



Issue 4, 2025

Trunkline

ELEVATING THE
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INDUSTRY:

*Skills, Strategies,
and Success*

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Vision: A Message from Our Board President



Cameron Passey
UNLA President
2025

A few weeks ago I was leaving a project in Park City, Utah and decided to go back to the Salt Lake Valley over Guardsman's Pass. My drive was spent in awe as I found myself admiring the amazing landscapes and the variety of fall colors that were all around. The vibrant reds, yellows and oranges, along with groupings of evergreens scattered throughout, made me think of what an amazing place we call home.

For most of us, the beauty I experienced that afternoon, surrounds our everyday lives and many of us contribute to creating spaces in our cities and neighborhood's, that make our neighbors and friends feel the way I did that afternoon. Although the fall season brings afternoons like this, its cooler temperatures and shorter days can also create a little panic as we think of the many things we need to get done before the leaves all fall and the weather turns.

This time of year can also bring a chance to take a breath and look back on the year we had and plan for what's next. This has been the case with the Utah Nursery and Landscape Association. Our vision is to advance the Green Industry in the State of Utah, by providing educational opportunities and promote the intellectual, business and social interests of you... its members. As we look back over the year, there has been much accomplished in this pursuit.

Throughout this year many of you have experienced the value in the

associations efforts to offer education, conferences, certification programs and opportunities to maintain licensing in your respective fields of expertise. Many have also participated in networking events that have brought us together socially and have been able to learn from each other in different settings.

We have also had opportunities to hear from our local and state political leaders on topics that effect our members. We have been engaged in offering feedback and education and plan to continue to monitor and keep our members informed on topics that are effecting the green industry.

The progress towards making this Vision a reality is made possible by our partners and those who volunteer, serve and make the industry better by giving back. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside those on the Board, past Presidents, Executive Directors, and others who give of their time and talents to raise our industry. I continue to learn from each of you.

As we look ahead to the upcoming year, we will continue to create opportunities for members to participate and grow through advocacy efforts, education and events that will strengthen us. All of this will begin with our Annual Utah Green Conference, January 5th-7th.

Each year, this conference provides an opportunity to invest in the education and development of employees, network with other professionals, vendors, business owners and ultimately experience what an amazing industry we are a part of. I am looking forward to seeing many of you there.

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Trunkline is published four times each year as a membership benefit to inform UNLA members of the opportunities and actions of the association and its members.

Send submissions to:
Trunkline c/o UNLA Office
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INTERNET RESOURCES
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**UTAH GREEN
CONFERENCE
2026**

UTAH GREEN
Mountain America Expo Center
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**CONFERENCE
SCHEDULE**
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Monday–Wednesday, January 5,6,7, 2026

Early registration closes on January 2, 2026

Highlighted Speakers

Brent Bateman

Arboriculture Track:

Monday, Jan 5 (10:30 – 11:20 am)



Brent Bateman is a recovering government employee, who in his new job enjoys significantly less stress and significantly more moolah. Brent is an attorney with the law firm of Dentons Durham Jones Pinegar, where he practices property, land use, zoning, and development law on behalf of a few downtrodden

millionaires and many of America's even lower-trodden property owners. Brent proudly now causes the stress to his government chums that he once was required to absorb.

Brent has been an attorney for 25 years, and in that time has learned a few things: (a) He takes his work very seriously, but not himself; (2) He's getting old and no longer has the time nor the interest in working with jerks; (3) Most lawyers are not the Sith. Lawyers are actually the Jedis of society (although some do occasionally turn to the dark side). Lawyers let you think that they are the Sith because lawyer jokes are so good.

Presentation Description:

Brent is happy to be returning to the Utah Green Conference to discuss speak about the Law of Trees. One would think that such a presentation would be pretty short, since trees neither have individual rights, nor standing to file a lawsuit. But indeed an

invigorating body of law exists on the subject, and folks who live the *green life* should know it. Brent will also discuss neighbors and explain why some of your neighbors are psychos.

