



2026 Gather to Grow Speaker Announcement

Additional speakers and pre-conference activities to come! *Titles are subject to change

Pre-Conference Opportunities	Gather to Grow Youth Track	Forest Farming Expo	Poster Session	Book Signing
------------------------------	----------------------------	---------------------	----------------	--------------

Keynote Speakers

Opening Keynote	Graham Rigby	American Herbal Products Association (AHPA)
Evening Keynote	Elspeth Hay	The Local Food Report and <i>Feed Us with Trees</i>

Conference Sessions*

African-American and Diasporic Practice of Agroecology	Nailah Garard	Succotash Gardens, NY
Air Pruning Beds for Trees and Forest Botanicals	Nick Wrenn	Living Soil Tree Farm, VA
American Ginseng, From Farming to Clinical Applications	Dr. Ming Tao Jiang	Marathon Ginseng, WI
Building a forest farm	Andrew and Anna Gedeon	Soulshine Forest Farm, NC
Farm the Forest: Conservation, Opportunity, and Income from the Appalachian Woodlands	Roy Ramey	Avalon Farms, WV
Forest Botanicals in Appalachian History, Culture, and Community	Shannon Bell, Mary Hufford	Virginia Tech & Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network, VA, KY
Forest Farming - Agroforestry Farm Census Survey Results	Gary Bentrup, Kate MacFarland	USDA National Agroforestry Center, NE
Forest Farming Mushrooms and Fungi	Chris Parker	Forest Farmacy, NC
Ginseng Genetics and Implications for Conservation and Policy	Rachel Palkovitz, Others	Penn State, Yale, NH University, PA, CT, NH
Growing Yellowroot Successfully on the Forest Farm	Craig Mauney	NC State Extension, NC
Minimizing and Mitigating Risk on the Forest Farm	Bill Rogers	Double R Bar Ranch and Farm, VA
Plant Energy Yoga	Brandy McCann	Virginia Tech, VA
Research Update: Pricing Trends and Woodland Botanicals	Holly Chittum	American Herbal Product Association, MD
So you want to grow forest farmed Ginseng and other woodland medicinals? A forest farmer's journey	Joe Boccardy	Up the Creek Farm, NC
The Forest In Forest Farming: Site Selection from the Canopy Down	Jim Hamilton	NC State Extension, NC
Value added Products and Affrilachian Herbs	Ruby Daniels	Creasy Jane's, WV
Wild Appalachian Sericulture: Collaborating with North American Silk Moths	Mary Hufford	Livelihoods Knowledge Exchange Network, KY
Wildlife and Forest Farming	Ian Nichols	Virginia Tech, VA

Conference Panels*

Rooted In and Branching Out	Forest Farming History, Culture, and Traditional Practices
Industry Growth & Networking	Supply Chains, Certification, and Workforce Development
Barriers to Forest Farming	Profitability, Land Access, and Underserved Communities
Growing Opportunities Under the Canopy	Experienced Forest Farmers Discuss Realities and Opportunities