

# HLA Happenings

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## Wenjing Guan Shares Specialty Crop Insights Across Regional Grower Conferences

**Wenjing Guan** has been sharing her expertise at several grower-focused events this winter. In December, she presented on watermelon production at the Great Lakes Expo. Over the past two weeks, she delivered two presentations on strawberry production and one on cucumber production at the Great Plains Growers Conference. She also helped organize the Southern Indiana Melon and Vegetable Growers Conference, held in conjunction with the Illiana Watermelon Association Convention, where she presented on using cover crops to manage soilborne diseases and shared results from the latest watermelon variety trial.

## Register for the Indiana Horticulture and Small Farm Conference



**2026**

**INDIANA HORTICULTURE AND SMALL FARM CONFERENCE**

**March 3-5**  
*Hendricks County Fairgrounds • 1900 E. Main St. • Danville, Indiana*

**REGISTER TODAY!** [HTTPS://PUEXT.IN/IHSFC26](https://puext.in/ihsfc26)

**Registration is now open for the 2026 Indiana Horticulture and Small Farm Conference.**

Register for our new merged conference for horticultural crop growers and small farmers!  
PARP, CCH and CCA continuing education credits will be available.  
*Coordinated by Purdue Extension Diversified Farming and Food Systems and the Purdue Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture.*

**March 3-5**  
**Hendricks County Fairgrounds - Danville, Indiana**

## Miranda Purcell Presented at IAA Annual Conference

**Miranda Purcell** presented 'Growing Fruit Trees' at the Indiana Arborist Association Annual Conference on January 20th in Noblesville.

## HLA Bowling Team

Our team **Good Thyme Gang** played against Eamus Catuli Monday afternoon at Mike Aulby's Arrowhead Bowl for Week 17 of the Purdue Staff and Students league. We won 2 of 8 points, maintaining 10th place.

In the Team Category: Good Thyme Gang placed 1st with team scratch game scoring a 684.

In the Women's Category: **Alexandra Jewell** placed 2nd for scratch game scoring a 221 and placed 1st for scratch series scoring a 620.

In the Men's Category: **Chris Adair** placed 2nd with handicap game scoring a 278.

*Note: This bowling team is a casual league team for the department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture. This is NOT the competitive team for undergraduate students. Any prospective student looking to join the competitive team should consult the Purdue Intercollegiate Bowling Club.*

## 2026 HLA Spring Seminar – Kadeem J. Gilbert, PhD



Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

# 2026 HLA Spring Seminar

**Kadeem J. Gilbert, PhD**  
Assistant Professor

**Kellogg Biological Station, Department of Plant Biology Ecology, Evolution, & Behavior Program, Plant Resilience Institute, Michigan State University**

Thursday January 29<sup>th</sup>, at 3:30pm, HORT 117  
or Via Zoom.




**Pigments and pH: Plant traits temper their interactions**

All plants must contend with numerous arthropod and microbial associates; thus, plants have evolved multiple ways of regulating their interactions with other organisms, i.e., deterring antagonists and promoting mutualists. Individual leaf traits can signal different things to herbivores and pollinators, and physiological traits can be used to alter the environment experienced by communities of symbionts. In this talk, I will discuss current and ongoing work in my lab covering traits regulating plant biotic interactions in multiple systems, including carnivorous pitcher plants, which, in addition to fending off herbivores and attracting pollinators, must also attract insect prey and contend with symbiotic organisms living in their modified leaves. I will highlight anthocyanin pigmentation as a key visual trait and pH regulation as a key physiological trait for interactions with arthropods and microbes.

Purdue University is an Equal Access/Equal Opportunity Institution.

Kadeem J. Gilbert PhD

Assistant Professor

Kellogg Biological Station, Department of Plant Biology Ecology, Evolution, & Behavior Program, Plant Resilience Institute, Michigan State University

Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, at 3:30pm, HORT 117 or via Zoom.

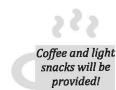
### Pigments and pH: Plant traits temper their interactions

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## HLA 2026 Spring Seminar Series



### HLA 2026 Spring Seminar Series



Date & Host	Seminars	Seminars will be in person with a zoom option unless otherwise noted Thursdays @ 3:30pm in HORT 117 Virtual and Hybrid Zoom
January 29 Widhalm	Kadeem Gilbert - Michigan State University Assistant Professor - Kellogg Biological Station	
February 5 Awashra	Philip Ackerman-Leist - Foodshed Solutions LLC Principal - UpTunket Farm <b>ONLINE ONLY</b>	
February 12	Olinger Lecture - Mike Ciccarelli - Hoerr Schaudt <b>5:30 PM PFEN 241</b>	
February 26	David Barbarash - Purdue University Associate Professor- Horticulture and Landscape Architecture	
March 5 Langenhoven	Marty Travis - Spence Farm, Fairbury, IL Co-owner and operator	
March 12 Widhalm	Andrea Glassmire -Michigan State University Assistant Professor - Entomology	
March 26 Gomez	Aren Phillips -Walters Gardens Greenhouse Systems Manager	
April 2 Thompson	Zahra Salehi -University of Connecticut PhD Student - Plant Science and Landscape Architecture	
April 9	Kirby Kalbaugh-Purdue University AG Data Services	

HLA Seminars Series will be in person with a Zoom option unless otherwise noted.

