



NEWFIELDS

2024 Newfields Horticulture Fall Forum Speaker

Peter Zale, Ph.D.

Associate Director, Conservation, Plant Breeding and Collections, [Longwood Gardens](#)

Peter Zale, Ph.D holds a Master's degree and Ph.D in plant breeding and genetics (2009, 2014) from The Ohio State University and is currently Associate Director, Conservation Horticulture and Plant Breeding, at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, PA. In this position he leads the plant exploration, breeding, and conservation programs through a combination field, garden, and laboratory based activities. His main efforts at Longwood have centered around development of a comprehensive conservation horticulture program focused on native orchids of the U.S. and planning and participation in over 30 plant exploration expeditions throughout the U.S., East Asia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and equatorial Africa. In his spare time, he has been creating his own "private botanical garden" with extensive collections of hardy geophytes and orchids, woodland plants, trees, shrubs, and a variety of other plants that reflect personal plant exploration efforts and interest in propagating plants from seeds.



 [@peter_zale](#)



Presenting *Building a Plant Explorer's Garden*

Starting with two box trucks containing a carefully curated collection of potted plants and a sloping half acre of turf and weeds in southeastern Pennsylvania, I was able fulfill a longtime desire to create a home botanical garden.

Established in 2015, The main purpose of the garden was to reflect my intensive interests in collecting and propagating plants from a combination of botanical field work around the globe, specialty nurseries from around the country and the world, and U.S. native species worthy of cultivation for their ornament, intrigue, and cultural importance. The collections are united by common goals of using the collection illustrate the incredible range of plants

hardy in zone 6, the importance and joy of propagating plants, the value of growing plants "with data", and to illustrate the need for conservation of plants and their habitats. After 8 years, my original vision for the garden is coming to fruition through the creation of different garden spaces and microhabitats that include an extensive woodland garden, a crevice garden, bog gardens, perennial borders, numerous woody plants, and a small alpine house that all together support an ever-expanding collection of over 2000 different kinds of plants, mainly propagated from my own seed propagation efforts. This presentation will discuss the development of the garden, trials and tribulations encountered along the way, some of my propagation techniques, and introduce some favorite plant groups that can be embraced by gardeners from a range of different climates.

