



## HIGH LINE HORTICULTURE EXPERTS OFFER ECOLOGICAL GARDENING INSIGHTS IN NEW “NATURE IN THE CITY” CONVERSATION SERIES ON URBAN ECOLOGY

**“Engaging Nature: Dialogues on Urban Ecology” Launches on Earth Day, April 22, with Ecological Garden Designer Rebecca McMackin**



Photo by Liz Ligon

**NEW YORK, NY (April 8, 2025)** — The High Line announced today **Engaging Nature: Dialogues on Urban Ecology**, a four-part virtual public program series that will illuminate the practices and expertise driving the High Line’s contributions to the domains of ecological horticulture, urban biodiversity, and climate resilience.

As more and more professional horticulturists and home gardeners alike look to engage with holistic and ecologically-informed practices in their gardens amid changing climates, horticulture teams at the High Line and other top institutions

across New York City have been at the forefront of studying and employing methods to foster plant and wildlife resilience. Launching Earth Day 2025, April 22, at 6pm EDT with a conversation between Rebecca McMackin, Lead Horticulturist for the American Horticultural Society and ecological garden designer, and Richard Hayden, High Line Senior Director of Horticulture, about ecological horticulture, the Engaging Nature dialogue series offers nature-lovers a chance to learn what we can each do to contribute to a stronger and more harmonious urban environment.

“Experiences with nature are such a vital part of our wellbeing, and too often people think that you have to leave the city to connect with the natural world,” said Richard Hayden, Senior Director of Horticulture at the High Line. “The High Line’s Engaging Nature dialogue series on urban ecology offers deeper understanding on the rich interconnectedness and interdependence between people and natural life in the greenspaces of New York City—and insights into how we all can advance this work.”

Through the Engaging Nature: Dialogues on Urban Ecology series, attendees will learn about the often-overlooked connections between plants, humans, wildlife, and the many elements that make up the natural world around us within the built environment of New York City. From best practices for fostering a holistically healthy garden and recent learnings on the vital partnerships between native pollinators and plants that allow them both to thrive, to insights on horticultural resilience in the face of a changing climate and the care and keeping of some of New York City’s most vibrant greenspaces, the Engaging Nature dialogues reveal the role we play within the complex and unseen system of networks that undergirds the urban environment.

The dialogue series features experts across the fields of gardening, horticulture, and biology, including: **Rebecca McMackin**, Lead Horticulturist for the American Horticultural Society and ecological garden designer; **Sarah Kornbluth**, American Museum of Natural History Field Associate in entomology and native bee expert; **Sam Hoadley**, Manager of Horticulture Research at Mt. Cuba Center; **Thomas Rainer**, landscape architect at Phyto Studio; and **Margaret Roach**, *New York Times* garden columnist, as well as horticulture specialists from the **High Line**, **Brooklyn Bridge Park**, and **Green-Wood Cemetery**.

This public program series is part of the High Line’s annual horticulture celebration. Each year, the High Line selects an aspect of horticulture to showcase through a

variety of engaging educational presentations on and off the park. “Nature in the City,” the 2025 horticulture celebration, focuses on urban ecology, featuring a range of programming and in-park interpretive content that illuminates the network of relationships between plants and urban environments. More information about the larger horticulture celebration will be announced in the weeks to come.

### **Adventures in Ecological Horticulture**

Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 6pm EDT Earth Day (virtual discussion)

[Rebecca McMackin](#), Lead Horticulturist for the American Horticultural Society and former Director of Horticulture at Brooklyn Bridge Park, will present on the importance of gardening from an ecological perspective. Following her recent [Ted Talk](#), *Let Your Garden Grow Wild*, Rebecca will share a 45-minute slide presentation and then answer questions from viewers in conversation with High Line’s Senior Director of Horticulture, Richard Hayden.



Rebecca McMackin; Richard Hayden

Gone are the days when a garden could be ornamental alone. We now recognize the impact that our landcare practices have on the ecosystems around us, and can see the importance of encouraging biodiversity. Thankfully, we do not need to sacrifice beauty when we invite butterflies and songbirds into our gardens. Rebecca McMackin has cultivated gorgeous landscapes in the toughest environments possible: urban parks, school playgrounds, and the sidewalks of New York City. She will take lessons from her work in iconic city green spaces and gardens, and decades of research to share how those of us who are fortunate enough to care for land—from home gardeners and park advocates to professional horticulturists and everyone in between—can do it beautifully and ecologically.

### **Living Landscapes: Supporting Pollinators with Plants and Practices**

Wednesday, June 18, 2025, 6pm EDT Pollinator Week (virtual panel discussion)

Participants include Sarah Kornbluth, American Museum of Natural History Field Associate in entomology and native bee expert; Sam Hoadley, Manager of Horticulture Research at Mt. Cuba Center; and Richard Hayden, High Line Senior Director of Horticulture

### **Future Nature: Rethinking Public Landscapes as Living Infrastructure**

Wednesday October 15, 2025, 6pm EDT (in person and virtual event)

with High Line Network Policy Lab

Featuring Thomas Rainer, Landscape Architect at Phyto Studio, garden futurist, and author of *Planting in a Post Wild World*

### **Celebrating City Nature: Insights from NYC Greenspaces**

Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 6pm EST (virtual panel discussion)

Participants include Margaret Roach, *New York Times* garden columnist and A Way to Garden podcast host; High Line Senior Horticulture Manager, Yuki Kaneko; Rashid Poulson, Director of Horticulture at Brooklyn Bridge Park; and Sara Evans, Director of Living Collections, Green-Wood Cemetery

Further details, including additional speakers, registration information, and Zoom information, will be shared on [thehighline.org](https://thehighline.org).

Friends of the High Line, the non-profit organization that operates, programs, and fundraises for the park, requests a suggested donation of \$20 for a ticket for each virtual program, \$5 for seniors and students. Each program will be recorded and ticket holders will be sent a link to view the program after the event.

### **SUPPORT**

Lead support for Horticulture on the High Line is provided by Amanda M. Burden.

Engaging Nature: Dialogues on Urban Ecology is made possible, in part, with endowment funds from the Diamonstein-Spielvogel Foundation.

### **ABOUT THE HIGH LINE**

The High Line is both a nonprofit organization and a public park on the West Side of Manhattan. Through our work with communities on and off the High Line, we're

devoted to reimagining public spaces to create connected, healthy neighborhoods and cities.

Built on a historic, elevated rail line, the High Line was always intended to be more than a park. You can walk through the gardens, view art, experience a performance, enjoy food or beverage, or connect with friends and neighbors—all while enjoying a unique perspective of New York City.

Nearly 100% of our annual budget comes through donations. The High Line is owned by the City of New York and we operate under a license agreement with NYC Parks.

For more information, visit [thehighline.org](https://thehighline.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), and [Instagram](#).

**@HighLineNYC**

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