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Northwest to Host Native Plant Experts

Northwest Missouri State University will host the Grow Native! plant marketing and education program, an initiative of the Missouri Prairie Foundation, this spring.

The event from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, April 14, in the J.W. Jones Student Union Ballroom, will include exhibits and a plant sale as well as six speakers addressing a variety of topics including pollinators, garden design and maintenance, native trees and shrubs, soil health and edibles.

The cost to attend is \$40 for the public, \$30 for Grow Native! or Missouri Prairie Foundation members and \$20 for students with a valid student ID. The cost includes a light breakfast and lunch.

“This is an outstanding opportunity in the northwest region for people to have access to a variety of experts regarding the value of native plants and solid information about working with them in gardens and landscapes,” Betty Grace, a Grow Native! Committee member, said.

Grow Native! works to protect and restore biodiversity by increasing conservation awareness of native plants and their effective use in urban, suburban and rural landscapes.

The program is partnering with Northwest’s School of Agricultural Sciences to bring the workshop to Northwest.

“It’s unique to have the opportunity to both hear these accomplished speakers and purchase good quality native plants in one local spot — and the program will be valuable to both the person just starting to learn about native plant gardening, as well as the more accomplished native gardener,” Grace said. “The venue and meals will make for pleasant, comfortable surroundings, and I expect that everyone who comes will find the day educational and enjoyable.”

A schedule of activities and speakers appears below. To register or for more information, visit www.grownative.org. The deadline to register is Friday, April 6.

9 a.m. – Registration, light breakfast, exhibits, plant sale

9:30 a.m. – Welcome and introductions

9:45 a.m. – Dave Tylka, author of “Native Landscaping for Wildlife and People”: Why Natives?

11 a.m. – Ed Spevak, curator of invertebrates at the St. Louis Zoo: Native pollinators

Noon – lunch

12:45 p.m. – Scott Vogt, executive director of Dyck Arboretum of the Plains: Garden and landscape design, installation and maintenance

2 p.m. – Steve Buback, Missouri Department of Conservation biologist: Native trees and shrubs

3 p.m. – Doug Peterson, NRCS regional soil health specialist: Native plants and soil health

3:25 p.m. – Ruth Farrand-Cox, Burr Oak Woods naturalist: Native wild edibles

3:50 p.m. – Wrap-up