Taun Beddes

Turf Track:

Monday, Jan 5 (2:30 – 3:20 pm)



Taun Beddes has spent most of his life in Utah, where his passion for agriculture and horticulture began at a young age. As a teenager and college student, he worked on farms harvesting vegetables, hauling hay, and helping with dairy operations. He later spent 15 years at a local nursery before joining Utah State

University Extension, where he has served as a horticulturist for the past 18 years. His work focuses on landscape horticulture and commercial fruit production. Thirteen years ago, Taun succeeded the legendary Larry Sagers as host of the KSL Greenhouse Show, a role he continues to enjoy today.

Presentation Description:

Newer and Problematic Weeds in the Utah Landscape

I will focus on field bindweed, white briony, wild parsnip, American licorice, White Top, and a few others.

Dan Bridenstine

Arboriculture Track:

Wednesday, Jan 7 (8:30 – 9:20 am)



Daniel is a Board Certified Master Arborist. Raised in Cache Valley and a graduate from Utah State University, Daniel has worked on tree projects around the country as a subject matter expert for Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive tree pests in Colorado, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois, an advanced wildfire risk

reduction specialist in California, and now he is back home working on Utah's trees and enjoying time with his wife, sons, and hunting dog.

Presentation Description:

Learn the basics of tree selection, proper pruning, and working safely around utility lines from a Board Certified Master Arborist.

Chad Burdette

Turf Track:

Wednesday, Jan 7 (10:30 – 11:20 am)



Chad is a dedicated professional in the landscape industry, with almost 10 years of experience working with TruGreen. He brings 25 years of B2B experience, specializing in account management, delivering exceptional customer service, and providing budget-friendly outdoor solutions.

Passionate about building strong client relationships and offering cost-effective, eco-friendly landscape services, Chad is committed to enhancing communities and natural environments.

Presentation Description:

Healthy Green Spaces in Lawn and Landscape

This presentation explores the importance of creating and maintaining healthy green spaces within lawns and landscapes. It highlights how well-designed green areas contribute to environmental sustainability, improve air and water quality, enhance biodiversity, and support mental and physical well-being.

Key topics include soil health, native and drought-tolerant plant selection, integrated pest management, and water-efficient irrigation practices.

By adopting sustainable landscaping practices, homeowners, businesses, and communities can enjoy beautiful outdoor environments that are both eco-friendly and resilient.

The presentation emphasizes practical strategies to promote long-term landscape health while meeting aesthetic and functional needs.

David Dickey

Garden Center Track:

Tuesday, Jan 6 (8:30 – 9:20 am)



David W. Dickey, owner of DWD Plant Sales, brings over 25 years of experience in the nursery industry. A graduate of Ohio University with a bachelor's degree in plant biology, David represents several leading nurseries—including J. Frank Schmidt & Son, Northwest Shade Tree, and Woodburn Nursery &

Azaleas—serving the Intermountain region (CO, UT, AZ, NM, and western KS & TX).

David began his career at Willoway Nurseries in Cleveland, Ohio, where he spent 12 years developing the Northern Illinois and Wisconsin markets. He later relocated to Denver to open the Colorado territory, expanding into Nebraska and Iowa. In 2013, he joined J. Frank Schmidt, a move that opened the door to additional partnerships with premier growers nationwide.

Having worked across multiple regions, David offers broad and diverse insight into the national nursery industry. Known for his energy and genuine passion, he works tirelessly to help both his customers and nursery partners thrive.

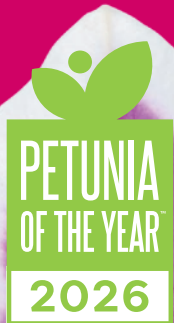
David is an active member of the Plant Select board of directors and also volunteers with the Colorado Nursery & Greenhouse Association. His love of plants—and the people who work with them—drives his ongoing commitment to helping the industry succeed.

Presentation Description:

The west is a harsh place to be a plant, and it takes a special kind of plant to survive all that Mother Nature will throw at you out west. With the future getting dryer, weather patterns getting more unpredictable, and as we move development out to harsher and less ideal locations, we need to find plants that can take a wide variety of conditions, soil types, and temperatures. From Plant Select to Proven Winners and some of the old tried and true, we will discuss great trees, shrubs, and perennials that will thrive in our western climate.

