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# GARDENING SYMPOSIUM WILL PUT YOU IN A SPRINGTIME MOOD

## 27 YEARS AND GROWING

by [Jim Hanchett](#) | February 16, 2026

Christopher Newport University is preparing to host the 27th annual Gardening Symposium, “The Purposeful Garden,” with a focus on pollinators, plant breeding, and the evolution of agriculture.

The symposium, a traditional sign that spring is finally here, will be held Saturday, April 11, 2026, in the David Student Union on campus, with outdoor exhibits nearby on the York River Residence Hall lawn. The event runs from 7:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

[Tickets](#) are available now with a discount for early registration.

“The symposium this year will give gardeners the insight and inspiration to make their gardens a purposeful and powerful place,” said Katie Shaw, conference coordinator.

This year’s speakers will highlight the many benefits of a home garden. Joseph Tychonievich, noted author of “The Comic Book Guide to Growing Food” and “Rock Gardening: Reimagining a Classic Style,” will discuss plant breeding, followed by a book signing in the student union. Ethnobotanist Nan McCarry and Master Naturalist Nathan Brauner will offer presentations on how gardens serve as an ecological haven for native plants, insects, and other biodiversity.

In addition to the speakers, the symposium offers the annual plant sale and a local vendors market, providing an opportunity to purchase plants that are ideal for Peninsula growing conditions.

The symposium is organized by CNU's LifeLong Learning Society, which is actively seeking sponsors and vendors for the event. The event represents another example of how the University serves the local community. That is one of the priorities of the University's [Strategic Compass](#), a comprehensive plan for the next five years.

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