

Kickstart 2021

Webinar Details and Speaker Bios

Tuesday Morning, January 12th

9:00 am - 9:10 am

Introduction - MTWFA

9:10 am - 10:00 am

DCR Programs, Grants and Updates

Julie Coop, Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation will highlight past and future DCR projects, discuss what tools are available through the department to assist municipal and other organization leaders, and discuss grant opportunities and application process.

10:05 am - 11:05 am

Insect Pests of Woody Plants:2020 Updates

Tawny Simisky, Entomology Specialist, UMass Extension. One thing you can always count on - insects feeding on trees and shrubs in our landscapes! Some interesting insects were reported by Massachusetts professionals and property owners this year. We will review updates for some of the usual suspects (spotted lanternfly, Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, and continued bagworm activity), and take a look at some perhaps lesser known species seen in 2020. The accurate insect identification is the first step in determining proper management strategies.

11:10 am - 12:10 pm

Managing Key Invasive Plants

Randy Probstak, UMass Extension Weed Specialist will outline management strategies for some of the common invasive plants in Massachusetts. A brief discussion on managing invasive plants in right-of-way areas will be included.

Please see next page for speaker profiles

Wednesday Afternoon, January 13th

12:30 pm - 12:40 pm

Introduction - MTWFA

12:40 pm - 1:40 pm

Adapting Urban and Community Forests in Massachusetts to Climate Change

Leslie Brandt PhD, Climate Change Specialist Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science Urban and community forests play an important role in helping communities mitigate the effects of climate change, but trees themselves can also be vulnerable to these changes. Learn about the current and anticipated effects of climate change on Massachusetts' urban trees and how we can adapt our management to these changes.

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm

Massachusetts Forest Health Update

Nicole Keleher, Forest Health Program Director, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation will discuss the major forest health concerns and highlights in 2020, what to expect in 2021, and potential future invaders to look out for. Learn how to identify forest insects and diseases and tips for how to deal with these issues. Topics discussed will include gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, white pine decline, beech leaf disease, and oak wilt.

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

UMass Plant Diagnostic Lab: The year in review

Nicholas J. Brazee PhD, UMass Extension Plant Pathologist will focus on both major and minor pathogens and pests encountered in the UMass Plant Diagnostic Laboratory during the 2020 season. Topics will include the rapid spread of beech leaf disease, an oak wilt update, heat and drought stress, chronic health issues affecting landscape oaks and conifers, herbicide exposure injuries and research updates. When appropriate, management strategies will be discussed.



Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Assn.

Kickstart 2021 Speaker Profiles

Leslie Brandt PhD is the regional climate change coordinator for the Eastern Region of the U.S. Forest Service and a climate change specialist with the Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science and the U.S. Forest Service, where she works on climate change adaptation and outreach for natural resource managers. Her areas of focus include urban forestry, Central Hardwoods Forests, and recreation.

Nicholas Brazee PhD earned his doctorate in forest pathology from the University of Massachusetts and has worked as an extension plant pathologist at UMass since 2012. His duties include providing plant disease diagnostics and support for green industry professionals and conducting research on fungal pathogens of trees. His current research involves the detection of internal decay in living trees using tomography.

Julie Coop is the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Urban and Community Forestry Coordinator. With DCR since 2010, Julie has worked with the Asian Longhorned Beetle Cooperative Eradication Program in both Worcester and Boston and, just prior to that, she supervised the replanting program in Worcester under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Julie came to DCR after a long career at the Arnold Arboretum. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, a certified arborist with ISA and MAA, and a past president of the New England Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture (ISA).

Nicole Keleher is the Forest Health Director with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). She works on statewide projects investigating and addressing the impacts of insects and diseases on Massachusetts' forests.

Randy Prostak joined UMass in 1994 and has been a UMass Extension Specialist since 2000, specializing in weed management. He is a member of the UMass Extension Landscape, Nursery and Urban Forestry Team and is an active contributor to the Crop Dairy Livestock Equine, Turf, and Pesticide Education Extension Programs. He currently serves on the Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group. Randy is an active member of the Weed Science Society of America and served as president of the Northeastern Weed Science Society. In February 2013, Randy received the Northeastern Weed Science Society's Outstanding Educator Award. The 2020 growing season will mark Randy's 32nd year working in weed science.

Tawny Simisky is a Woody Ornamental Entomology Specialist with UMass Extension and the interim team leader of the Landscape, Nursery, and Urban Forestry Program. She develops resources and implements educational programs for landscape professionals, arborists, and grounds managers. She provides entomological and diagnostic support to the UMass Plant Diagnostics Lab. Prior to this position, she worked with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Forest Health Program where she was involved with the eradication of the Asian longhorned beetle and monitoring emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, and other forest pests throughout the state. She earned her M.S. Degree in Ecology and Environmental Science with a focus on Entomology from the University of Maine, Orono. While at UMaine, her research focused on biosurveillance to monitor for the invasive emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) using a native, ground-nesting and non-stinging wasp, *Cerceris fumipennis*, also known as the smoky-winged beetle bandit. Prior to her graduate work, Simisky earned a Bachelor of Science in both Biology and Environmental Science from Westfield State University in Westfield, MA.