(continued on page 7)

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Neal Dombrowski

Design Track:

Monday, Jan 5 (12:30 – 1:20 pm)



Neal Dombrowski has been a horticulturist with Red Butte Garden since 2010 working in the First Impressions and the Water Pavilion Gardens, and the Natural Area. He specializes in native plants, landscape design, ecology, and restoration of native habitats. He has a degree in Botany from Weber State University

and is originally from Massachusetts. He lives in Salt Lake City with his partner, two girls, and dog, Rue.

“Restoration of Utah’s Native Landscapes” will focus on every step of the process from disturbance to planting, watering, and timing expectations, focusing on natural landscapes with low to no water.

Michael Guidi

Design Track:

Tuesday, Jan 6 (8:30 – 9:20 am)

& (9:30 – 10:20 am)



Michael Guidi is Manager of Horticulture Research Programs at Denver Botanic Gardens, where his work spans plant breeding and trialing, ecological horticulture, plant exploration, and the design of urban green infrastructure. His research investigates how vegetation established from seed can

enhance biodiversity, improve urban resilience, and provide human well-being benefits, particularly in the semi-arid landscapes of the American West. Michael holds a master’s degree in Ecology from Colorado State University. His current passion is designing low-cost, high-diversity seed mixes that restore habitat, enrich urban infrastructure, and expand the role of ecological horticulture in cities.

Session 1 Description

Shrouded In Light: Naturalistic Planting Inspired by Wild Shrublands

Shrublands exist all around us, thriving in almost any environmental condition, from the desiccating sunshine of the endless sagebrush steppe to the deep, private shade of moist forests. These diverse and inspiring ecosystems serve as perfect models for our gardens. Beyond their inherent beauty, they provide nurturing habitats and demonstrate resilience in the face of a changing climate.

Join Michael Guidi, coauthor of *Shrouded in Light: Naturalistic Planting Inspired by Wild Shrublands* (Filbert Press, 2024) as he explores a glorious spectrum of wild shrublands and discover the design strategies behind translating these magnificent plant communities into your home garden.

Session 2 Description

Sowing Resilience: Designing Beautiful and Diverse Plant Communities from Seed

Direct seeding with custom seed mixes offers an affordable, efficient, and sustainable way to establish vegetation in urban and residential landscapes. Yet, in semi-arid climates, this approach is often dismissed as impractical due to perceived aesthetic limitations, difficulties supporting high germination rates, and ongoing management challenges. At the same time, seeds provide unparalleled access to a wide range of plant species, creating opportunities to build high-diversity, ecologically valuable communities that would be far more costly or logistically difficult to establish with container-grown plants.

This session shares experiments and case studies testing the feasibility of direct seeding in urban contexts, with a focus on the semi-arid West. We will explore seed mix design, site preparation, and soil conditions that influence both ecological outcomes and aesthetic performance. Together, these findings highlight how direct seeding can support resilient, beautiful, and biodiverse plantings that benefit people, pollinators, and urban ecosystems.

(continued next page)

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Greg Hand

Irrigation Track:
Monday, Jan 5 (8:30 – 9:20 am)
& (9:30 -10:20 am)



Greg Hand started Backflow Training Services in 1998. He is a licensed Master Plumber and has served on the State of Utah Plumbing Code Advisory Board. He holds an AAS Degree from Salt Lake Community College, Professional Educators License for the State of Utah, Class III Backflow Certification,

Previous Utah Chapter President of the American Backflow Prevention Association 1996-1998, and the Utah Chapter Meritorious Service Award in 2002.

He taught in the Apprenticeship Plumbing Program at Salt Lake Community College for 30 years, at nights, along with being a full-time plumber with over 40 years of experience in the plumbing field. He has plumbed everything from houses to large commercial and industrial jobs. He retired from Salt Lake Community College as a plumber/pipefitter/welder. He sold Backflow Training Services in 2024 to Utah Plumbing and Heating Contractors.

Greg has taught backflow certification classes since 1985, including courses at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, Eielson Air Force Base, Fairbanks, Alaska, Wyoming Rural Water, Glenrock Wyoming, Dugway Proving Ground, Utah, Utah National Guard, various state, government, and engineering entities. Students have come from as far away as Texas, Alaska, Hawaii, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Wyoming, New Jersey, even England and Korea to take his classes.

