

2019 National Pesticide Forum Speaker Bios

Speakers are listed in alphabetical order



reduction policy.

Rella Abernathy, PhD, is the Integrated Pest Management Coordinator for the City of Boulder, Colorado. Boulder was one of the first cities to adopt an IPM policy and neighbor notification ordinance for pesticide applications. Boulder has nearly 100 urban parks and more than 47,000 acres of open space land. The city has reduced pesticide use substantially since its 1993 adoption of its first IPM policy, with the goal of reduction and elimination of pesticide use whenever possible. Rella became the IPM Coordinator for the City of Boulder in 2009. With a background in entomology, she worked at the EPA's pesticide program on sustainable agriculture and pesticide



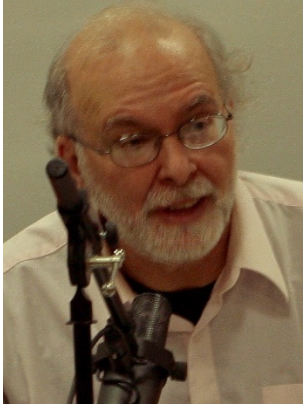
Christina Chan is an urban farmer and educator on Randall's Island. As a native New Yorker and Chinese-American, she is dedicated to bringing the local food movement to the Asian diaspora of NYC by starting an organic diversified Asian vegetable farm in the Hudson Valley. She has an academic background in environmental and conservation science and has farmed organically and biodynamically in London, UK and Hudson, NY.



Josie Connell is the Deputy Park Manager for The Battery Conservancy, where she helps oversee general park operations and manages all programming in The Battery. In 2013, after many years of organic farming in Maryland, Josie started as Lead Farmer for The Battery Conservancy's Battery Urban Farm. Since then, she's developed a passion for sustainably-managed public space and overseen the growing programs which now serve over 6700 NYC school students and hundreds of volunteers and community members every year. Programs teach about sustainability, resilience, and wellness using the park's many organically-managed resources, including perennial gardens designed by Piet Oudolf, vegetable and forest farms, and lawns.



Andrew Cote runs Silvermine Apiary, LLC, home of Andrew's Honey. He and his family maintain beehives not only in Connecticut and New York states, but also in four of the five boroughs of New York City, including atop landmark buildings in Manhattan. Like any active beehives, Silvermine Apiary is a family affair today, with Andrew's brother Mike and nephew Patrick helping with the hives, Norm building equipment, working bees and selling at the markets, and Andrew's mother Polly taking care of the books.



Mitchel Cohen coordinates the [No Spray Coalition in New York City](#), which successfully sued the City government over its indiscriminate spraying of toxic pesticides. In 1997, he organized the campaign to rid NYC public schools of milk from cows injected with genetically engineered Bovine Growth Hormone, and in 2001, he ran for Mayor of NYC as one of five [NYC Green Party](#) candidates. He was editor of the national newspaper Green Politix, and of the NY State Green Party newspaper. Mitchel edited Red Balloon, the journal of the Red Balloon Collective that he cofounded at SUNY Stony Brook, and chaired WBAI radio's Local Board. His writings include: *The Social Construction of Neurosis*, and numerous other pamphlets; *What is Direct Action?*, a book that draws on personal experiences as well as lessons from Occupy Wall Street; *An American in Revolutionary Nicaragua*; and two books of poetry, *One-Eyed Cat Takes Flight* and *The Permanent Carnival*.



Caroline Cox is research director at the Center for Environmental Health in Oakland, California. Previously she served as staff scientist at the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides. Prior to working at NCAP, she had nearly 10 years' experience as a senior research assistant at Oregon State University, where she conducted research on the biological control of agricultural weeds. Caroline serves as a public interest representative to EPA's Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Beyond Pesticides, and writes and speaks regularly as a national expert on the toxicity of, and alternatives to, pesticides.



Peter Del Tredici, PhD, recently retired from the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University after working there for 35 years. He taught in Harvard's Landscape Architecture from 1992 through 2016 and is currently teaching in the Urban Planning Department at MIT. He is the winner of the 2013 Veitch Gold Medal from The Royal Horticultural Society and has studied the ecology and cultivation of the Ginkgo tree since 1988. Dr. Del Tredici is the author of more than 140 scientific and popular articles including the widely acclaimed "Wild Urban Plants of the Northeast: A Field Guide" (2010). His recent work is focused on urban ecology and climate change.



