

Continuing Education Credits

LA credits: This program offers 5 HSW credit hours in horticulture and sustainable site design and 0.5 educational activity credit for NYS registered landscape architects for a total of 5.5 continuing education credit hours.

NYSDEC Pesticide Applicator: 1.50 credits in categories 2, 10, 25, 3a, 3b

ISA Arborist: Pending approval

CNLP credits: Pending approval

Check with Mina Vescera (mv365@cornell.edu) on pending credits.

To protect others, if you are not feeling well, please do not attend the conference.



Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County
Extension Education Center
423 Griffing Avenue, Suite 100
Riverhead, NY 11901-3071

Living Landscapes Conference

Understanding the Ecological Benefits of Ornamental Horticulture

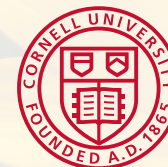
This full-day, in-person workshop explores the beauty of designed landscapes while emphasizing their ecological role and protecting them from invasive pests.

**Wednesday
October 21, 2026**

7:30 AM to 4:15 PM

Held at the

**Planting Fields Arboretum
State Historic Park,
Conference Center**
1395 Planting Fields Road
Oyster Bay, NY 11771



**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Suffolk County**

Living Landscapes Conference

Understanding the Ecological Benefits of Ornamental Horticulture

7:30 AM – 8:15 AM Sign-in. Light breakfast provided.

8:15 – 8:30 AM Welcome and Announcements

*Mina Vescera, CCE Suffolk, and
Vinnie Simeone, Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park*

**8:30 – 9:30 AM Jumping Worms: Effects, Distribution,
and Potential Management**

*Josef Görres, University of Vermont,
Healthy Soil Collaborative*

Jumping worms have now been found in at least 39 US States and 4 Canadian Provinces. They have major effects on soils, plant communities and people. Scientists from across North America are dedicated to the study of jumping worm ecology, their effects on soil fertility, water quality, pollinators, and ways of managing them. This talk will give an overview of the current research efforts.

**9:30 – 10:30 AM What Can We Learn About Urban
Biodiversity from New York's Most Common
Street Trees?**

Lena Hunt, Ph.D., New York University

Street trees are among the most visible components of New York City's urban forest, providing ecosystem services such as cooling neighborhoods, improving air quality, reducing stormwater runoff, and enhancing quality of life. Yet an important question remains: could different planting decisions better support wildlife? This presentation highlights an ongoing study in Manhattan's Village neighborhoods examining the ecological value of the ten most common street tree species. We compare native and non-native trees to evaluate how tree species influences biodiversity in a dense urban environment.

10:30 – 11:00 AM Stretch Break

**11:00 – 12:00 PM An Integrated Approach to Addressing
Heavy Metals in Urban Soils**

S. Perl Egendorf, Ph.D., Pace University

Urban soils are a record of the legacies of industrialization, where toxic elements like lead (Pb) and arsenic (As) can accumulate. Given the invisibility of soil toxicants, recognizing their presence requires listening through geochemical tools. In this presentation, we will consider the roles of geochemistry in listening to soils, locating contaminants, identifying clean

soil alternatives, and discussing testing options for landscape professionals. Lastly, soils data from the NYC Clean Soil Bank initiative will be discussed to demonstrate the need for high-quality soil amendments.

12:00 – 1:00 PM Lunch included with registration.

1:00 – 1:30 PM Battling Mugwort in Meadows

Darcy McDowell, North Shore Land Alliance

In 2023, the North Shore Land Alliance began experimenting with a sheet mulching technique to manage monocultures of mugwort. Although the trial is still in its early stages, preliminary results revealed that there may be a correlation between the timing of the sheet mulch application and regrowth of mugwort in an area. Darcy will review the method, the initial trial results, and how the methods for this experiment are evolving to further investigate how to effectively reduce mugwort presence in our meadows.

**1:30 – 2:30 PM Restoring Healthy Habitat: A
Transformation from Invasives to a Native Grassland**

*Robin Simmen, North Fork Audubon Society,
Andy Senesac, Ph.D., CCE-Suffolk*

A visible quarter acre of land at Inlet Pond County Park in Greenport, NY was converted from a neglected waste area loaded with highly invasive plant species to a native grassland that supports more than thirty species of native grasses and forbs. The presenters will review the restoration process from land clearing to establishment.

2:30 – 2:45 Quick Break

2:45 – 4:00 PM Piet Oudolf Garden at Planting Fields

Peter Slothower, Planting Fields Foundation

Peter will close the conference with a lecture and guided walking tour of Planting Fields' newest horticultural masterpiece, the Oudolf Garden. Home to more than 24,000 plants, the garden is a living work of art designed to inspire, educate, and foster a deeper connection between people and the natural world. Scheduled for completion in fall 2026, the Oudolf Garden will be a bold new addition to the richly layered landscape of Planting Fields, marking the site's most significant landscape enhancement since the Olmsted Brothers' work of the 1930s.

4:00 – 4:15 PM Closing Comments & Distribution of CEUs

REGISTRATION FORM

Fee: Pre-registration fee is \$85 per person. After October 13th, registration fee is \$100. Last day to register online is end-of-business day on October 15th. No refunds will be issued after October 15, 2026. Seating is limited. Register early, as walk-ins may not be accepted.



Online Registration Click Here:

[http://weblink.donorperfect.com/
LivingLandscapes2026](http://weblink.donorperfect.com/LivingLandscapes2026)

Payment is accepted via the online registration link (all major credit cards are accepted).

**For more information or to register over the
phone contact:** Courtney Fenyo at 631-727-7850,
X210 or cf389@cornell.edu.

Mail in Registration (For checks or P.O.s only):
CCE-Suffolk, ATTN: Courtney Fenyo,
423 Griffing Ave., Ste. 100, Riverhead, NY 11901

Name(s): _____ ☐ Veg. Lunch

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Company/ Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E- mail: _____

of Registrants _____ X \$85 = _____

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Please contact Cornell Cooperative Extension at 631-727-7850 x210 if you have any special needs.

***NO refunds after October 15th**