Presentation Description:

Will be presenting the requirements for backflow protection on landscape irrigation according to all Utah State plumbing codes and Division of Drinking Water rules.



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Kelsey Johnson

Irrigation Track:
Monday, Jan 5 (12:30 – 1:20 pm)



Kelsey has been with RWAU since 2020, serving as both a Cross Connection Instructor and Conference Coordinator. Certified as a Cross Connection Control Program Administrator through the Utah Division of Drinking Water, she brings expertise in water safety and program management. She holds a

bachelor's degree in Recreation Resource Management from Utah State University. Based in Layton, Utah, Kelsey enjoys spending time with her family, building with Legos, and exploring the outdoors through camping.

Presentation Description:

Learn how proper backflow prevention keeps drinking water safe, prevents costly mistakes, and helps landscapers stay in compliance with local water purveyors.

Dr. Paul Johnson

Turf Track:
Monday, Jan 5 (1:30 – 2:20 pm)



Paul has been working and playing the amazing little plants we call turfgrass for most of his life after being transplanted from an Iowa farm. His mentors at Iowa State University, University of Minnesota, University of Nebraska, and turf managers around the world have helped him shape teaching and research

towards understanding the urban landscapes. Paul is professor and the assoc. director of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station at Utah State University (USU).

Presentation Description:

What is soil health and its relation to the health of

the turfgrass you manage? That's what we will be exploring in this presentation. In short, I'll aim to provide science-based information, practical interpretations, and also dispel misconceptions that are common in the turf industry. I will simplify what you need to do in order to have a healthy turf "system" that meets your performance goals.

Jack Karlin

Turf Track:
Tuesday, Jan 6 (8:30–9:20 am) & (9:30–10:20 am)



Jack Karlin is the Principal at Karlin Consulting LLC serving as Executive Director of Turfgrass Water Conservation Alliance (TWCA) since 2014 after earning his Bachelor of Environmental Science from Oregon State University specializing in water science and policy. He volunteers as a small grants reviewer for the Oregon Water-

shed Enhancement Board (OWEB) region (03). He is also a Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL). He is a proud teacher's husband and father of two.

John Kennedy

Keynote/Special Session & Garden Center:
Tuesday, Jan 6 (10:30 am – 12:00 pm)
& (12:00 – TBD);
Wednesday, Jan 7 (9:30 – 10:20 am)
& (10:30 – 11:30 am)



John Kennedy is a professional speaker, strategist, and author with over 25 years of experience delivering impactful presentations and consulting services across the horticulture industry. As co-founder of BoomerWrangle LLC, alongside his wife Souny, John specializes in strategic planning, team building, leadership

development, and digital solutions tailored for independent garden centers and small businesses. His

(continued next page)

work has reached nearly 500,000 audience members worldwide, and his innovative intranet platforms and coaching programs have helped organizations achieve operational excellence and employee engagement. John's background in hospitality and tourism informs his dynamic approach to business growth, and his motto—"Make it Better!"—drives both his professional and personal life.

Presentation Description:

Becoming Great

This presentation dives into the **execution of leadership**—transforming understanding into action. Attendees will explore the four **stages of building and leading an invincible team**, learn how to track success, and apply leadership strategies to maintain momentum in the face of economic uncertainty and workforce challenges. Designed for emerging leaders, this session equips participants with practical tools to elevate team performance and drive sustainable growth into 2026 and beyond.

ConnectSpace

In this dynamic session, John Kennedy and Sarah Polzin explore how innovative garden centers are

transforming team performance through smart workplace solutions. Featuring the ConnectSpace™ platform, they'll share actionable strategies for improving employee engagement, streamlining training, and boosting retention. Whether you're already using ConnectSpace or just curious, this session offers practical insights to help your business work smarter—not harder—and make the most of every minute.

Coaches Corner / Round Table Discussion is an interactive session led by John Kennedy that focuses on practical strategies for business and leadership success. Centered around the theme of **"Putting First Things First,"** this session explores how prioritization and intentional focus can elevate team performance and customer satisfaction. John will also share insights on **delivering an exceptional customer experience**, followed by a **round robin discussion** where attendees can engage directly, share challenges, and exchange ideas with peers and coaches. This collaborative format encourages open dialogue and actionable takeaways for immediate implementation.

