

## President's Message

As we settle into the winter months here in West Virginia, I'm reminded of the unique beauty that this season brings to our landscapes. While many of our gardens and nurseries take a well-deserved rest, we're all busy planning and preparing for the year ahead.



*Bobby Gompers*  
WVNLA President

WVNLA's board members did some planning of our own last month when we gathered for a strategic planning

session. After a day spent establishing priorities; assessing strengths and weaknesses; and assigning timelines and people to tasks, we have a clearer idea of where we plan to concentrate our efforts. We'll explain more at our Members Annual Breakfast Meeting on February 18 before the Winter Symposium.

The Winter Symposium is a tremendous benefit to our members. It's going to be a wonderful opportunity for all of us to come together, share insights, and get inspired for the upcoming growing season. We'll have some fantastic speakers and plenty of chances to connect with one another.

So as we enjoy the quieter pace of winter, let's look forward to gathering at the Winter Symposium. I can't wait to see many of you there and to kick off another great year for our Association.

*Bobby Gompers owns Highland Landscaping and Highland Nursery in Buckhannon.*

## Hear Interesting and Inspiring Experts at Our Winter Symposium

Mark your calendars for **February 18** and join us at our Winter Symposium and Annual Members Meeting at Embassy Suites in Charleston, WV.

Plan to attend our Members' Annual Breakfast Meeting at 8:30 a.m., where we'll kick off the day with a hearty breakfast, a chance to connect with members and friends and a quick vote on changes to our bylaws.

After breakfast, we'll hear what University of Georgia horticulture and consumer professor Dr. Julie Campbell expects to be popular when she discusses "Horticulture Hot Takes: Trends Shaping the Green Industry."

As always, we'll split into two breakout sessions, one with speakers addressing design issues and the other featuring business topics and concepts.

**Design** speakers include:

Proven Winners® landscape industry outreach manager Jane Beggs-Joles on up-and-coming evergreens and flowering shrubs;



*Jeff Butler*

West Virginia University professor Dr. Kirsten Stephan on exquisite plants and the botanical names that describe them, and;

Riverbend Green roofs project manager/estimator Michael Gagne on green roof design and maintenance.

On the **Profit/Business** side, keynote speaker Jeff Butler will discuss strategies for managing multi-generational workforces in one session and the impacts of digital advancement in the workplace and society in his second session.

Mark Totten, technical services manager for West Virginia's Division of Purchasing, will guide us through the unique challenges of bidding on government contracts.

During our lunch time break, we'll draw names of the lucky attendees who will win generous door prizes and we will introduce our impressive scholarship winners. You'll have plenty of time to visit our vendor tables before heading into the afternoon education sessions.



*Dr. Julie Campbell*

# You're Invited to Breakfast at MANTS

Heading to the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show? We'd love for you to join us for a casual breakfast.

Come chat with WVNLA exhibitors and colleagues while you fuel up for a big day on the floor. We'll be gathering at 8:00 a.m. on January 8

in Room 330 of the Baltimore Convention Center.

All WVNLA members and guests attending the show are welcome—just bring your appetite and good conversation. Hope to see you there. Please visit [wvnla.org](http://wvnla.org) or email [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) to make a reservation.

## Official Notification of Bylaws Vote

Please note that a vote on proposed changes to the organization's bylaws will take place at the upcoming Members Annual Breakfast meeting. The meeting is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. on February 18, just prior to the start of the Winter Symposium at the Embassy Suites in Charleston.

All members are encouraged to attend and

participate in this important decision. Details regarding the proposed bylaw changes will be distributed ahead of the meeting. Your input is valuable to the future direction of our organization.

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for breakfast and this important vote.

## Vendors: Grab Their Attention at Your Symposium Exhibitor Table

Are you a vendor looking to showcase your products or services to an engaged audience? Don't miss your chance to exhibit at the Winter Symposium on February 18 at the Embassy Suites in Charleston.

### Exhibit Table Details

- 8-foot tables, draped in black
- Located in a prime gathering space for

maximum visibility

- Table rental: \$50
- Event date: February 18
- Location: Embassy Suites, Charleston

### Reserve Your Spot

Spaces are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Don't wait—reserve your exhibit table today.

