



**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

Master Gardener Annual Update Conference

Speaker Bios



Bret Lang

Bret Lang grew up in the small town of Kanawha, Iowa in northcentral Iowa. As a farm kid, he enjoyed exploring the country roads and ditches near his family's acreage for plants and animals. Oftentimes, he would come home with a fist-full of (mostly non-toxic) plants for his mom to put in a vase so she could enjoy until the next time he went out to gather more.

As he grew older, Bret started noticing a change in the landscape around him. New agricultural practices had changed the once colorful and vibrant ditches he used to play into a sea of plain green grass. No longer did he see the bees and butterflies that were once common in the area. It was for this reason, Bret decided to study environmental policy at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. At Drake University he spent most of his time walking through prairies and recording surveys of the plants, butterflies, and birds that he observed. This experience was formative in his love of native prairies, something that he carried with him to graduate school at Iowa State University where he studied butterfly populations in urban prairie landscapes as he received his master's degree in environmental science.

Currently, Bret is in the biology Ph.D. program at South Dakota State University where he is studying native plant interactions with soil communities. In his free time, he enjoys hiking and exploring natural areas with his wife, Kristine, and his dog Lola. He also is an avid, albeit amateur, birder and still loves taking any free moments that he has during the day to explore the countryside looking for whatever birds, insects, and flowers he can find.



Kristine Lang

Dr. Kristine Lang is a South Dakota State University Assistant Professor and Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist based in Brookings, SD. She holds a Ph.D. in Horticulture and Sustainable Agriculture from Iowa State University, where her research focused on sustainable vegetable production. Her horticultural career has included working in private-sector, university, and non-profit organizations across four Midwestern states. Dr. Lang works with citizens across South Dakota to empower Master Gardeners, celebrate public gardens, champion local food and cut flower production, and address herbaceous plant questions from aster to zucchini!



Anna Barr

Anna Barr is a registered dietitian (RD) and serves as Farm to School Nutrition Field Specialist for SDSU Extension. She was raised on a small farm in Iowa before attending SDSU for her bachelor's and master's degrees in nutrition. While an undergraduate, Anna completed a minor in horticulture and enjoyed working at the SDSU Local Foods Education Center.



**Prairey
Walkling**

Prairey Walkling is excited to expand her role with SDSU Extension to include Master Gardeners in Western South Dakota. Prairey currently supports the citizens of South Dakota in her role as the Family & Community Health Field Specialist, based in Rapid City. She will continue to support SNAP-Ed work being done in Pennington, Oglala Lakota, Bennett, and Todd Counties. Here's a bit of background on Prairey and her gardening interests.

Prairey grew up on a ranch/century farm in Todd County and has lived most of her life in South Dakota. Her parents both gardened and canned and have passed on this lifestyle. Prairey's first garden was in New Mexico, as was her first community gardening experience. She helped initiate a gardening project in an alleyway at Boys & Girls Club of Las Cruces and this inspired her for years to come. After returning to South Dakota, Prairey began working for SDSU Extension in 2015. This work included hiring and supervising several Summer Program Leaders, who work in community gardens and provide nutrition education. She completed the Master Gardener course in 2019 in Sturgis. She is very interested in community and school gardens, public art, and helping match Master Gardeners with meaningful volunteer projects, including food security projects.

Prairey lives near Rapid City with her husband, Jameson Brennan, who is an Assistant Professor in Animal Science at SDSU and her 2 children. In her spare time, Prairey enjoys hiking, reading, volunteering at her church, and spending time with family and friends.



**Robin
Buterbaugh**

Robin Buterbaugh was born and raised in South Dakota and grew up in an environmentally conscious gardening family. She's been growing a vegetable garden for over 20 years, but became interested in permaculture (permanent agriculture) when her brother lent her the book "Gaia's Garden" by Toby Hemenway about 10 years ago. Since then, she's been incorporating permaculture techniques into her regular vegetable garden, expanded into permaculture design and forest gardening, and received her Permaculture Design Certificate in 2017. Robin returned to SDSU to get a Master's degree in Natural Resources Management focusing on integrating native plants into community landscaping, and also started her own ecological landscape design and consulting business The Wild Edge, LLC. She currently works as a graduate research assistant for the Native Plant Initiative and as laboratory manager at Ecdysis Foundation. She is also a board member for the non-profit Project Food Forest. In her free time she likes spending time disc golfing with her two sons and trying to do some gardening of her own.



**Devon
Mihesuah**

Dr. Devon Mihesuah is the Cora Lee Beers Price Teaching Professor in International Cultural Understanding. She holds a Ph.D. in American History from Texas Christian University.

Her career has been devoted to the empowerment and well-being of indigenous peoples. She served as Editor of the American Indian Quarterly for nine years. Her research, writing and speaking focuses on decolonization strategies and is one of the few indigenous writers who successfully writes non-fiction and fiction.

She regularly speaks nationally and internationally about issues pertaining to empowerment of indigenous peoples; her works are cited and reprinted in hundreds of publications and her books and essays are used in classrooms across the world. Books to her credit include, but are not limited to: "Indigenous food Sovereignty in the United States: Restoring Cultural Knowledge, Protecting Environments, and Regaining Health."