Effective Strategies for Horticultural Sustainability in Planting Design
ASLA Annual Meeting
November 17, 2013, 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

Presenters
W. Gary Smith, FASLA
Patrick J. Cullina

Description
What is “sustainability” in the designed landscape, and what role can “horticulture” play in sustainable landscape design and management? This discussion will question our typical ways of using plants in design, investigating important horticultural and ecological issues that are critical for ecologically effective design, implementation and management of the planted landscape.

Learning Objectives
• Discuss how to maximize the role of plants in the designed landscape.
• Explore the value of including non-native as well as native plants in sustainable landscape architecture.
• Learn about planting design strategies that are tailored to the particulars of a site, rather than the more typical practice of modifying a site to accommodate a favorite palette of plants.
• Understand the necessity to incorporate landscape maintenance and management strategies into the whole landscape architectural services package.

Session Outline
1. Planting Design
   • The role of horticultural perspective and plant selection in an early stage of the design process
   • More compelling roles for plants in the landscape
   • Challenging the dominance of the “hardscape”
   • Maintaining a sensitivity to seasonality

2. Developing Substantive Sustainable Strategies
   • Surpassing verbal homage to “sustainability” by achieving a more effective definition
   • Identifying the key factors in designed landscapes that make them actually sustainable
   • Noting the ecological/horticultural factors in designed landscapes
   • Assessing the role of landscape dynamics and the subsequent changes over time, e.g. size, spacing, etc.
   • Developing innovative plans for continued landscape care and management, e.g. editing, etc.
   • Planning with anticipation of the effects of climate change
   • Building an understanding of the role of soils, amendments and mulches
3. Plant Selection
   • Assessing the roles of native vs. non-native plants
   • Understanding the benefits and challenges associate with the use seedlings, varieties and cultivars
   • Identifying meaningful roles for herbaceous plants
   • Reviewing plant combinations derived from observed interactions between species in the field

4. Related Themes
   • Reviewing the sequential role of horticulture from design through installation and beyond
   • The value of developing an extended client/project relationship over time
   • Working with professional horticulturists

Speaker Biographies
W. Gary Smith, FASLA, creates gardens that celebrate plants and the connections they offer between people and nature. A nationally recognized expert on botanical garden master planning and design, he has worked in various regions throughout the U.S. in collaboration with some of the nation’s most talented ecologists and horticulturists. In 2011 he received the Landscape Design Award from the American Horticultural Society.

Patrick Cullina is a horticulturist, designer, photographer, lecturer and observer of living environments who has served as Vice President of Horticulture and Park Operations for Friends of the High Line and V.P. of Horticulture, Operations and Science at Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Consultant and adviser to clients ranging from design firms and project teams to municipal, commercial and private entities, he remains a committed, creative advocate for the role of plants in landscape design. His work in horticulture has been recognized by a number of organizations including the Garden Club of America, who awarded him a Zone Horticulture Commendation in 2010.