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Paul Mulder

Garden Center Track:
Monday, Jan 5 (2:30 – 3:20 pm)



Paul Mulder is a Utah certified nursery professional and industry veteran of 30+ years. He's worked in retail, wholesale and growing capacities in both Utah and California. He currently manages the sales team at Glover Nursery in West Jordan and maintains a rose garden at his Fairpark home with over 100

different rose varieties.

Presentation Description:

This year Paul is talking about his favorite topic - growing roses in northern Utah - where he'll be discussing general rose care and maintenance and focusing on the newest class of rose - hybrid shrub & landscape roses - to explore what makes them different from more traditional varieties.

Sarah Polzin

Garden Center & Design Track:
Monday, Jan 5 (9:30 – 10:20 am)
& (3:30 -4:20 pm)



Sarah Polzin of Down to Earth Garden Center, located in small-town Wisconsin, has worked full time in her family business since 2019. Combining her passion for creating sustainable business systems and encouraging employee growth, resulting in a thriving small business community. Sarah has worked with her husband, Ben, creating a multi-million-dollar operation, actively living out the philosophy of lifting others as you climb.

Sarah graduated from University of Wisconsin Stout with a bachelor's degree in business management and spent 15 years in the medical profession working for Mayo Clinic, St. Jude Medical, and Abbott

Laboratories in the field of Electrophysiology. She left the medical field and went back to her small business roots to work alongside her husband in expanding their garden center and family of shops, going strong for 28 years and counting. AS the Co-Owner and Retail Operations Vice President at Down to Earth, Sarah works diligently to create an environment that promotes both employee and business growth.

Presentation Description:

Is Anyone Listening?! Does Anyone Care?! Cultivating a Culture of Engagement at Your IGC

Creating team unity and engagement throughout a multifaceted IGC can be challenging! Dive into the messy middle to create systems that cultivate an ownership mindset among your team; systems of engaging mile markers that lead to exciting prizes and rewards; systems that will ultimately set the team up for success for years to come. Learn The DTE Way that transformed the culture of a 28 year old IGC into an engaged community of leaders over the last two years. The S.P.E.E.D Approach for success: Survey, Plan, Execute, Evaluate, Direct!

ConnectSpace

In this dynamic session, John Kennedy and Sarah Polzin explore how innovative garden centers are transforming team performance through smart workplace solutions. Featuring the ConnectSpace™ platform, they'll share actionable strategies for improving employee engagement, streamlining training, and boosting retention. Whether you're already using ConnectSpace or just curious, this session offers practical insights to help your business work smarter—not harder—and make the most of every minute.

Gene Pouly

Arboriculture Track:
Monday, Jan 5 (8:30 -9:20 am)



Eugene (Gene) Pouly was founder and president of the E. F. Pouly Company, a landscape management company, providing landscape and tree care services for 43 years. He is currently President of Pouly Consulting Inc.

Gene is a Certified Grounds Manager (CGM) and past presi-

(continued next page)

dent of the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS) and has served as the representative for PGMS on the ANSI A300 board for 13 years.

He is an ISA Certified Arborist, a member of the American Society of Consulting Arborists (ASCA) and a Master Technician through the Ohio Green Industry Association.

He holds a degree in Landscape Contracting & Construction from Ohio State University.

Presentation Description:

An introduction to the new consolidated ANSI A300 Tree Care standards and an explanation on how implementing the ANSI A300 standards can provide tree care companies with a system where the sales person specifying the work, the crew doing the work and the client are all on the same page for achieving the objective of the job by streamlining the work specification, work proposal and the work order process, thereby reducing costly errors on the job and needed callbacks.

Lucas Proctor

Garden Center Track:

Monday, Jan 5 (10:30 – 11:20 am)



Lucas Proctor has been working in the green industry for over 20 years and has been an ISA Certified Arborist for 15 years. With a Bachelor of Science in Plant Production from BYU-Idaho he has tried his hand at growing hundreds of different species in nurseries and gardens over the years in many different

climes. He has designed landscaping for a multi-acre fantasy park (to remain unnamed), designed the tropical plants used in pop-up Jurassic World events all over the world, and currently is the Horticulture Manager at Loveland Living Planet Aquarium in Draper where he has been over 6 years.