Visit [wvnla.org](http://wvnla.org) for more information and to secure your table.



Connie Beaty of Kotalic Landscaping chatted with customers at her table at the 2025 Winter Symposium.

## SYMPOSIUM (Continued from page 1)

Don't miss this remarkable opportunity to connect, learn, and grow with fellow professionals.

We'll also be distributing the latest edition of our well-received *Landscape Plants for West Virginia*. The first edition print run of 5,000 were quickly picked up by landscapers and eager members of the public.

The cost to attend for WVNLA members is \$50. Non-members attend for \$100. Registration is open at [wvnla.org](http://wvnla.org).

We look forward to seeing you!



# WVNLA Announces \$20,000 in 2026 Scholarships to Landscape Architecture and Horticulture Students

Four in-state students attending West Virginia University (WVU) studying landscape architecture are receiving \$5,000 each, thanks to WVNLA's Marcus W. Rennix scholarship program. The WVNLA board of directors approved their applications at its October 22 meeting.

The WVU scholars will be recognized at the association's February 18, 2026 Winter Symposium in Charleston. "We hope each of these Mountain

State scholars will stay in West Virginia after graduation and contribute to our thriving profession," said WVNLA president Bobby Gompers

## **Joshua Cross** of

Summit Point is a senior majoring in Landscape Architecture, who has worked the past few summers at Reading Landscapes in Winchester, Va.

## **Sophia Folwell** of

Williamstown is a senior majoring in Landscape Architecture and minoring

in Sustainable Design. She spent the past summer interning with Scott Getz, a licensed independent landscape architect in Charlotte, N.C.

**Cameron Mahar** of Charles Town is a junior majoring in Landscape Architecture and Environmental and Community Planning. She has provided analysis and restoration of Bathtub Gully in Morgantown and planning and along the Elk River Trail corridor in Braxton County.

**Reagan Rowland** of Charles Town is a senior studying Landscape Architecture and minoring in Horticulture.

WVNLA prioritizes scholarships to West Virginia citizens wherever they are studying to help

boost the nursery and landscape industry. The

Marcus W. Rennix scholarship applications are accepted through the WVNLA website and due on September 30.

Applicants seeking scholarship funding must be studying horticulture, landscape architecture, or nursery and greenhouse management. Students must be in-state residents who have completed half the required courses in ornamental horticulture or landscape architecture and maintained at least a 2.5 grade point average.

Recently, WVNLA added the George W. Longenecker scholarship, which covers full tuition for the first four

semesters to students entering the Landscape Architecture or Horticulture programs at WVU. Applicants must be in-state residents who are graduating from high school and have been accepted into WVU Davis College's Landscape Architecture or Horticulture programs OR any in-state resident student entering/accepted into their first year of WVU Landscape Architecture or Horticulture program. Applicants must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher.

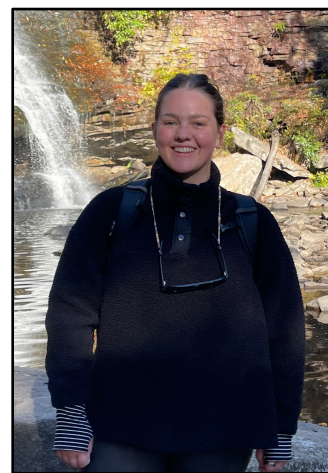
If you know a high school graduating senior who is considering this course of study, please encourage them to apply. The deadline to apply is March 15. For more information on WVNLA's scholarships, visit [wvnla.org](http://wvnla.org).