Jay Feldman is a cofounder of Beyond Pesticides and has served as its director since 1981. Jay dedicated himself to finding solutions to pesticide problems after working with farmworkers and small farmers through a 1978 EPA grant to the national advocacy organization Rural America (1977–1981). Since then, Jay has helped to build Beyond Pesticides' capacity to assist local groups and to impact national pesticide policy. He has tracked specific chemical effects, regulatory actions, and pesticide law. He is very familiar with local groups working on pesticides and has helped develop successful strategies for reform in local communities. His work with media has fostered broader public understanding of the hazards of pesticides. Jay has a Master's degree in urban and regional planning with a focus on health policy from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (1977), and a BA from Grinnell College (1975) in political science. In September 2009, U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack appointed

Jay to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), where he completed a five-year term in January 2015.



Andrea J. Filippone, focuses on landscape design for [F2 Environmental Design](#), bringing together the finest elements of design with ecologically sound scientific practice. Ms Filippone is a former professor at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design and principle in the Firm Tendenze Design, which focuses on Architecture and Interiors. Ms Filippone's career has been centered on design and how it can enhance the health and beauty of the environment. This is evidenced by her offices which include a five acre boxwood nursery containing more than 50 cultivars, including a closed loop composting system, and glass greenhouses powered by solar voltaic and

thermal panels.



Eric T. Fleisher focuses on horticulture and soil science for [F2 Environmental Design](#). Mr Fleisher is a national leader in the field of sustainable horticulture, and was the former director of horticulture at Battery Park City Parks Conservancy (BPCPC) in lower Manhattan. Fleisher brought this 37-acre oasis of parkland on the Hudson River to the forefront as the only public garden space in New York City to be maintained completely organically. A 2008 Loeb Fellow at Harvard University, Fleisher is continuing to develop protocols to help landscapes recover from the 20th century's chemical interventions. He is a frequent lecturer on sustainable practices and serves as a consultant for some of the top institutions in the country.



Joan Dye Gussow, EdD, is a nutritionist, educator, writer, and gardener. She was one of the first experts to advocate, as early as the 1970's, that we "eat locally, think globally." Gussow is a leading thinker not just about food, but also about how consumerism damages the planet. By 1971, the year after she published her first book on the relationship between nutrition and children's performance in school, Gussow was invited to testify before Congress about Saturday morning cereal commercials and the confusing, harmful messages they send to children and families about food. In 2010, her garden, where she grows seasonal produce for her own consumption, was flooded by Superstorm Sandy and destroyed. However, Gussow insists that's no reason to give up. In her book, *The Feeding Web*, Gussow explains

why gardening matters: "Food comes from the land. We have forgotten that. If we do not learn it again, we will die. ...Are we not, in fact, more helpless than any people before us, less able to fend for ourselves, more cut off from sources of nourishment? What would we do if we could not get to the supermarket?"



Melinda Hemmelgarn, MS, RD, is a Registered Dietitian, investigative nutritionist, and advocate for social and environmental justice in the food system. She believes in using the power of art and media to influence public opinion, change public policy, and improve quality of life. She is a freelance writer, speaker, and host of nationally syndicated Food Sleuth Radio. Her mission: help people "think beyond their plates"; connect the dots between food, health and agriculture; and promote critical thinking and food system literacy.



Mary Jones is [Toxics Action Center](#)'s Western Massachusetts and Connecticut Community Organizer, where she supports grassroots leaders plan and win local campaigns at the intersection of human health and the environment. Prior to joining TAC, Mary worked as an environmental educator and helped spearhead several community initiatives focused on food access and food justice in Indiana. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies from Earlham College and and MS in Environmental Justice from the University of Michigan.



New York City Council Member, Ben Kallos was praised by the New York Times for his "fresh ideas" and elected in 2013 to represent the Upper East Side, Midtown East, Roosevelt Island and East Harlem along with all 8.4 million New Yorkers in the New York City Council. In his current term 2018-2021 as Chair of the Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions, and Concessions he is focusing on preserving and building new affordable housing, overseeing every deal made by the City closely to ensure New Yorkers are actually getting the affordable housing they need. Council Member Kallos is also working to empower communities in the planning process to create opportunities for minority & women-owned small businesses. His office is open and transparent, with constituents invited to decide on how to spend one million dollars on local projects in the district as well as to join him in a conversation on the First Friday of each month, or he will go to them if they can gather ten neighbors for "Ben In Your Building."

Maria Martins is an urban farmer from the Bronx. She is a graduate of [Green City Force](#), a farming program. She has farmed all across New York with different organizations. Maria hopes to one day own her own farm. She is a youth educator in NYC public schools, educating the students of NY about gardening and healthy eating.



