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## Gardening with Nature

by Sigrie Kendrick

### BETTER LANDSCAPE CHOICES

## Join the move towards good landscape choices

Sigrie Kendrick - Feb 15, 2023 / 11:00 am



Photo: Contributed

Landscape professionals from up and down the Okanagan met last week in Kelowna to learn more and be inspired about xeriscape from the Okanagan Xeriscape Association.

We have to move away from inappropriate landscape choices such as turf grass, cedar hedges and inappropriate plant selections and instead move toward choices that better mimic our stunning natural Okanagan environment and support our pollinators, birds, and small mammals.

We humans have to relinquish our control issues and let nature do what she does best—heal herself, with our support.

That was brought home to me recently during a day-long, sold-out workshop for professionals in the landscape and nursery industries, organized last week by the Okanagan Xeriscape Association in Kelowna. Participants came from up and down our valley, while the keynote speaker, Egan Davis, travelled from Vancouver to present.

Both of OXA's co-founders, Gwen Steele and Lisa Masini, were in attendance, as were many OXA board members and volunteers. There were municipal workers, golf course managers, irrigation specialists, nursery personnel, Master Gardeners, tree advocates, landscape designers, and many landscape companies also in attendance.

Of course, organizing a conference like that is a time-consuming challenge and I am very grateful to all of our volunteers who put in countless hours of work to pull off the extremely successful event. Thank you all.

Personally, I was pleasantly surprised to see so many young people in attendance, interested in becoming leaders in their field and being educated about the challenges that face this industry as our climate changes.

While all the presenters approached the issues of climate change and sustainable landscapes through a slightly different lens, many of the discussions on the day overlapped and built upon each other as the day continued. Through the day, I witnessed friendships rekindled and new connections being established.

On a personal level, I was able to spend time with Steele, one of the founders of OXA and my mentor, and was able to hear how happy she was with all of our work to further the organization. Everyone in that room owed a debt of gratitude for her vision.

At days' end, a master gardener approached me and said with unmitigated glee that she had found her "tribe." I couldn't have agreed with her more. There was an infectious enthusiasm that permeated everyone in that room and a feeling that we had all found our tribe.

I have attended countless climate conferences over the decades but have never come away with such a feeling of that precious emotion—hope, hope for education that leads to better collective choices for our home, Earth. My faith in humanity is intact.

Give yourself that feeling by joining us. Become a member of the Okanagan Xeriscape Association by visiting our website at [www.okanaganxeriscape.org](http://www.okanaganxeriscape.org). Membership costs \$25 for individuals and \$40 for households and includes many benefits, all of which are outlined on our website.

Memberships taken out prior to March 1 will be eligible to win one of two \$25 gift certificates toward purchases at our annual spring plant sale. Follow us on social media for inspiration on the beauty that is xeriscape and consider submitting photos of your garden to [director\\_smedia@okanaganxeriscape.org](mailto:director_smedia@okanaganxeriscape.org) to be featured in our "Share your Garden" segment.

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