Presentation Description:

In our quest to simulate nature as plant growers, sellers, and influencers, we need to try and take lessons from nature in biodiversity. In the long run, we have responsibility to create a sustainable place to live and will see great benefits in painting with a broader palette.

Kristina Veenker

Arboriculture Track:

Monday, Jan 5 (9:30 -10:20 am)



My love for the nursery industry began as a child following my dad around at the different nurseries he's worked at. I became fascinated with the process of buying and selling plants and decided to pursue that as a career. I got my start in the industry at a wholesale tree grower in Oregon and saw what it takes

for large trees to come to market. I really enjoy talking to people about plants so when I moved to Utah 15 years ago, I got a job at a retail nursery and became familiar with Utah's somewhat challenging growing conditions. My passion became educating people about choosing the right plants for their area and being successful in creating beautiful outdoor spaces to enjoy. I am currently the buyer for Thrive Nursery in American Fork, and I spend my time talking to customers, sourcing plant material and meeting with nursery owners and growers to find the best plants for our state.

Presentation Description:

New and Upcoming Cultivars Changing the Landscape

My goal with this presentation is to help those of us working in the nursery business to better understand the plant selection at your local nursery and the process it takes to get there. Whether you are a landscape architect, arborist, designer or someone that just really enjoys shopping for plants, my hope is that you will come away from this knowing how certain varieties end up at the nursery and how to be flexible with your plans and allow for educated substitutions by those of us that work with these plants on a daily basis.

MOUNTAIN AMERICA EXPO CENTER
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ConnectSpace

Special Session



JANUARY 6, 2026
12:00 PM



JOHN KENNEDY

Step into ConnectSpace at the Utah Green Conference—a dynamic session designed for green industry professionals and businesses ready to grow smarter, stronger, and more connected.



SARAH POLZIN

UTAH GREEN CONFERENCE



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2026

UTAH GREEN CONFERENCE

Tuesday, January 6

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**DANIEL
MARTINEZ**

HYDRO RAIN/
HUSQVARNA

12-12:50 pm

“Electrical Trouble
Shooting”

1 DOPL-Pro, 1 IA, 1 QWEL, 1 UCNP



**DANIEL
MARTINEZ**

HYDRO RAIN/
HUSQVARNA

1-1:50 pm

“Sprinkler Design”

1 DOPL-Pro, 1 IA, 1 QWEL, 1 UCNP



**JACOB
CARLEY**

SUNLINE
LANDSCAPES

2-2:50 pm

“Best Planting Practices
for Trees & Shrubs”

1 DOPL-Pro, 1 ISA, .25 IA., 1 UCNP

MOUNTAIN AMERICA EXPO CENTER, SANDY UTAH

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**DANIEL
MARTINEZ**

HYDRO RAIN/
HUSQVARNA

12-12:50 pm

“Diagnóstico de
Problemas Eléctricos”

1 DOPL-Pro, 1 IA, 1 QWEL, 1 UCNP



**DANIEL
MARTINEZ**

HYDRO RAIN/
HUSQVARNA

1-1:50 pm

“Diseño de
Rociadores”

1 DOPL-Pro, 1 IA, 1 QWEL, 1 UCNP



**JACOB
CARLEY**

SUNLINE
LANDSCAPES

2-2:50 pm

“Mejores Prácticas de
Plantación para Árboles y
Arbustos”

1 DOPL-Pro, 1 ISA, .25 IA., 1 UCNP

MOUNTAIN AMERICA EXPO CENTER, SANDY UTAH



UNLA
UTAH GREEN

Utah Nursery and Landscape Association
PO Box 1073
Riverton, UT 84065-1073



Calendar

DECEMBER 2025

- 12 Pesticide Webinar** "How to Use the Fun New AIMS Program for Pesticide Licensing While Avoiding Common Mistakes" online 10:00 - 11:00 am

JANUARY 2026

5-6-7 Utah Green Conference

- 5 Women in the Green Industry Luncheon**
11:30 am - 1:30 pm

UNLA Awards Reception
4:30 - 5:30 pm

For more information go to www.utahgreen.org/events