



This year's keynote speaker, **Kip McConnell**, Director of Plant Development Services Inc., and the Southern Living Plant Collection, will share his expertise. **“New, Better, Yours – Plant the Newest Best Plants.”** In recent years, new plant varieties and brands have filled your local garden centers, but how do you distinguish the best from the rest? Plant expert Kip McConnell will lead a tour of the newest introductions, including new releases from the Southern Living Plant Collection and Encore Azalea. Kip will discuss proper placement, planting and care tips for each new plant release to solve your landscape challenges.

Since graduating from Auburn University's Ornamental Horticulture program in 1984, Kip McConnell has built a career in the horticulture industry, gathering experience in a range of areas including new plant development, botanical garden management, retail merchandising, landscape design and installation, and nursery supply sales. Best of all, Kip knows about the newest plants coming down the innovation pipeline. He and PDSI are a great resource for plant information and stunning photography as you write your next best gardening post or story!



Sharon Collins is the current host and Executive Producer of Georgia Outdoors, which airs on Georgia Public Broadcasting. She is a national Emmy winning correspondent and former anchor for CNN. In addition to working on the CNN prime time shows *NewsStand* and *American Edge*, she was also a host, producer and writer for CNN's award winning weekly ecological program *Earth Matters*. Collins was awarded an Emmy for her contribution to the CNN special "In Nature's Wake," a program detailing floods in the Mississippi River Valley. She also received a Cable ACE award for her work on a 90 minute *Earth Summit* special. Prior to working for CNN, Collins was Managing Editor for WSET-TV in Virginia, where she also produced and hosted quarterly one hour shows on environmental issues facing the state.



Well known gardener, writer and radio/TV host **Walter Reeves** will speak at this year's Master Gardener's State Conference. Presenting: "Planting Perfectly: Happy Plants Make Happy Gardeners." Walter Reeves is one of the most respected garden gurus in the Southeast and the author or co-author of nine books on gardening. For twenty years, Reeves has hosted "The Lawn and Garden Show with Walter Reeves" Saturday mornings on Atlanta's WSB radio, which is one of the most listened-to radio shows in Atlanta among all thirty competing stations each Saturday morning. He also writes a weekly column for the Thursday Atlanta Journal-Constitution, distributes a biweekly e-mail garden newsletter and maintains an extensive gardening web site. Walter also hosted "Your Southern Garden" on Georgia Public Television for ten years. He is also a strong supporter of the 4-H and Cooperative Extension organization in Georgia. He was a 4-H camp counselor, a 4-H adult leader and is a Master 4-H'er. He has been for many years a member of the board of directors of Southface, the Atlanta-based sustainability organization.