

Kevin Kavanagh

Sunday March 7, 2010, 2 P.M.
Vineland Research and Innovation Centre
Victoria Avenue, Vineland Station

Kevin Kavanagh has worked in the field of conservation for most of his professional life. He continues to work part-time as the Manager of Conservation Internship Programs for the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC). Prior to joining NCC, he worked for 15 years with World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF). While at WWF, he led the conservation science work to help expand Canada's parks and protected areas system and directed programs for the recovery of Canadian species at risk.

Our speaker, the owner of South Coast Gardens, situated along the north shore of Lake Erie in southern Ontario, began gardening in his youth in Quebec's Eastern Townships.

Now designing gardens for clients in the comparative warmth of Norfolk County, Kevin continues to enjoy testing the hardiness of plants from the deep south to assess their suitability for local gardening. Carefully siting plants in microclimates and offering modest winter cover, he has succeeded in growing such southern specialities as Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), Laurel Oak (*Quercus laurifolia*) and Loblolly Pine (*Pinus taeda*) at his nursery location.

As well, he is currently testing the local suitability of nearly 150 varieties of Rhododendrons and Azaleas and 50 varieties of Magnolia.

In the course of assessing plant hardiness, he has developed some simple techniques to help these species survive a Canadian winter and will illustrate these methods in his presentation.

Many gardeners confess that they often look southward to milder gardening zones with some envy at the myriad of tender plants seemingly unsuitable for their own backyard. Applying his experience with gardening in Norfolk, Kevin will discuss some of the native species from neighbouring U.S. states that are well adapted to Ontario gardens. His presentation will also highlight a selection of sub-tropical species ideally suited to outdoor containers that can help to add 'a touch of the south' to any garden design in our warmer months.