Joshua Cross



Sophia Folwell



Cameron Mahar



Reagan Rowland

# Membership Drive Deadline Rapidly Approaches

Your window to earn monetary prizes for attracting new members is closing soon. You have until December 31 to snag \$750, \$500, or \$250. Those prizes will go to the top three current WVNLA members who recruit new members. This is a great opportunity to grow our community of



WVNLA members enjoy outings such as a tour of northern Ohio nurseries several years ago.

landscapers, maintenance companies, growers, garden centers, nurseries, horticulturalists, educational institutions, suppliers, vendors and equipment providers. The prizes:

- \$750 to the member who recruits the most new members (more than 5)
- \$500 to the member who recruits the second most new members (more than 3)
- \$250 to the member who recruits the third most new members (more than 2)

Simply reach out to the potential members you know, and have them scan the QR code at right to become a member on the spot and receive buy-one, get-one-year-free memberships. That's a lot of benefits in two years for \$35! Or they can visit [wvnla.org](http://wvnla.org) to join.



Either way, they will need to register as a new user.

New members are vital to the future growth of our organization and collaboration of initiatives. Why not step up your recruiting numbers and ring in the new year with a little cash in your pocket?

## We Welcome WVNLA's Newest Members

### ENVY Pristine Landscapes

*Active member*

Michael O'Shaughnessy  
7103 MacCorkle Ave. SW, PO Box 23  
St. Albans, WV 25177  
304-989-3530 [envypristinelandscapes@gmail.com](mailto:envypristinelandscapes@gmail.com)  
[envypristinelandscapes.com](http://envypristinelandscapes.com)

*Landscape design and construction, landscape and lawn maintenance, hardscape design and installation, landscape lighting, irrigation.*

### Derek Gallagher

*Individual Professional member*

PO Box 3102, Shepherdstown, WV 25443  
[dgallagher@k12.wv.us](mailto:dgallagher@k12.wv.us) 412-370-5911  
*Educator.*

### Growing Seasons Landscaping – GSL

*Associate member*

Justin O'Connor  
786 Morganza Rd, Canonsburg, PA 15317  
412-310-4554 [jj0144@hotmail.com](mailto:jj0144@hotmail.com)  
[gslpgh.com](http://gslpgh.com)

*Landscape construction, lawn and landscape maintenance, fertilization and weed control, hardscape design and installation, Certified Professional Horticulturist.*

### Quiet Cuts – Electric Lawn Care, LLC

*Active member*

Kurtis Conley  
109 Sturm Road, Huntington, WV 25705  
304-617-6877 [quietcutswv@gmail.com](mailto:quietcutswv@gmail.com)  
[quietcutselectriclawn care.com](http://quietcutselectriclawn care.com)  
*Landscape and lawn maintenance.*

### Tussey Enterprises Lawn Service and Landscaping

*Active*

Ryan and Ben Tussey  
150 Shannontown Rd., Beckley, WV 25801  
304-222-2416 [ryan@tusseyenterprises.com](mailto:ryan@tusseyenterprises.com)  
[tusseyenterprises.com](http://tusseyenterprises.com)  
*Landscape construction, landscape and lawn maintenance, landscape lighting, hardscape design and installation, retail garden center.*



## Showcase Your Projects:

# Submit Photos for Our Facebook Spotlight

Are you proud of a recent project completed by your company? We want to help you spread the word. We invite all member companies to share high-quality photos of your standout work for a chance to be featured on our Facebook page.

Getting exposure for your business has never been easier. Simply submit photos of your favorite projects, and we'll handle the rest—highlighting your company, your creativity, and your hard work to our online community.

### How to Participate

- Choose 2–5 high-resolution photos that capture the beauty and uniqueness of your project.



- Include a brief description of the project: give us the specific goals, tell us what made it special, and any challenges encountered and overcome.

- Email your submission to [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) with the subject line "Facebook Project Spotlight."

Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your talent and hard work, reach potential new clients, inspire others and grow your brand. Send in your photos today, and let us help you elevate your business

Questions? Contact us at

[wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) or 304-553-1234.

## WVNLA Board Members Collaborate with WVU Davis College

Recently, some of our board members met with WVU Davis College of Agriculture and Natural Resources leaders, exploring opportunities for future partnerships. Both organizations share the

goal of encouraging young people to consider green industry careers. Thank you, Dean Jorge Atilas and the other Landscape Architecture, Horticulture and Plant Science leaders who met with us.



