

Johnson County Master Gardeners & Hills Bank present

Community Speakers Series 2025

Sunday, March 2, 2025 — 1 to 4:30 p.m.



Johnson County Extension Office, 3109 Old Hwy 218 South, Iowa City

The program is free and open to the public. However, attendance is limited to room capacity.

Registration is required: <https://go.iastate.edu/XR8GMT>

1 p.m. — **Building Soil Health.** Hillary Olson, Iowa NRCS State Soil Health Specialist, and Jeremy "JD" Hollingsworth, SE Iowa NRCS Soil Health Specialist.

Hillary Olson was raised on a family row crop and farrow-to-finish hog farm in central Iowa. She received a B.S. in Animal Science and an M.S. in Soil Science at Iowa State University. She has worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) as a Soil Conservationist in multiple field offices across Iowa. She and her husband farm in central Iowa and have a row crop operation and a cow-calf herd. Hillary has been in the State Soil Health Specialist role for Iowa NRCS since 2020.



J.D. Hollingsworth graduated from Iowa State University with a B.S. in agronomy and began working at a private research farm. Before launching his career with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as a Soil Conservation Technician in Fairfield, J.D. worked as a district technician and a watershed coordinator. He served as a Civil Engineering Technician with the NRCS in Ottumwa before accepting a newly created Area Soil Health Specialist position with the NRCS in Fairfield, Iowa. He lives near Packwood in southeast Iowa with his wife, Becky, and their two children. J.D.



farms with his Dad on their family farm. They began using no-till and cover crops in 2013 and now utilize no-till and cover crops on all the acres they farm. They have raised cereal rye for cover crop seed since 2019.

2:15 p.m. — **Prairie Restoration.** Mike Fallon, University of Iowa Adjunct Instructor. Mike has taught "Prairie Restoration," a field course in the UI Dept. of Earth and Environmental Sciences, for six years. Previously, Mike owned and operated Native Landscaping, L.L.C., a landscaping company that specialized in restoring native landscapes (prairie, savanna, and woodland). Mike co-wrote the design plan for the Ashton Prairie Living Laboratory (APLL) and helped secure permission from the UI Dept. of Athletics to restore the 1-acre prototype prairie at the UI Ashton Cross Country Course. Mike and former UI undergraduate Megan Lenss were awarded a grant from UI USG to purchase native plant seeds for APLL. Prairie Restoration students hand-broadcasted the native plant seed for 1-acre and 7-acre prairie restorations at APLL. Mike is a strong advocate for both the ecological restoration of former and degraded native landscapes and experiential learning in living laboratories on the UI campus and in natural areas.



3:30 p.m. — **Monarch Research Project.** August "Augie" Bergstrom is the Station Manager at the Monarch Research Project in Marion. A Cedar Rapids native, Augie studied ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Michigan before taking on the role of Station Manager. The nonprofit organization was established in 2015 to restore and rebuild green infrastructure to support the Monarch butterfly and other native animal life in the local ecosystem and community. Augie is a knowledgeable ambassador for Monarchs and native plants. He frequently gives informative presentations about the butterfly's life cycle and how to protect and build habitats.



Augie is also a new Linn County Master Gardener!

NOTE: If the weather presents hazardous travel issues, an alternate date of Sunday, March 24, has been selected. If a change is necessary, a notice will be posted to the JCMG Facebook page. Attendance provides Master Gardeners CE hours.

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