

[About Us](#)[Store](#)[Resources](#)[Events](#)[Conservation Planning](#)[Education](#)[Get Involved](#)[Donate](#)

Native Plant Expo & Marketplace

2023 Report!

Back and bigger in 2023 with food, educational speaker stage, and a fun festival atmosphere!

Coming off of the success of the [2022 Native Plant Expo & Marketplace](#), we took a great deal of feedback, started earlier planning, and roped in more staff and partners to take this event to the NEXT LEVEL in 2023! In 2022, we exceeded our expectations with over 1600 attendees, and continuing that momentum, we counted **2250 attendees in 2023!**

I wanted to share highlights heard and survey responses since the event:

- "The people are awesome. From the organizers from WCCD and WCWRC, to the volunteers, to the public. This is my favorite event to table at." -



About Us Store Resources Events Conservation Planning
Education Get Involved Donate



- "The staff were extremely pleasant, and the event was well organized. Kudos to everyone!" - volunteer survey response
- "I didn't know there were so many plant nerds out there like me." - attendee statement
- "Astounding what you are all doing here, nothing in the state compares." - nursery vendor statement



So with that, we'd like to share our many thanks to everyone who made this possible, share some lovely photos, and recap some of the many facets of the 2023 Native Plant Expo & Marketplace.

Gratefully,

- Doug Reith, WCCD Resource Coordinator

ENJOY THE EVENT PHOTO ALBUM ON FACEBOOK!

Thanks to [Cat Carty-Buswell](#) for the photography this year!

Native Plant Pre-Sale Distribution

One big part of the event is the [Native Plant Sale pre-order distribution](#). We host a few plant distributions per year, and this is our largest selection of native plants offered by pre-order. We work with 3 local nursery vendors and offered around species in plug flats, quart pots, and some larger gallon pots. Over 400 orders distributed totaled to over **13,282 plants!** This sale allows for our county's gardeners who know that a successful garden takes some planning to order ahead, and the



[About Us](#)
[Store](#)
[Resources](#)
[Events](#)
[Conservation Planning](#)

[Education](#)
[Get Involved](#)
[Donate](#)



or check our [events page](#) for information on the upcoming annual plant distributions.



Summer Roberts, WCCD Community Forester, unloading the plants delivery.

Vendors & Exhibitors

The Expo & Marketplace barns hosted 31 **vendors & exhibitors**, up from 27 in 2022! This included 10 different native plant focused nurseries, local nonprofits and government programs focused on native plants and conservation, and local businesses offering everything from native plant landscaping services to honey bee products to our favorite local author on raising Butterflies in the Garden.



The nurseries reported an **estimated 6,158 plants sold** (only 4 of 10 have reported yet) collectively, totaling to over \$27,408 (only 7 have reported so



responding).

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
ALL THE VENDORS!**

Educational Speaker Stage

In addition to the [2023 NPEM Speaker Series](#), which provides educational webinars and seminars in advance of the event,

Newly launched in 2023 was the educational speaker stage. The stage provided our vendors and exhibitors a unique opportunity to give a short TED style talk to our attendees, and they took us up on it! With a packed schedule and varying topics, 15 speakers took the stage and educated and entertained while folks rested and enjoyed food from the food trucks.

EXPO SPEAKER STAGE SCHEDULE Located in Barn B			
9:15 Introduction to Ann Arbor Farm & Garden	9:30 Growing for Fruit & Nut Production	9:45 Go Beyond Beauty	
10:00 Rain Gardens: Keeping Rivers Clean, One Garden at a Time	10:15 Michigan Shoreland Stewards Program	10:30 Winning Over Friends and Neighbors to Your Native Plant Garden	10:45 Community Supported Ecology
11:00 Have You Considered a Conservation Easement for Your Land?	11:15 Invasive Species	11:30 MBGNA's Mission, Pillars, and How It Uses Native Plants	11:45 Butterflies & Moths And The Plants They Use
12:00 Pollinators Importance to the Food System	12:15 Growing Native Food Crops	12:30 Read Aloud of Children's Book "My UnBEElievable Life"	12:45 Native Gardening Hacks

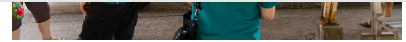


Food Trucks! New in 2023!

