

THE WAGNER FREE INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

Winter 2020
BOTANY SERIES

Ground Plan: Using Plant Functional Groups in Landscapes and Gardens
Professor Karen Snetselaar

This course will be held at the **Pennsylvania Horticultural Society**, 100 N. 20th Street (20th and Arch Streets), Philadelphia, PA.

Dates: 5 Tuesdays and 1 Thursday, January 14 - February 18, 2020

Time: Lectures are held from 6:30 to 7:30 PM

This course requires pre-registration. To sign up, click on the link on the Wagner's course schedule webpage or call 215-763-6529 x23.

Course Description

The amazing diversity of plants can cause challenges for people trying to develop general principles for activities such as ecological restoration, planting for resistance to invasive species, and development of low-maintenance assemblages of native plants for landscaping. Results obtained in one location aren't easily generalized to places where different plant species are found. The functional groups concept gets around this by grouping plants with similar functions in the landscape design or ecosystem. This course will explore the idea of functional groups from several different angles. It will include considerations relevant to home garden planning as well as how well the concept has worked in a few scientific studies.

Course Schedule

1. Tuesday, January 14, 2020 – Plant Diversity

Traditional taxonomic systems of considering plant species and their relationships and how these can guide plant choices for particular needs

2. Thursday, January 23, 2020 - Plants as Landscape Materials

Strategies that landscape designers traditionally have used to categorize plant materials

3. Tuesday, January 28, 2020 - Plant Communities

Ecological systems for categorizing groups of plants often found growing together in non-managed systems

4. Tuesday, February 4, 2020 - Plant Functional Types

Global-scale categorization of plants based on ecological function and traits easily measured using geographic systems

5. Tuesday, February 11, 2020 - Functional groups in restoration

We'll look at a few examples of how the functional group concept has been used to guide ecological restorations

6. Tuesday, February 18, 2020 - Putting it all together

How individual homeowners or caretakers can develop sustainable landscape plans using functional group concepts

Tuesday, February 25, 2020 – make-up class (if needed)

About the Professor

Dr. Karen Snetselaar is Professor of Biology at Saint Joseph's University. She has been a member of the faculty of the Wagner Free Institute of Science since 2000. Her research focuses on fungi and plant disease. She is also interested in urban ecology and in promoting public understanding of science, especially science education outreach into K-12 schools. She leads the Wagner's partnership with Saint Joseph's University, GeoKids LINKS, which brings intensive science learning into North Philadelphia schools.
