

Green Industry Winter Forum Education & Trade Show

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center • Marlborough, Massachusetts

Day 1: February 4, 2026

Registration required for all programs, walk-ins welcome

7AM Registration and Setup Opens for Vendors & Sponsors

8AM Attendee Registration Opens | MCH Exam, Pre-registration Required

Solutions: Winter Forum Education *register early for discounts • 4 MCH credits when attending both days, 2 MCH credits available for single day attendance*

9AM–3PM MCH Plant & Tool I.D. Sponsored by the MCH Board

9AM **Ownership Transitions in the Green Industry “Succession or Sale”** As many business owners in the Green Industry begin to consider retirement, understanding ownership transitions is increasingly important. This session provides an overview of the two primary types of ownership transitions: succession and sale. Zach Willner, President and Founder of Free Pier Advisors, will walk through the process for each option and the potential impacts on business operations so that owners and employees can successfully understand and navigate this important company milestone. **Speaker: Zach Willner, Free Pier Advisors**

9AM **Smart Plant Choices: Low-Maintenance Solutions for Every Landscape** Design landscapes that thrive, not just survive. This session highlights rugged perennials and shrubs that meet real-world challenges—from poor soil to limited maintenance time. Discover how these easy-care plants can simplify your designs, enhance durability, and keep landscapes looking fresh season after season. **Speaker: Heather Poire, Proven Winners**

10:30AM **Framing the Perfect Shot: Inside an Architectural Photographer’s World** Join us for an inside look at how powerful images of landscapes and exteriors come to life. Chris will walk through his process on commissioned shoots—sharing techniques for composition, lighting, and styling—and demonstrate how each creative decision transforms a scene into a striking final photograph. **Speaker: Chris Rucinski, Chris Rucinski Photography**

10:30AM **Native Plants with a Twist: Unexpected Excitement from our Native Flora** Production and Horticulture Manager Adam Wheeler of Broken Arrow Nursery will explore the distinctive and exceptional qualities of Northeastern native flora in this engaging presentation. He will highlight his current favorite native trees and shrubs for general garden use, addressing design considerations, cultural requirements, and other essential details. Special emphasis will be placed on unique variations and innovative landscape applications that showcase the versatility of native plants. **Speaker: Adam Wheeler, Broken Arrow Nursery**

11:45AM **MNLA Annual Meeting Luncheon & Keynote Presentation:**
Cultivating the Future—Attracting and Growing the Next Generation of Green Industry Talent Attracting and retaining young professionals is essential for future leadership and growth in the green industry. We will discuss practical, low-cost strategies to appeal to the next generation and share success stories. Investing in workforce development enhances profitability, company culture, and long-term sustainability. Understanding what young talent values makes it easier to engage, hire, and retain them as we work toward future growth. **Speaker: Terri McEnaney, Bailey Nurseries**

1:30PM **Biohacking Landscape Design: The Future of Smarter Land Care** What if you could diagnose and solve landscape challenges with precision? Trevor Smith reveals a new way to “biohack” your designs—combining existing methods with biological insights to uncover what a property truly needs. Learn how to reduce plant loss, save money, and build landscapes that thrive naturally in the face of climate and site stress. **Speaker: Trevor Smith, MCH, AOLCP, LEED GA, ReEarth Studio/Social Impact Collective**

1:30PM **Invasive Plants: What Every Landscape Professional Needs to Know** Get a refresher course on what it means for a plant to be invasive or prohibited in Massachusetts, test your knowledge of the “Top 10” invasive plants in our state, and hear about some non-invasive alternatives and whether they are practical substitutes for some of the species the green industry has been relying on for decades. **Speaker: Jennifer Forman Orth, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources** 🌱 **Pesticide credits: Cat 26, 29, 33 & CORE**

3PM **Taking It to the Top: How Did They Do That? — Roof Edition** Ever wonder how those lush rooftop landscapes come to life? From big trees on decks to skyline views framed in green, this session reveals the behind-the-scenes planning that makes rooftop gardens thrive. Learn how thoughtful design, smart plant selection, and careful installation turn the toughest growing conditions in town into thriving urban oases. **Speaker: Kerry Preston, MCH, Wisteria & Rose**

3PM **Reinforcing IPM Strategies with Biological Control** Integrating biological control into pest management programs offers multiple advantages, including reducing the risk of pesticide resistance, minimizing pesticide exposure for employees and customers, and eliminating downtime from re-entry intervals (REIs). This session will cover practical strategies for managing common greenhouse and nursery pests, with a focus on both augmentative releases of biocontrol agents, and conservation techniques such as using insectary plants to support natural enemies. **Speaker: Greg Bryant, Beneficial Insectary** 🌱 **Pesticide credits: Cat 26, 29, 33 & CORE**

3:30–5:30PM **Networking Social at the All Star Sports Bar**

Register online by January 16, 2026 for the best attendee rates!

Visit mnla.com/winter-forum for more details and to register as an attendee, sponsor or vendor.