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Virtual and Hybrid Zoom

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- April 2: Zahra Salehi -University of Connecticut, PhD Student - Plant Science and Landscape Architecture
- April 9: Kirby Kalbaugh-Purdue University, AG Data Services

## 2026 Boilermaker Spring Salad Kit





For the second time, the [Purdue Student Farm](#) will offer a [Spring Salad Kit](#) with a variety of greens grown in the [Overbeck Controlled Environment Facility](#). In addition to a variety of salad greens, the kit may include microgreens, mustard greens, turnips, radishes, herbs, and tomatoes, plus surprises!

### Registration

Sign-up for the Spring Salad Kit is now open! With limited availability, don't miss your chance – [register today!](#)

### Salad Kit Options - March 6 - May 8

Full Share: Weekly for 10 weeks at \$23.90/week at a total cost of \$239.

Half Share: Bi-weekly, 10 weeks for \$27.20/week at a total cost of \$136. Pickup is every other week.

### Pickup Details

Fridays between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. at the Purdue Student Farm.

## Vegetable Chat Webinar Series



**Asparagus: Growing, protecting & reaping your investment**

**Benjamin Werling**  
Extension Vegetable Educator  
Michigan State University

Vegetable Chat is a webinar series focusing on vegetable crop production. The series is designed primarily for commercial vegetable growers, though producers of all scales may find the information valuable. Each session will feature an expert presentation followed by a Q&A discussion.

The second session will focus on asparagus. We will hear from Ben Werling, an Extension vegetable educator from Michigan State University. The live webinar is scheduled for January 29, 2026, at 2:30 pm Eastern Time.

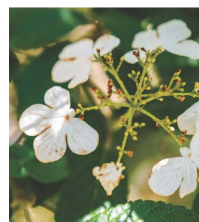
If you are interested in joining the live webinar, please [register on Zoom](#).

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with details

on how to join the session.

You can access previous [Vegetable Chat](#) recordings on our website.

## Students, Farmers, and Researchers are invited to share work at Indiana Horticulture & Small Farm Conference Poster Session



### WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2026

**4:30-5:15 p.m. EST**

*Hendricks County Fairgrounds*

We welcome any individual or group conducting a research, outreach or education project focused on small farms, local foods or diversified agriculture.

All poster presenters will receive a \$25 discount on their conference registration.

**Apply to be a presenter here:**

[https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_25WwDFKsb5IWzTo](https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_25WwDFKsb5IWzTo)

**Deadline to apply: Jan. 30, 2026**

**Notified of acceptance by: Feb. 2026**

**First-time poster presenter? Questions?**

**Contact Emily Evers** at [everse@purdue.edu](mailto:everse@purdue.edu) or call 574-235-9605



<https://puext.lin/SFC2026PosterSession>

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Danville, Indiana – January 8, 2026 – Students, farmers, and researchers are invited to present at the 14th Annual Poster Session at the **Indiana Horticulture & Small Farm Conference** at the Hendricks County Fairgrounds in Danville, Indiana. The poster session will be held on Wednesday March 4, 2026 from 4:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. (EST).

This year's conference continues to highlight the innovative work happening on small farms and in diversified horticultural operations across Indiana. The poster session provides a unique opportunity for participants to showcase their research, production experiences, and educational initiatives related to local foods, specialty crops, small farm systems, and horticulture. In appreciation of their contributions, poster presenters will receive a \$25 discount on their conference registration.

The Indiana Horticulture & Small Farm Conference remains one of Purdue Extension's premier events for connecting small-scale and diversified producers with research-based knowledge and peer

learning opportunities. Participation in the poster session has grown steadily, reflecting the strong interest among farmers, students, and educators in sharing practical insights and innovations.

The poster session chair, Emily Evers explains, “Each year we see a wonderful blend of presenters—graduate students sharing their research alongside farmers sharing their on-farm experiences. This mix creates a unique environment where everyone is eager to learn from one another, and the poster session continues to be one of the best ways the Indiana Horticulture & Small Farm Conference fosters peer-to-peer learning and community building.”

To encourage and assist new presenters, poster presentation tips and guidelines are provided here <https://bit.ly/PUposterguidelines>. Registration to participate in the poster session is simple; presenters submit their proposal at <https://puext.in/SFC2026PosterSession>. The deadline for

submitting a proposal is January 30, 2026. Applicants will be notified once their proposal has been accepted, and they will receive the \$25 discount code for their conference registration. If you’re a student who does not have access to funds to cover conference registration, please still contact us about potential poster presentation opportunities.

Please direct any questions about poster session presentations and submissions to Emily Evers, chair of the poster session committee, at 574-235-9605 or [everse@purdue.edu](mailto:everse@purdue.edu).

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### Newsletters:

Facts for Fancy Fruits: <https://fff.hort.purdue.edu>

Vegetable Crops Hotline: <https://vegcropshotline.org/>

Purdue Landscape

Report: <https://www.purduelandscape.org>

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