



Location: Virtually hosted on Zoom Events

(Registration required at <https://bit.ly/GrowingSolutionsRegistration>)

Agenda: Day 1 – Thursday, December 11, 2025

All times are displayed in EST.

	Presentation	Speaker
12:00 pm	Welcome, Introduction, and Opening Prayer	Melissa Deleary, Indigenous Knowledge Holder
12:20 pm	Keynote Presentation	Dr. Kathy Dunster, Society of Landscape Architects / Department of Sustainable Agriculture and School of Horticulture, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
1:00 pm	2023 Conference Outcomes Overview	Invasives Canada and Ontario Invasive Plant Council
1:10 pm	Setting the Stage and Exploring Priorities	
1:10 pm	The first step in federal regulation: weed risk assessment	Laura Brennan, Plant Health Risk Assessor – Botany, Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1:20 pm	The Role of Federal Regulation in the Horticulture Pathway	Kristina Pauk, Invasive Alien Species Program Specialist, Canadian Food Inspection Agency
1:35 pm	Panel Discussion: Industry Perspectives and Initiatives	Scott Pearce, BC Horticulture Industry Member, GardenWorks Andrea Eastham, Horticulturalist Heather Schibli, Assistant Professor- Landscape Architecture University of Guelph
2:30 pm	Break	
3:00 pm	Exploring Solutions	
3:00 pm	Weeding through Botanical Terminology	Ryan Godfrey, Senior Specialist, Community Action at WWF-Canada & Ellen Jakubowski, Communications Specialist, Public Engagement at WWF-Canada
3:15 pm	Everyday Heroes: Partnering with Nature to Stop the Spread of Invasive Plants	Cathy Kavassalis and Claudette Sims, Co-founders of the Canadian Coalition for Invasive Plant Regulation; Master Gardeners of Ontario
3:30 pm	National Horticulture Working Group & PlantWise Program	Gabby Nichols, Program Manager, Invasives Canada

Last updated: December 4, 2025

3:35 pm	Ontario's Grow Me Instead Task Force	Vicki Simkovic, Coordinator, Ontario Invasive Plant Council
3:45 pm	British Columbia's Grow Me Instead and Recognized Retailer Program Update	Nick Wong, Manager, Science & Research, Invasive Species Council of B.C.
3:55 pm	Q & A	
4:00 pm	Exploring Solutions (Continued)	
4:00 pm	Emerging species alert system in botanical gardens: Public Gardens as Sentinels against Invasive Plants: A Growing Network with New Resources	Theresa Culley, Professor of Plant Biology, University of Cincinnati & Michelle Beloskuk, Coordinator, Midwest Invasive Plant Network (MIPN)
4:15 pm	Identifying botanical hybrids and cultivars: Which Magnolias are escaping from the Arboretum? Using next-generation sequencing to identify the culprit	Nadia Cavallin, Royal Botanical Gardens Canada and Edeline Gagnon, Assistant Professor, University of Guelph
4:30 pm	A National Native Seed Strategy to Support Restoration across Canada	Carolyn Callaghan, Senior Conservation Biologist, Canadian Wildlife Federation
4:40 pm	Q & A	
4:50 pm	Wrap Up & Closing Remarks	

Agenda: Day 2 – Friday, December 12, 2025

All times are displayed in EST.

	Presentation	Speaker
12:00 pm	Welcome, Introduction, and Opening Prayer	Mary Lou Smoke, Celebrated Indigenous Elder and Knowledge Holder
12:20 pm	Panel: Horticulture Industry-led Initiatives & Case Studies	
12:20 pm	Strengthening Native Species Supply Chains	Paul Laporte, Ephemeral Ark Nursery, Chair Ontario Native Plant Grower's Association
12:35 pm	Out With the Old: Navigating a Retail Breakup with Invasives	Saskia Kersten, Owner, Vandermeer Nursery
12:50 pm	<i>To be confirmed</i>	Jason Rekker, National Perennial Manager, Brookdale Treeland Nurseries (BTN) Limited
1:05 pm	Q & A	
1:20 pm	Break	
1:50 pm	Regional Case Studies Exploring Decision Making	
1:50 pm	Managing Invasive Horticultural Plants in the City of Toronto	Margaret Good, Natural Resource Specialist, Forest and Natural Area Management, City of Toronto
2:05 pm	A Conservation Authority's Perspective- Credit Valley Conservation's Invasive Species Management Program	Lee Merrill, Coordinator, Terrestrial Restoration, Credit Valley Conservation Authority

Last updated: December 4, 2025

2:20 pm	The 440 Parkside Collective: Growing solutions through Indigenous leadership in High Park, Toronto	Rebecca Beaulne-Stuebing, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, York University
2:35 pm	Q & A	
2:45 pm	Exploring Solutions	
2:45 pm	Say YES to Community Action on Invasive Species with Youth EcoStewards	Mackenzie DiGasparro, Manager, Youth Engagement, Invasives Canada
2:55 pm	Insights from the Ground	Chase Guindon, Coordinator, PEI Invasive Species Council
3:05 pm	Implementing the Southern Ontario Seed Strategy	Jennifer Nantais, Healthy Habitat Manager, Carolinian Canada Coalition Carolinian Canada
3:20 pm	Tackling the hard questions with nursery growers	Dr. Jeanine West, Grower Technical Analyst, Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association
3:35 pm	Q & A	
3:50 pm	Wrap Up & Closing Remarks	