Green Industry Winter Forum Education & Trade Show

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel & Trade Center • Marlborough, Massachusetts

Day 2: February 5, 2026

Registration required for all programs, walk-ins welcome

7AM **Attendee Registration Opens**

Solutions: Winter Forum Education register early for discounts • 4 MCH credits when attending both days, 2 MCH credits available for single day attendance

- 7:30AM Women in Horticulture: Growing Connections & Opportunities** This open conversation invites all green industry professionals to share insights, celebrate success, and explore opportunities to advance inclusion and leadership in horticulture. Come ready to connect, reflect, and grow together! **Speaker: Terri McEnaney, Bailey Nurseries**
- 8AM–2PM MCH Plant & Tool I.D. Sponsored by the MCH Board**
- 8AM QuickBooks Online for Landscapers: Managing Your Business on the Road** This hands-on session is designed specifically for landscaping professionals who need to manage their finances while out in the field. Whether you're quoting jobs, tracking expenses, or invoicing clients from your truck or job site, QuickBooks Online offers powerful tools to keep your business running smoothly—anytime, anywhere. **Speaker: Ed Jaworski, Siegel Solutions, Inc.**
- 9:30AM Sparks in the Night: The Secret World of Fireflies** Fireflies evoke a feeling of magic and wonder; Elegant blobs of light dancing and blinking in the summer night. But, increasingly fewer people report seeing fireflies today. Why is that? Are fireflies really disappearing? What challenges are they facing today? Join us! We will discuss their mysterious lives, biology, and simple steps to protect them. **Speaker: Blake Dinius, Plymouth County Extension**
- 9:30AM Plant Geeks Are Us: Oddball Plants for Oddball People** Production and Horticulture Manager Adam Wheeler of Broken Arrow Nursery will present a fun and engaging lecture exploring the world of unusual and uncommon woody plants, with a special focus on rarities best suited for New England landscapes. Adventurous gardeners with a taste for experimentation will discover a remarkable diversity of unjustly rare botanical treasures. Ornamental qualities, cultural details, and design perspectives are all woven together in this visually rich and delightfully geeky presentation. **Speaker: Adam Wheeler, Broken Arrow Nursery**
- 11AM Invasive Pests New and Old: What to Watch for This Year** The signs and symptoms of invasive pests are often right in front of our eyes but go unnoticed until it is too late. Knowing how to spot the signs early and what the available management options are can help reduce their impact and spread. This talk will cover spotted lanternfly, box tree moth, beech leaf disease, emerald ash borer, Joro spider, and Asian longhorned beetle, and will discuss how these pests affect plants, how to spot them, and what to do if you see one. **Speaker: Elizabeth Barnes, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources** 🌿 **Pesticide credits: ANY & CORE**
- 11AM Inspiration & Tricks of the Trade From a Former Major League Groundskeeper** As Fenway Park's former Senior Director of Grounds, David Mellor brings together a love of turf and a love of sports that resonates with just about everyone in the landscape industry. David will share his tricks of the trade for soil preparation, turfgrass selection, and lawn maintenance. You'll even get an insider's look at David's favorite mowing patterns and insight into life experiences that have led him to where he is today. **Speaker: David Mellor, former Senior Director of Grounds for the Boston Red Sox**
- 1PM Rainbows on the Wing: Dragonflies and Damselflies** An estimated 160 species of animals within Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies) can be found in Massachusetts. Often referred to as "rainbows on the wing," dragonflies and damselflies come in a variety of patterns, shapes, and colors. Join our adventure! We will discuss the ecology of dragonflies: their secret lives, adaptations, needs, and obstacles. **Speaker: Blake Dinius, Plymouth County Extension**
- 1PM The Delicate Balance of Residential Landscape Designs with Wetland Permit Plans** What do you do when you have a client or a project with wetlands, rivers, streams or coastline on their property? Rather than avoiding these types of projects, we'll discuss how to navigate the process of wetland permitting and how to create a landscape & planting design that will result in a net benefit for these sensitive, water resource areas. **Speaker: Angie Verge, PLA, MCH, Angie Verge Landscape Architecture & Design**
- 2:30PM Woody Ornamental Diseases in the Managed Landscape** This talk will review important diseases of trees and shrubs in managed landscapes across southern New England. In recent years, there have been significant swings in precipitation with very wet periods quickly followed by drought. Both conditions are conducive to disease development. Topics for discussion will include beech leaf disease, lilac leaf blotch, foliar anthracnose, conifer needle blights, among others. Management strategies will also be considered. **Speaker: Nicholas Brazee, UMass** 🌿 **Pesticide credits: Cat 26, 29, 33, 36 & CORE**
- 2:30PM Natural Stone & Garden Designs** In this session, you'll explore the many cuts and options available in natural stone. Each stone offers its own aesthetic appeal and functional purpose, allowing you to design with both artistry and intention. From globally sourced materials to locally quarried favorites, you'll discover a wide range of textures, colors, and styles. Plus, our One of a Kind stones—unique, rare pieces—will inspire you to create truly customized designs that stand apart. **Speaker: Derek Stearns, Plymouth Quarries**
- 3:30PM Adjourn**

PRICING

Visit mnla.com/winter-forum for attendee, vendor and sponsor details! Register as an attendee on or before Friday, January 16, 2026 and save \$50 per registration!

LODGING

Reserve a room at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel for the great rate of only \$119/night! Visit mnla.com/winter-forum to learn more.