A big hit on a hot day with lots to see. Two of the three trucks even sold out with our hungry attendees enjoying their offerings!



[About Us](#) [Store](#) [Resources](#) [Events](#) [Conservation Planning](#)
[Education](#) [Get Involved](#) [Donate](#)



Milkweed Giveaway

Thanks to generous donors, we had the pleasure of [giving away milkweed to support monarch populations](#) in our Pre-sales and during the event.



Our staff and volunteer gave away 2888 milkweed plants of 5 different species to over **951 attendees and presale customers!**

Read more on the [Milkweed Giveaway page](#).

Event Sponsorships



Our sponsors make it possible for this event to exist and to grow to the level it is now. With their support we were able to purchase radio spots with Michigan Radio to broadcast our event, among other event outreach and operations. We want to thank again all of our sponsors, especially the top level sponsors in 2023:



[About Us](#) [Store](#) [Resources](#) [Events](#) [Conservation Planning](#)
[Education](#) [Get Involved](#) [Donate](#)



Natural Community Services

SEE ALL THE SPONSORS AND CONNECT TO THEIR WEBSITES

Thanks to our Partners, Staff, and many Volunteers

I say it every time and every time I mean it, we couldn't do our events of this scale without the support of many dedicated, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic volunteers. We had **over 120 volunteers** sign up and even more support over the 2 days of preparation and the day of the event. Volunteers rated the event highly, and I consistently hear from them how much they've learned, how fun it was, and how they feel part of something bigger, so if you're interested...

Join us:



**SIGN UP FOR VOLUNTEER
OPPORTUNITIES!**



[About Us](#)
[Store](#)
[Resources](#)
[Events](#)
[Conservation Planning](#)

[Education](#)
[Get Involved](#)
[Donate](#)



grounds leadership team including, from

WCWRCO & Master Rain Gardeners:

Heather Rice, Susan Bryan, Catie Wytychak, as well as Rachel and Matt who we're huge help during the event. They are an indispensable group and partnership that keeps the event steering clearly, and they bring all their many skills towards improving and running the event.

Additionally, we hired **Bridget Mitchell** as the Expo Coordinator this year. Bridget brought her organizational skills and endless energy to coordinating all the vendors, sponsors, food trucks, and supporting many other aspects of this event. We have our finger's crossed to keep Bridget in this position in 2024!

And as for the WCCD staff, we had much of the team out doing the challenging tasks of parking lots and the such. I want to specifically point out the work of our Volunteer/Outreach Coordinator, **Dru Mark-Wilson**. Many of the volunteers know her know for her cheerful approach in organizing many many volunteers on the various sometimes chaotic operations of the events. She is the behind the scenes

GARDENER

Master Rain
Gardeners!



Bridget Mitchel,
Expo
Coordinator &
Jill Dohner,
Board Chair



Dru Mark-Wilson: Best. Volunteer.
Coordinator. Ever.



[About Us](#) [Store](#) [Resources](#) [Events](#) [Conservation Planning](#)
[Education](#) [Get Involved](#) [Donate](#)



And a special thanks to the Washtenaw County's Solid Waste Department for loaning the Zero Waste stations to reduce our impact of this event.

Thanks to the Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds!

With newly painted barns, the new grounds managers, Kirk and Kyle, are revitalizing this venue to be an even more valuable asset to our communities and events. They were both so helpful with the set-up and supportive of our event.

Can't wait to see you all next year! Happy planting,

Thanks for reading, and if you made it this far, stay in touch:

[Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter](#) or check our [events page](#) for information on the upcoming annual plant distributions.

Search

Washtenaw County Conservation District

(734) 302-8715

info@washtenawcd.org

705 N. Zeeb Rd. Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Copyright 2020



- About Us
- Store
- Resources
- Events
- Conservation Planning
- Education
- Get Involved
- Donate

