM—3:15 PM

AFTERNOON BREAK



3:15 PM –4:15 PM

Protecting Pickering's Morning Glory

Emile DeVito, PhD, New Jersey Conservation Foundation

Since 2007, New Jersey Conservation Foundation and Pinelands Preservation Alliance has been protecting and managing populations of the state endangered Pickering's Morning Glory (*Stylisma pickeringii* var. *pickeringii*) in the New Jersey Pine Barrens. They have employed various methods to combat the invasive species Chinese Bush Clover, rampaging illegal off-road vehicles, forest succession, and herbivores. In addition, they have worked with Duke Farms to learn how to propagate the plants in a nursery, and outplant seedlings to separate experimental population sites within the Foundation's Franklin Parker Preserve in the heart of the Pine Barrens. This talk will discuss the pitfalls and successes in protecting and restoring a rapidly declining herbaceous species.

4:15—4:30 PM

Closing Remarks

*Bryan Thompson Nowak, Director of Education
Morris Arboretum & Gardens*