

A photograph of an older man with grey hair, a goatee, and round glasses. He is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and a dark vest. He is holding a large, vibrant green leaf in front of him. The background is a lush garden with various plants, including what appears to be a greenhouse structure in the distance. The overall scene is set against a green background.

THE  
2nd  
GARDENING  
GARDENER

John Dromgoole



# Philosophy of Organic Gardening

- Organic gardening is all about *life in the soil*
- Healthy soil = healthy plants = healthy people
- Work *with* Mother Nature, not against her
- Gardening is not just a technique – *it is a relationship with the earth*



# Why Native Plants Matter

## Natives:

- Support and restore local ecosystems
- Provide food and habitat for pollinators and wildlife
- Adapted to local soil and climate conditions
- Low-maintenance
- Drought-tolerant
- Eliminating the need for toxic fertilizers and pesticides
- Dramatically reduce water usage
- Prevent erosion
- Combat climate change (by storing carbon)




# Most insecticides DO NOT discriminate...a bug is a bug.

Did you know that there are significantly more beneficial insects than harmful ones?

- Over 97–99% of all insect species are either pollinators, predators, decomposers or are completely benign.
- Only about 1–3% acting as true pests that damage crops, homes, or human health.



Pollinators are the heart of the garden!



# Soil biology drives plant success!

## Feed the soil, not the plant:

- Compost (mushroom blocks, leaf mold, homemade)
- Earthworm castings
- Organic fertilizers (seaweed, fish emulsion)
- Organic soil conditioners



# Native landscapes ARE beautiful landscapes

## Grasses & Ground Covers

Silver Ponyfoot



TX Frogfruit

Calylophus

Cedar Sedge

Buffalo Grass



Stemodia



Lyreleaf Sage

Native Grass Mix

Horseherb

Winecup



# Native landscapes ARE beautiful landscapes

## Edibles

Opuntia (Nopal) - Sunflowers - Blackberries

Creek Plum - Mexican Plum

Agarita

Native Persimmon



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## Shade Perennials

Turk's Cap



Cedar Sage

Pigeonberry



Horseherb



Inland Sea Oats



Heartleaf Skullcap

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## Shrubs

American Beautyberry



Texas Sage



Flameleaf Sumac



Yaupon

Evergreen Sumac

Mexican Buckeye



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## Wildflowers

Bluebonnet - Indian Paintbrush - Winecup

Pink Evening Primrose - Purple Coneflower - Black-eyed Susan

Mexican Hat - Gregg's Blue Mistflower - Texas Yellowstar

Prairie Verbena - White Prickly Poppy - Drummond Phlox

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## Trees

Live Oak



Cedar Elm



Chinkapin Oak



Bur Oak



# Design *with* Mother Nature

- Mimic natural ecosystems  
(layers + diversity)
- Group plants in clusters
- Combine...
  - structure (shrubs)
  - movement (grasses)
  - color (flowers)
- Create year-round interest



# Watering the Natural Way

- Deep watering encourages deep root systems
- Observe, then design for rainfall and runoff patterns in your landscape
- Mulch to help retain moisture



# Creating a Pollinator Habitat

## Include:

- Nectar plants  
(spring-fall)
- Host plants  
(milkweed, etc.)
- Shelter  
(shrubs, grasses, leaf litter)
- Water Source



# Think *beyond* plants!

Create ECOSYSTEMS that support:

- Birds
- Insects
- Wildlife



# Disease prevention is gardening, too!



## Pruning Oaks

November – Early February

Mid July - August



# The Big Picture

*Every garden can...*

- Support biodiversity
- Conserve water
- Help heal the environment



# In conclusion...

- Start small
- Build soil first
- Plant natives
- Welcome pollinators
- Use local resources
- Keep learning



# Resources

Native Plant Society

Texas Audubon

Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center

Native American Seed

The Natural Gardener

Create a space where  
you can breathe,  
where nature can  
thrive, and where life  
feels connected  
again.