WVNLA board members John Jett, Patrick Biafore, Michael Biafore and executive director Julie Robinson (front) had a productive meeting with (standing) Jessica Blythe, Kim Barnes, Dean Jorge Atilas and former WVNLA scholar Hayden Swain, a landscape designer now employed by Biafore Landscape Development in Morgantown.



## Point Pleasant Pride

# Students Beautify School's Entrance

WVNLA recently provided funding for a landscaping project that greatly enhanced the front entrance to Point Pleasant Junior/Senior High School. Under the direction of Bud Cottrill, retired owner of ProScape WV and a WVNLA board member, students in the Discover Your Future (DYF) class prepared the soil, planted roses and perennials, and installed contrasting rows of stone and mulch.

Bud said the project entailed the addition of high-quality topsoil, mulch, decorative stone, 15 ornamental grasses, and eight flowering bushes to create an inviting, sustainable, and visually appealing landscape.

The students installed double red shrub roses and Black Lace elderberry (*Sambucus nigra*) which Bud selected to mimic PPJ/SHS's red and black school colors.

"The landscaping area at the front of the school is highly visible to students, staff, families, and community members who use our facility nearly seven days a week for various events and programs," said William Cottrill, principal of PPJ/SHS. He

added that visitors walk and drive past the entrance for school activities, athletic events, community meetings, and county and state functions.

William said the project was a collaborative effort between DYF classes and the Tu-Endie-Wei Garden Club based in Point Pleasant, combining hands-on student learning with community

partnership. DYF students took the lead in project planning, design, and installation, giving them practical experience in landscaping, budgeting, and community service.

"A revitalized and welcoming entrance reflects community pride, promotes environmental stewardship, and provided our students with a

meaningful, real-world learning experience in project planning, horticulture, and teamwork," said William.

Robert Gompers, WVNLA president, said this community project directly contributes to a lasting improvement that benefits students, parents, teachers and the broader community. "The Point Pleasant beautification hits all of our criteria — community and educational impact, student involvement, community collaboration, and facility enhancement," explained Bobby.



Students survey the landscaping they worked hard to create.



Students in the Discover Your Future class work to install the newly landscaped entrance to their school.

## Get to Know Us at a Meet & Greet

We are pleased to invite all members and their guests to our upcoming Meet & Greet event. Join us on February 17 from 6-9 p.m. at the Embassy Suites in Charleston for an evening filled with opportunities to share news, get to know each other, and build lasting relationships.

This Meet & Greet is the perfect opportunity to foster connections within our community, gain insights from our speakers, and expand your professional and social network. Whether you are a new member or a long-time participant, your presence will make a difference.

We encourage you to mark your calendars and invite a guest! Please let us know you are coming so we can plan accordingly. Email [wvnlassoc@gmail.com](mailto:wvnlassoc@gmail.com) to RSVP.

We look forward to seeing you there and making this event a memorable one together.



## Plotting Our Future Direction

WVNLA board members took some time away from their businesses during the busy fall clean-up season to strategize about the Association's goals and path forward. Led by facilitator Mary Ellen Waltmire, the group honed in on projects and initiatives that will most benefit our members and the green industry in West Virginia.



# MANTS<sup>®</sup> 26

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# WVNLA NEWS

P. O. Box 20284

Charleston, WV 25362

## Dates to Note

Jan. 7-9	Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS), Baltimore
Jan. 8	WVNLA Members Breakfast at MANTS, Baltimore, 8 a.m.
Feb. 17	WVNLA Board Meeting, Charleston, 2 p.m.
Feb. 17	Pre-Symposium Meet & Greet, Charleston, 6 p.m.
Feb. 18	WVNLA Winter Symposium and Annual Members Breakfast Meeting, Charleston
Feb. 19	Pesticide Applicator's Recertification session, Charleston
Feb. 19	Certified Professional Horticulturist Exam, Charleston

## Officers & Board of Directors

### *President:*

Robert Gompers – bgompers@aol.com

### *Vice President:*

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Betsy Raynes – betsyraynes@yahoo.com

### *Executive Director:*

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