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September 22 - 25, 2026
Amway Grand Plaza Hotel
Grand Rapids, MI

Motivation for Innovation!

Monday, September 21

2:00 - 7:00 PM **IPPS Eastern Region Board of Directors' Meeting**
(Fine Arts, 1st Flr)

7:00 - 9:00 PM **Registration** (North Concourse, 2nd Flr)

Tuesday, September 22

7:00 - 7:55 AM **Registration** (North Concourse, 2nd Flr)

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM **Pre-Conference Tours**
(Meet in hotel lobby by 7:45 AM)

3:30 - 5:30 PM **Poster and Silent Auction Session Set-Up**
(Governor's Room, 2nd Flr)

3:30 - 5:30 PM **Registration** (North Concourse, 2nd Flr)

5:30 - 7:00 PM **Welcome Reception** (Imperial Ballroom, 1st Flr)

7:00 PM **Dinner on Your Own**

Wednesday, September 23

7:00 - 11:00 AM **Registration** (North Concourse, 2nd Flr)

7:30 AM **Silent Auction Opens for Bidding** (Governor's Room, 2nd Flr)

General Session: Plant Breeding and New Plant Development
Moderator: Rachel Conley (Senator Vandenberg Room, 2nd Flr)

8:00 - 8:10 AM **Welcome and Introductions**
Steve Foltz, President, IPPS Eastern Region

8:10 - 8:40 AM **Garden Innovations: Breeding Plants for Flair & Fortitude**
Dr. Tom Ranney, Professor, NC State University, Mills River, North Carolina

8:40 - 9:10 AM **NDSU Woody Plant Improvement Program's Process of Breeding & Developing Tough New Trees**
Connor Hagemeyer, Research Specialist, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND

9:10 - 9:30 AM **In Vitro Techniques for Plant Breeding**
Dr. Mark Bridgen, Professor, Cornell University, Riverhead, NY

9:30 – 9:50 AM	IPPS Eastern Region Awards Presentation Shelby French , Recognition Committee Chair
9:50 – 10:15 AM	Break & Silent Auction Bidding
10:15 – 10:40 AM	The Golden Age of Plant Breeding Tim Wood , General Manager, Spring Meadow Nursery, Grand Haven, MI
10:40 – 11:05 AM	Around the World in Search of Shrubs: Sourcing and Developing New Woody Plants Dr. Judson LeCompte , Product Development Manager, Spring Meadow Nursery, Grand Haven, MI
11:05 – 11:30 AM	Supplying Landscape Plants for Middle Eastern Resort Projects Peter Lewis , Nursery Director, Wynn Al Marjan Island, Raz al Khaimah, UAE
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Lunch (Included in Conference Registration) & Silent Auction Bidding
General Session: New Technologies and Innovations Moderator: Kathy McGinty (<i>Senator Vandenberg Room, 2nd Flr</i>)	
1:00 – 1:30 PM	Using Generative AI for Nursery Growers Dr. Paul Fisher , Professor, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
1:30 – 2:00 PM	Jumping Worm Treatments in Container Production Dr. Brandon Miller , Assistant Professor, Minnesota State University, Saint Paul, MN
2:00 – 2:30 PM	Transplant Success of Container-Grown Trees Dr. Bert Cregg , Professor, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
2:30 – 3:00 PM	Environmental Conditions During Vegetative Woody Propagation Olivia Liebing , Graduate Student, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
3:00 – 3:30 PM	Coffee Break & Silent Auction Bidding
3:30 – 4:00 PM	The Plant Trials Happening at Secrest Arboretum, OSU Paul Snyder , Operations Manager, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
4:00 – 4:30 PM	Applications of Drones in the Nursery Jim Robbins , Owner, Ornamental Hort Solutions, Little Rock, AR
4:30 – 4:45 PM	Report on the 2025 IPPS International Tour in the UK Brayden Johnson , 2025 IPPS Foundation Travel Award Recipient
4:45 – 5:00 PM	2027 IPPS Eastern Region PREVIEW! Maryland! Alan Jones & Matt Palmieri

5:00 – 6:00 PM	Cash Bar with Final Silent Auction Bidding (Bidding Ends at 6:00 PM; <i>Governor's Room, 2nd Flr</i>)
6:00 PM	Dinner on Your Own
8:00 – 9:30 PM	Auction Item Pick-Up
Thursday, September 24	
7:00 – 7:55 AM	Registration (<i>North Concourse, 2nd Flr</i>)
8:00 AM – 9:00 PM	Conference Tour, Dinner & Live Auction (Meet in hotel lobby by 7:45 AM)
Friday, September 25	
7:00 AM	IPPS-ER Foundation Board Meeting (<i>Fine Arts, 1st Flr</i>)
7:00 – 11:00 AM	Registration (<i>North Concourse, 2nd Flr</i>)
General Session: Herbaceous Perennials & Native Plants Moderator: Andy Miller (<i>Senator Vandenberg Room, 2nd Flr</i>)	
8:00 – 8:10 AM	Announcements Steve Foltz , President, IPPS Eastern Region
8:10 – 8:25 AM	2027 International Tour Preview Clive Larkman , Larkman Nurseries, Australia
8:25 – 8:55 AM	Advanced Practices for Bulking and Toning Finished Perennials Laura Robles , Regional Product Manager, Walters Gardens, Zeeland, MI
8:55 – 9:25 AM	Increasing Perennial Propagation Yields and Quality with the Use of Bonded Media Matt Fredrickson , Vice President of Greenhouse Operations, Hampshire Farms, Hampshire, IL
9:25 – 9:55 AM	What's All the Buzz About Keystone Native Perennials? The Plants That Power Biodiversity Steve Castorani , Owner, North Creek Nurseries, Hockessin, DE
9:55 – 10:30 AM	IPPS Eastern Region Annual General Meeting
10:30 – 10:50 AM	Coffee Break
10:50 – 11:20 AM	Adventures in Native Plant Trialing and Propagation Dani Parisi , Manager, Bowyer Farm, Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden, Cincinnati OH
11:20 – 11:45 AM	Seed to Sale: Native Plant Propagation at McKay Nursery Mike Gates , McKay Nursery Company, Waterloo, WI
11:45 AM – Noon	New Plant Forum Rachel Conley , Broken Arrow Nursery, Hamden, CT
12:00 PM	IPPS Eastern Region Board of Directors' Meeting All are invited to attend (<i>Fine Arts Room, 1st Flr</i>)