



Designed-to-Engage...Made-to-Last



Spotlight on BELL's Resident Naturalist

Joshua Kaltreider

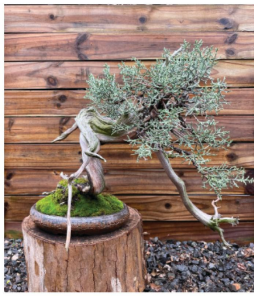


Some of you know BELL Architects for our Historic Preservation and major focus on sustainability. Most of you know that we pride ourselves in our love of our community and how we strive to bring the best results to make our projects places that unify the surroundings. We believe a unified whole is greater than the sum of its parts. For over 15 years, I've been working both personally and professionally to create places that incorporate buildings into the urban landscape. Like many things today, we know that everything is connected, and for our well-being and our planet, I'd like to highlight a few actions that might enhance a future project and note how things will evolve in the future for our profession.

For [Earth Day](#) 2023, we hope that some of the links here and the book suggestions below inspire a few of you to #getoutside and find ways to help #savetheplanet.

As architects, we can have conversations with owners and stakeholders early in the design process to address ways our buildings nurture wellness for humans, animals, insects, and plants. And, in the site and landscape design phases, I'd like to propose we consider various options for utilizing native species and their overall ecological impact. Many of our past natural systems have been broken by modern development and poor landscaping practices. There are plenty of remedies we can all practice to do a better job in the future for a host of reasons. By selecting the appropriate native plantings for a project, we can help restore biodiversity and repair historic food webs between these species. Please check out this quick [4-minute YouTube clip](#) from Doug Tallamy on the opening page of the Audubon site. It's a great summary of the importance of native plantings and should bring to light the potential we have as architects/designers/informed citizens to help.

Here's a fantastic list of [trees and shrubs](#) ranked by the number of butterfly/moth species they host. All of these are the natural way we can help insects and birds, but as architects and designers, we can do more. Each year, millions of migrating birds die due to window strikes. We ask our clients to please consider including such things as [bird-safe glazing](#), especially if they are to be successful in attracting birds. The District of Columbia is considering the [Migratory Local Wildlife Protection Act](#) aimed at ensuring bird-friendly designs be [incorporated into new construction](#). And, many cities have adopted turning off their lights at night, especially during migrating seasons. The [International Dark-Sky Association](#) has many guidelines for designers to help protect wildlife from light pollution.



Kaltreider's native species bonsai, a Virginia juniper. Approximate age 250 years, time in training 7 years.

Along with the contributions native species can make to our projects, I've also found the practice and mindset to be enriching to my personal space. Sourcing, planting, and caring for native species in my yard has been a cinch and the positive side effects have been surprising. After switching to all natives, I've seen lower water bills, more wildlife, longer flowering periods, and in general a keen interest from the neighbors. While a circuitous path, my front yard project has introduced me to many of the neighbors and spread a sense of community. Along the same lines, as a dedicated bonsai practitioner, I see room for introducing the concepts and benefits of native species into the practice. Bonsai originates from East Asia, and understandably, makes use of primarily Japanese/Chinese tree species, which are considered exotics in the United States. As a club member in [Northern Virginia](#), I continue to introduce the idea that we can practice the art form while being respectful to history and its forerunners while also using native species. By no means can I take credit for this push toward natives, but I can help introduce it to those around me.

The two books mentioned below provide insight into how our lives interconnect with nature, be it plants, insects, or fungi. Both books provide final chapters with truly hopeful and specific ways we can make a difference - now. Thank you in advance for reading about my passions — actually our firm's. We are here to help.

Cheers,



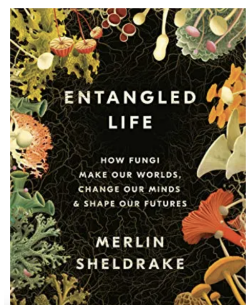
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Fun fact - Did you know the Japanese word "bonsai" is actually two words? When translated into English "bon" means "tray" (or pot), and "sai" means "tree" or "planting", which literally translates into "planted into a shallow container" or more casually "tree in a pot".



Silent Earth: Averting the Insect Apocalypse
by Dave Goulson

This an accessible, fascinating, and important book that examines the evidence of an alarming drop in insect numbers around the world. "If we lose the insects, then everything is going to collapse," Goulson warned in a recent interview in the New York Times—beginning with humans' food supply. Read more about **Silent Earth** [here](#).



Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures
by Merlin Sheldrake

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • A journey into the hidden lives of fungi—the great connectors of the living world—and their astonishing and intimate roles in human life, with the power to heal our bodies, expand our minds, and help us address our most urgent environmental problems. Read more about **Entangled Life** [here](#).

Both books are in stock at Politics and Prose.

Order now

Please support local bookstores
The link above takes you to
Politics and Prose

Garrison Elementary School

Washington, DC

This is a perfect project of ours to showcase how getting outside and being in nature reduces stress.

Here's a link to a recent [NPR broadcast](#) on the topic.

Read more about Garrison Elementary School [here](#). Landscape Architects: MKSK Landscape Architects.



Hill Center at Old Naval Hospital

Washington, DC

Here's an interesting article about [why historic buildings can be beneficial](#) for wildlife, granted it's about castles in England, but you get the idea.

Read more about Hill Center [here](#). Landscape Architects: OVSLA

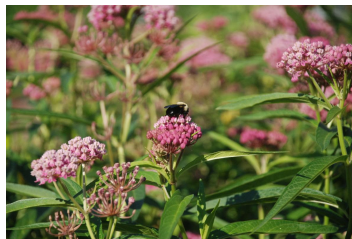


University of the District of Columbia: Green Roofs and Rooftop Architecture

Washington, DC

Intensive climate-friendly vegetation grown on the roof require little care, but provide coverage that helps to naturally cool the building. The roof also incorporates a pollinator garden to support bee health, as honey bees play an important part in agricultural and horticultural ecosystems. Read more about the project [here](#).

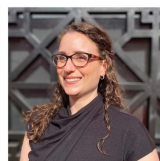
Landscape Architects: MKSK Landscape Architects/Sandy Farber – Master Gardener/BELL Team



AIA DesignDC 2023: The New Historic Preservation
CONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY
May 4, 2023 (virtual)



SCOTT KNIGHT LEED AP
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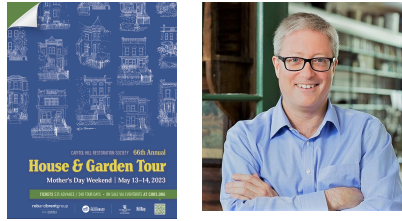


ERIN HOLDENRIED AIA, LEED AP BD+C, SEED
Director of Sustainability |
Project Architect



Join **DAVID BELL** for a tour of Hill Center
Capitol Hill Restoration Society's House & Garden Tour
May 13 - 14, 2023

[Buy tickets](#)



DowntownDC Parks Master Plan

In the fall of 2021, the BID embarked on a year-long process to inventory and reimagine the 27 acres of parks and open spaces that exist throughout DowntownDC's 138 blocks. The effort engaged with the U.S. National Park Service, the city's Department of Parks and Recreation, and DowntownDC stakeholders to identify challenges and opportunities to improve parks, open spaces, and streetscapes to make the public realm more engaging, adaptable, connected, authentic, and iconic. Read the plan [here](#).



DowntownDC Business Improvement District

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