Andrea Mata is the Director of Health Initiatives at the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) where she is responsible for advancing internal and external collaboration to build health into NYCHA's work to create safe, clean and connected communities. The nation's largest public housing authority, NYCHA operates a public housing portfolio of 2,418 buildings and is home to approximately 400,000 low and moderate-income New Yorkers. The Health Initiatives team leads and supports partnership strategies that connect residents to preventive health resources, create healthier indoor environments and cultivate resident leadership in health. Andrea is responsible for a diverse set of projects that includes

NYCHA's partnership in the Farms at NYCHA urban agriculture initiative, smoke-free housing policy implementation, efforts to establish pathways connecting public housing residents to community health worker careers, and engagement and partnerships related to comprehensive mold prevention and integrated pest management.



Charles E. ("Chip") Osborne Jr. is a nationally renowned organic turfgrass expert and a professional horticulturist with 35 years' experience in greenhouse production (as the former owner and operator of Osborne Florist & Greenhouse in Marblehead, Massachusetts). Founder and president of Osborne Organics, also in Marblehead, he has 10+ years' experience in creating safe, sustainable, and healthy athletic fields and landscapes, and 35 years' experience as a professional horticulturist. As a wholesale and retail nurseryman he has firsthand experience with the pesticides routinely used in the landscape industry. Personal experience led him to believe there must be a safer way to grow plants. His personal investigation, study of conventional

and organic soil science practices, and hands-on experimentation led him to become one of the country's leading experts on growing organic turf. Chip is a Beyond Pesticides board member.



Jeff Pettis, PhD, former research leader of the USDA-ARS Bee Research Laboratory in Beltsville, MD and now an independent consultant, Dr. Pettis has focused on improving colony health by limiting the impact of pests, diseases and pesticides on honey bees. His research areas include; IPM techniques to reduce the impacts of parasitic mites and disease, effects of pesticides and pathogens on queen health and longevity, host-parasite relationships and bee behavior. Dr. Pettis serves on several international committees including the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and is current President of the Bee Health Commission of Apimondia. With more

than 35 years of research experience conducted in more than 15 countries; he is frequently interviewed by the media for his opinions on worldwide pollinator declines and honey bee health. Dr. Pettis received undergraduate and MS degrees from the University of Georgia and his doctoral degree in Entomology from Texas A&M University in 1992.



Patrick Pizzo, EdD, M.B.A. holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Concordia University Chicago, a Master of Business Administration and an Advanced Certificate as a School District Business Leader from Long Island University. Dr. Pizzo's dissertation evaluated the impact of petrochemicals on student health and achievement. Prior to working for East Meadow Schools, Dr. Pizzo spent several years as a Deputy Regional Facilities Manager for the New York City Department of Education, supervising the cleaning and operation of 39 school buildings. Dr. Pizzo is a New York City Licensed Stationary Engineer and Refrigeration Engineer.



Warren Porter, PhD, is a professor of Zoology and Environmental Toxicology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Dr. Porter's research has shown that combinations of commonly used agricultural chemicals in concentrations that mirror levels found in groundwater can significantly influence immune and endocrine systems, as well as neurological health in animals. His recent research links pesticide exposure in utero to impaired learning, changes in brain function, and altered thyroid levels. His lab has also shown that lawn chemical mixtures at low levels increase abortion rates in lab animals. Dr. Porter is a Beyond Pesticides board member.



Urvashi Rangan, Ph.D. is Chief Science Advisor to the Grace Communications Foundation where she works on a wide range of communication and messaging initiatives on sustainable food issues. Urvashi is a national spokesperson and advocate on a wide range of food safety risks - pathogens, pesticides, antibiotic resistance, arsenic and other carcinogens – as well as sustainable solutions, product choices and meaningful labels. Urvashi is particularly interested in evidence based narratives that can influence marketplace and policy change. She has won several awards in investigative journalism and communications, participated in a number of public debates on food systems, testified to Congress and other agencies, as well as served as a member of the FDA Food Advisory Committee. In addition to her current role at Grace Communications Foundation, she also consults to foundations and public interest groups. She received her PhD in Environmental Health Sciences from Johns Hopkins University, School of Public Health.



Virginia Rauh, ScD, has been a member of Columbia's faculty since 1984 and is Deputy Director of the [Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health](#). Her work focuses on the adverse impact of exposure to air pollutants, including second hand smoke and pesticides on pregnancy and child health, and the susceptibility of individuals and systemically underserved populations to environmental hazards. She has been principal investigator on numerous major research projects, including studies of the impact of organophosphorus insecticides. Dr. Rauh serves on numerous national committees, including advisory groups at NIEHS, NICHD, and the Scientific Advisory Board for the Environmental Protection Agency.



