Designing Attractive Native Gardens for Home & Business

- How do I design a native landscape? Program and data collection
  - Understanding the site
    - Preliminary data
    - Environmental data
    - Cultural/misc. data
  - Understand human/cultural needs
    - Recreation
    - Utility
    - Plantings
  - Developing your long range vision
    - Master planning and layout (using your information gathered earlier)

- Mechanics of native landscape design – Native plant selection
  - Ecological Criteria – Native plants whose ecological requirements are met on site
    - Plant selection – right plant for the right place (Jen's quote)
    - Understanding native plant communities
      - Prairie/Meadow
      - Wetland
      - Woodland/Savanna
    - Consider plant dynamics – Aggressiveness
      - Pioneers
      - Long-lived, slow to establish
      - Invasive species
      - Rare species
      - Resource poor species - Be aware of vegetative spreaders, self-sowers, & non-reproducers
  - Prep Lists & Use Resources – Our website, native plant nursery catalogs, plant reference books, gardening literature

  - Aesthetic criteria – 'Enhanced nature' (bright colors, wider range of attractive species, longer flowering season, four-seasonality, height specific)

    - Plant structure – Growth form of the plant material (Most important component in determining success of a planting)
    - Structure – plant, leaf, & flower shapes (Upright, mounding, bulky, vase, fountain, leggy, etc)
    - Look for plants with distinctive form over a long season (i.e. bold foliage, strong vertical element, etc.)

- o <u>Dominant structural plants</u> - Determine overall feel of the planting (i.e. big bluestem, prairie dropseed, etc)
- o <u>Filler plants</u> – dominate the planting visually and define its average height
    - Shorter mounding plants can hide base of leggy plants
    - Seek a harmonious balance between varieties of structural elements (Oudolf uses 70% structural plants to 30% filler plants)

- Designing combinations – Create contrast
    - <u>Texture</u> – Course and fine textured species (Create depth in your garden by planting course plants in foreground & fine textured plants in the background
    - <u>Color</u> – Concerned with bright color & longer flowering season
        - Needs less emphasis (no hybrids and oversized flowers)
            - o Using naturalistic planting style and native plants leads to more foliage, wider spacing b/w flowers, diluting them in the field of vision
    - <u>Height-</u> Tall and short species
- Repetition & unity (define)
    - o Can best be created w/ trees (large sites), shrubs, and/or dominant structural plants (small sites)

- Project Examples

- Thank you!!