

OSKAR VON MILLER FORUM

Press release

Eco-Metropolis – Deploying Nature’s Technology in Urban Landscape Design

A lecture by Mark T. Simmons, University of Texas, Austin, USA, on October 23, 2014 at 6.30 pm at the Oskar von Miller Forum

In the last few decades humans have switched from being a rural to an urban species. This has negatively impacted our health and well-being, and in the face of climate change, made us more vulnerable to heat waves, air pollution, floods and wildfire. Fortunately, we can exploit the characteristics of our regional ecosystems and apply this natural technology to landscape design to optimize ecological, environmental and sociological performance. Technologies like urban prairies, sustainable turf, green roofs, green walls, urban forestry, and restored vegetated roadside shoulders and medians are at our fingertips. Our city landscapes represent an opportunity for engaging natural technology which is free, and readily available. So let’s start deploying it in our landscapes.

About Mark Simmons

Mark Simmons Ph.D. is Director of Research and Environmental Design for the Ecosystem Design Group at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas. He graduated from University of Cape Town, South Africa with a M.Sc. in Botany, and received his Ecology Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. His research and environmental design projects focus on creating and rebuilding landscapes and urban green infrastructure to improve ecosystem services.

Scientific research projects include: green roofs, green walls, roadside revegetation, prescribed fire, native turfgrass, urban prairies, and urban storm-water management. He works with multidisciplinary design teams for local and national clients including private developers, city and state authorities, the US Army Corps of Engineers, NASA and the National Park Service. Projects include: George W. Bush Presidential Center; San Antonio River Mission Reach Restoration; University of Texas Campus Masterplan; and numerous mixed-use, sustainable urban developments, highway improvement projects and restoration of urban prairies. He teaches university and professional courses on ecological landscape design and sits on several technical committees including the Landscape Architecture Foundation and the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES™).