Routt Reigart, MD, is professor of Pediatrics at Medical University of South Carolina and has conducted university affiliated clinical trials since 1971. Routt is one of the nation's top pediatric expert on pesticides. His research interests include children's environmental health issues, general pediatrics, and toxicology. Routt has been Chair of EPA's Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee, a member of EPA/USDA/Tolerance Reassessment Advisory Committee and the FIFRA Science Advisory Panel, and CDC Chair for the Childhood Lead Poisoning Advisory Committee. He is also co-editor of EPA's Recognition and Management of Pesticide Poisonings.



Kim Richman is the founding member of The Richman Law Group. Mr. Richman is an accomplished trial attorney in both state and federal courts, with experience litigating dozens of trials to verdict in New York City, as well as negotiating class action settlements across the nation. Mr. Richman is dedicated to using the class action device in a creative and activist manner, seeking meaningful change for consumers, non-profits, and ethical businesses alike. Mr. Richman's work is inspired by the principles of Tikkun Olam, "to repair the world." His cases address law and policy issues ranging from public health and sustainability to protecting animal rights and civil liberties. He also focuses on keeping our food systems unadulterated, protecting our privacy online, and defending our environment against corporate interests. Most recently, Mr. Richman is targeting pesticides, including neonicotinoids, in everyday consumer products such as oatmeal and applesauce.



Peggy Shepard is co-founder and executive director of WE ACT for Environmental Justice and has a long history of organizing and engaging Northern Manhattan residents in community-based planning and campaigns to address environmental protection and environmental health policy locally and nationally. She has successfully combined grassroots organizing, environmental advocacy, and environmental health community-based participatory research to become a national leader in advancing environmental policy and the perspective of environmental justice in urban communities — to ensure that the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment extends to all. Her work has received broad recognition: the Jane Jacobs Medal from the Rockefeller Foundation for Lifetime Achievement, the 10th Annual Heinz Award For the Environment, the Dean's Distinguished Service Award from the Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, and Honorary Doctorates from Smith College and Lawrence University.



Ling Tan, is a founding member of [Safe Grow Montgomery](#), an all-volunteer coalition that advocates for safer communities through reducing pesticide exposure where residents live, work and play. Safe Grow Montgomery championed Healthy Lawns Act in Montgomery County, Maryland, the first county with over one million residents to pass legislation that would stop the use of harmful lawn pesticides on public and private properties. She also chairs the pesticide issue at Sierra Club Maryland Chapter, working as part of the coalition which advocated for the successful passage of a landmark state

law banning the retail sale of neonicotinoid insecticides linked to harm in bees. Her current projects include advocating for a state-wide ban on the neurotoxic pesticide, chlorpyrifos, linked to harm in the development of young children, and advocating for the transition to pesticide-free parks and playing fields.



Jess Turner is a Black herbalist, urban grower and educator based in Harlem, NY. Raised in a working-class family in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay watershed, her love of the plant world began in her youth. In her herbal practice she endeavors to increase knowledge of the medicinal plants—often overlooked as mere weeds—that grow abundantly in her bio-region and aid marginalized communities in building land-based resilience practices. She has farmed and studied plants in Hawai'i, Saint Croix, North Carolina, Puerto Rico and the Hudson Valley. Find her on instagram : [@blackvervain](#)



Paul Wagner, certified Master Arborist, Certified Nursery & Landscape Professional, and president of [Greener Pastures Organics](#), a property care company located in Southampton, N.Y. He is also president of [Soil Foodweb New York](#) – a commercial soil-testing laboratory. With over 15 years of experience in science-based organic tree, shrub and lawn care, he has an extensive roster of clients on Long Island. Originally from Babylon, N.Y., he is a Board Certified Master Arborist, as well as a NYS Certified Nursery Professional with a degree in Ornamental Horticulture.



Patricia (Patti) Wood is founder and executive director of Grassroots Environmental Education, a not-for-profit environmental health organization. The organization uses science-driven arguments for clean air, clean water and a safe food supply and advocates for stricter regulation of non-ionizing radiation and chemical toxins. A Visiting Scholar at Adelphi University, Ms. Wood lectures on the environment and related health issues in the College of Nursing and Public Health. Ms. Wood is the co-producer of the documentary film "Our Children at Risk," which explores the latest scientific research linking environmental toxins to children's health problems. She is also the author of "The ChildSafe School," a program which promotes and provides a framework for a comprehensive approach to reducing environmental toxins in schools and "Helping to Heal," a book for parents of children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses.