SFA GARDENS ANNUAL REPORT SEPT 1 2015 – AUG 31 2016

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GREG GRANT

DAWN STOVER

ELYCE RODEWALD

KERRY LEMON

DUKE PITTMAN

A PICTORIAL HISTORY – 2015-2016
SFA GARDENS ANNUAL REPORT 9-01-2015 to 8-31-2016

Introduction

SFA Gardens continues as a recognized center within Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas, USA. SFA Gardens is a multi-faceted public garden developed within SFA’s Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. The gardens are managed by Associate Director Dr. David Creech (1/2 time) and 4.5 FTE staff, both professional and classified, volunteers and student workers. SFA Gardens cover 68 acres on the SFA campus -10 acres in the Mast Arboretum and Jim and Beth Kingham Children’s Garden, eight acres in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, eight acres in the Gayla Mize Garden, and 42 acres in the Pineywoods Native Plant Center and Jimmy Hinds Park. SFA Gardens plays a role in the maintenance and development of the 60-acre SFA’s Recreational Trails and Gardens, which is adjacent to the Gayla Mize Garden.

Community support is provided by a “Friends of SFA Gardens” group with about 200 members and the SFA Gardens Advisory Board, which meets quarterly. SFA Gardens enjoys a great corps of volunteers. In the past year, our Environmental Education volunteers generated 595 hours for a total value of $13,958.70. The Gardens Volunteer Corps generated 1630.6 hours, worth $38,368.02, with most of the focus on growing and managing the two plant sales per year. Thus, the total volunteer hours for the SFA Gardens set a record this past year: 2225.6 hours’ worth $52,326.72. While State of Texas funding assists with operations and maintenance expenses, the gardens staff raise significant funds through plant sales, a robust grant-seeking effort, and six endowments that support the gardens. The Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building was constructed at the PNPC in 2014 after a successful campaign to raise the funding. In the past year, we have added additional outdoor lighting to facilitate parking and visitor access during the evening programs. The building demonstrates environmentally sensitive methods of construction and operation.

A new development since 2014, the Jimmy Hinds Park, received funding in the past year from Barbara Finney, who was the daughter of Jimmy Hinds, the first Agricultural Professor at SFA. In the past year, this project saw the construction of a vineyard, the placement of a PVC- sign that recognizes the contributions of Jimmy Hinds, the very first Agriculture instructor at SFA (Barbara Finney’s father), and the installation of four benches in the weeping bald cypress treehenge.

Plant diversity and adaptability are key focal points in developments in each of the four main gardens, offerings in the two plant sales, and in the public outreach by staff through lectures, public events, publications, and tours. Environmental education for future generations is another main initiative that reaches nearly 14,000 a year in a broad spectrum of programs for ages K-adult.
STATUS OF GOALS FOR PAST ANNUAL REPORT: 2015-2016

Dave Creech

HIGH PRIORITY: With the Introductory Crops course being accepted as a “core” science course, the SFA Gardens use of the Horticulture facility behind the Agriculture building came under space pressure. After discussions with the two Horticulture professors in Nov 2015, it was agreed that the SFA Gardens staff would move to the PNPC – and that a campaign for the construction of a new greenhouse would be undertaken. The project received the permission of the Site Modification committee at SFA. The campaign received the permission of the President shortly thereafter. At the close of the year (Aug 31, 2016), the project had achieved about $35,000 in donations.

Pittman/Creech: Bracing for the Gayla Mize Garden Gazebo – add the eight rafters that are under the Ag building – in-house roof creation – IN PROGRESS

Creech/Dawn: Pecan variety planting at Pecan Acres Park – a City/SFA Gardens collaboration – DONE, MAPPED, AND HEALTHY

Creech: Continue Acer skutchii evaluation at the SRC and replant any losses. DONE

Creech/Greg: Add two rows of blueberry germplasm to the plots at the N end of the PNPC and tie in to existing irrigation system. DONE

Creech/Greg: Now that gutters are installed, design and install rainwater capture at the Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building – UNDER STUDY

GM Garden plantings expanded – GM Garden drainage project – PLANTINGS CONTINUE, DRAINAGE WAY DONE

Pittman/Creech: Expand Kiwi Evaluation Plots - DONE

Creech: Expand Coliseum Parking Lot plantings – DONE

Dawn/Greg: Expand Wildflower Plantings along Starr Avenue – augment with plugs of appropriate perennials – develop signage – DONE, NEEDS SIGNAGE

Work with Physical Plant and donor to get GM Well Water to RM Garden – NOT ACCOMPLISHED.

Increased focus on pollinator/prairie habitat creation at the SFA Gardens. Search for grants and other sources of funding to facilitate this goal. IN PROGRESS

Develop a Wildflower PVC sign and install there. NOT ACCOMPLISHED
Continue to expand woody plant and hardy chrysanthemum trials – post excel files and data collection on web. NEED TO REINVIGORATE MUM TRIAL

Host second Industry Day event in June 24, 2016 DONE

**PNPC and JIMMY HINDS PARK**

Expand and enhance the profile of the PNPC’s rare, threatened, and endangered plants conservation program utilizing the Elisabeth Montgomery Endowment funds. NOT ACCOMPLISHED

Assist campaign for new horticulture greenhouse facilities for SFA Gardens.

Greg: Make at least 20 K at both spring and fall sales. DONE

Replace plants lost in 2015 drought. WORK IN PROGRESS

Trail maintenance – SOME PROGRESS, NEED MORE

Repair and enhance landscape irrigation. NOT ACCOMPLISHED

Expand nursery herbaceous pad. DONE

Replace GH mist nozzles. DONE PLUS BOTTOM HEAT REWORKED

Develop a parking plan to allow vertical parking. NOT ACCOMPLISHED

In bottomland, create 5 glades . . . sunlit circles already located, to be planted in winter 2016. NOT DONE

Plant more native plants down Sara’s branch in appropriate spots and provide chicken wire tubes for protection from deer. SOME ADDITIONS BUT NEED MORE.

Paint the new Jimmy Hinds Park boardwalk floor. DONE

Repair bridges and boardwalks in the PNPC with paint and grit. DONE

Return to an annual Privet control effort in bottomland. NOT DONE

Benches at JH Park placed – Interpretive sign at JH Park placed. DONE

New red iron ore rock trails at JH Park expanded DONE

Structure on Oxbow Island at JH Park created with seating – IN PLANNING

Oxbox planting with wetland plants. IN PLANNING
Muscadine Grape Vineyard at Jimmy Hinds Park built, planted and with irrigation. DONE

Signage for the muscadine planting. NOT DONE

Elyce Rodewald

Focus on vegetable gardening with after-school program

Increase education assistant position to full time in order to maintain current level of educational programming

Kerry Lemon

Help develop program for gardening with youth.

Assist in developing positions and job descriptions to maintain current level of educational programming.

Assist in development of curriculum with a focus on endangered plant species for summer camp and third grade field trips.

Organize educational programming files and create curriculum folders for after-school activities.

GOALS FOR 2016-2017

Dave Creech

Raise $150,000 for new greenhouse range at PNPC and build the new greenhouse.

Coordinate with ONCOR to deal with construction of new pylons for the high voltage lines.

At the PNPC, develop a parking plan to allow vertical parking. Install gate at S end PNPC to the Raguet Elementary Parking Lot and provide lighting.

In PNPC bottomland, create 5 glades . . . sunlit circles already located, to be planted in winter 2016.

Return to an annual Privet control effort in PNPC bottomland. Spot treatments.

Add JH Park, add one more row of Muscadine grapes.

Hire Kerry Lemon’s replacement
Hire Greg Grant’s replacement.

Step up conservation research utilizing the Elisabeth Montgomery Endowment fund.

Increase advertising and promotion of the SFA Gardens Industry Day.

Jimmy Hinds Park – add an additional row of muscadine grapes because of recent acquisitions. Working with TAMU’s Justin Scheiner on this project. Add a small orchard of fruit trees starting with plum and persimmon varieties. Oxbow island structure at JH Park.

At the GM Garden, assist Eagle Scout Luke Stanley with a “labyrinth Project”

At the GM Garden, finish the gazebo project which involves additional bracing, a roof cap and a weather vane.

Moody plot work expanded to the full two acres of property. Cooperate with Steve Wagner, Josephine Taylor and Ken Farrish on their research projects.

TDA grant of $35,000 expected in December 2016 will be used to expand our golden kiwifruit research plots and work with TAMU’s Tim Hartmann.

Two International trips. One trip to New Zealand in May 2017 to visit during the kiwifruit harvest season to observe harvesting, processing, packing, and marketing strategies there. Second trip to China in July 2017 to present paper at the International Botanical Congress, visit ornamental nurseries and blueberry and kiwifruit farms in central China with colleagues of mine at the Nanjing Botanical Garden.

Dawn Stover

First, we’ll need to build a big, brand new greenhouse at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center. Our funding is in place, so we’re in good shape for this to happen – hopefully in April of 2017.

I’d like to create more “designed plant communities” in the SFA Gardens, using the style described in my new favorite book, “Planting in a Post Wild World” by Thomas Rainer and Claudia West.

I hope to continue our efforts to collect locally sourced native plants to be able to distribute appropriate plant material for our area, and to use in creating more pollinator gardens here at SFA and in Nacogdoches.

Lastly, with Greg’s departure, I’m hoping to pull off a successful plant sale under only my direction. We have a wonderful army of volunteers and student workers who really make the sales happen, but Greg and I did share Commander in Chief duties.
Elyce Rodewald

Increase gardening component of after school program

Review and revise learning excursions to incorporate more inquiry learning

Integrate new education coordinator into all aspects of environmental education program
FALL 2015 AND SPRING 2016 PLANT SALES

SFA Gardens hosts two plant sales per year. They serve as a major source of funding for staff salaries and program development. This has surfaced as the record year since our plant sale began in spring 1986. $39135 for Fall 2015; $60113 for Spring 2016. $99,248 total for fiscal year.
2015-2016 LES REEVES LECTURE SERIES

SEPT 17 - Greg Grant / Dawn Stover - Is this the best Plant Sale in Texas or not? A Plant Sale Preview - SFA Gardens, Nacogdoches, TX - ggrantgardens@yahoo.com, dawnstover@sfasu.edu

OCT 8 – Leon Young - Making Dirt Work For You - SFA Soil and Plant Tissue Testing Laboratory, Nacogdoches, TX – lyoung@sfasu.edu

NOV 12 Heath Lowery - Numinics, the unabridged story of bee collapse and what we should all do. NuFarm Americas Inc., Hockley, TX heath.lowery@us.nufarm.com

DEC 10 – Dave Creech - Changes brewing at SFA Gardens; interesting plants, plans, and people. SFA Gardens, Nacogdoches, TX - dcreech@sfasu.edu

Jan 14 - Adam Black, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL and Manager of Xenoflora LLC. Made In Taiwan - Collecting Amazing New Plants For Gulf coast Landscapes. adamblack@ufl.edu

Feb 11 – Danny Carson, Director of Gardens, Moody Gardens, Galveston, TX. Evolution Of The Moody Gardens Landscape. dcarson@moodygardens.org

Mar 10 – Tom Cox, Cox Arboretum, Canton, Georgia. Breaking New Ground With Conifers For The South. coxarb@bellsouth.net

Apr 14 - Dr. Mike Arnold, TAMU, College Station, Texas. Sifting Ashes For A Phoenix And Other Tales From The Former TAMU Horticulture Garden. ma--arnold@tamu.edu


June 9 – Greg Grant, PNPC, Research Associate, SFA Gardens, Nacogdoches, TX. Show Me Your Garden and I Shall Tell You What You Are -Twenty Years Creating One View. ggrantgardens@yahoo.com

Jul 14 – Ethan Guthrie, Atlanta Botanical Garden, Gainesville, GA. Yes, We Really Are The Atlanta Botanical Garden - But We’re The One In Gainesville, Georgia. eguthrie@atlantabg.org

Aug 11 - Laura Miller, County Extension Horticulturist, Fort Worth, Texas. Ornamental Plants For A Drier And Hotter World. immiller@ag.tamu.edu
DAVE CREECH (Sept 1, 2015 – Aug 31, 2016)

International


Presentations


Creech, David. Oct 22, 2015. “Experiences in international Agriculture.” Guest lecture to Leon Young’s class. 15?


Creech, David. Dec 10, 2015. Adventures in China. Dave Kulhavy class. 15

Creech, David. Dec 17, 2015. Landscape design, a primer. TAMU landscape short course, College Station, TX. 24.

Creech, David. Jan 26, 2016. The natives are restless. MG training on native plants, Montgomery county Master Gardeners, Conroe, TX. 82

Creech, David. Feb 16. Figs for East Texas. 45


Creech, David. March 17, 2016. New and exciting woodies for the Gulf South. Arboretum, Houston, Texas. 54


Creech, David. Apr 7, 2016. Genetic improvement of woody ornamentals and propagation tips and tricks. Guest lecture to a Horticulture class. 35.

Creech, David. April 19 and Apr 20, 2016. New, Interesting and Underutilized Woody Ornamentals for the South. Two lectures at Moore Farms and Botanical Gardens, South Carolina. 163 in two lectures.


Total: 2316
Publications

Submitted to Plant Systematics and Evolution: Yuhong Zheng; Lei-hong Wang; Jun-xian Yang; Li Fu; David Creech. "Phylogeny of Elaeagnus L. based on morphology in China". Pending.

Creech, David. 2015. Influence of Three Pruning Strategies on Growth and Form of Three Taxodium Clones. HortScience 50(9): S33


<< At the end of this year, Greg Grant accepted a position as a Texas Agrilife Horticulture Extension Agent for Tyler, a really terrific high impact position. We hate to lose Greg but there’s one thing for sure. Greg’s stamp on Horticulture in the Pineywoods will continue. For SFA Gardens, we continue forward. One door closes, another door opens. >>

Presentations:

November 12, 2016. “The Hole Truth” to the Nacogdoches County Master Gardeners Lunch and Learn. 87 in attendance.

November 6, 2016. “Heirloom Gardening for the South” to the Nacogdoches Garden Club. 23 in attendance.

October 10, 2015. “Long Live the Kings” to the 100th anniversary celebration at King’s Nursery in Tenaha. 103 in attendance.


September 11, 2105. “Let Me Introduce You” to the Houston Plant Conference in Houston. 100 in attendance.


September 21, 2015. “Restoration Celebration” to the Texas A&M Landscape Design Study Course in College Station. 175 in attendance.

February 9, 2016. “Plant Breeding” to SFA horticulture class in Nacogdoches. 9 in attendance.

February 27, 2016. “Heirloom Gardening in the South” at the Mobile Botanic Garden in Mobile Alabama. 120 in attendance.

March 5, 2016. “Picking and Grinning” to the Gregg County Master Gardener Spring Conference in Longview. 200 in attendance.

March 19, 2016. “Greg Grant Introductions” at The Arbor Gate Nursery in Tomball. 25 in attendance.
April 14, 2016. “Gardening for the Birds and the Bees” to the Nacogdoches County Master Gardeners Lunch and Learn. 88 in attendance.


August 6, 2016. “Seed Saving” at the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center in Nacogdoches. 40 in attendance.

**Total Lecture Attendance: 1,172**

**Tours:**

September 23, 2015. PNPC tour to Christ Episcopal School students. 9 in attendance.

February 19, 2016. PNPC tour to international students organization. 12 in attendance.

March 30, 2016. PNPC tour to Gregg County Master Gardeners. 15 in attendance.

May 31, 2016. Arcadia garden tour to Garrison Methodist church group. 11 in attendance.

May 28, 2016. Arcadia bird walk to Tyler Master Naturalists. 20 in attendance.

**Total Tour Attendance: 67**

**Publications:**


Grant, Greg.  *Gardening Truly is the Best Medicine*.  July/August 2016.  Volume XXXV.  Number 5.

Dawn Stover
Research Associate SFA Gardens

EDUCATION


Jan. 8, 2016 – “The Importance of Pollinators” – presentation, Flora Garden Club, Nacogdoches, 30 attendees

Feb. 4, 2016 – “Greenhouse Production” – guest lecture, SFA HRT 213 Annuals and Perennials, 15 attendees

Feb. 18, 2016 – Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden tour, San Augustine Master Gardeners, 10 attendees

Mar. 5, 2016 – FFA Nursery and Landscape Invitational Career Development Event at Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo – contest judge – 150 student attendees

Mar. 10, 2016 – “Perennials for Pollinators” – presentation, Nacogdoches County Master Gardener Lunch and Learn Seminar, 75 attendees

Mar. 30, 2016 – Mast Arboretum tour, Harrison Master Gardeners, 10 attendees

Apr. 5, 2016 – Mast Arboretum tour, Smith County Master Gardeners, 15 attendees

Apr. 7, 2016 – “Seed Germination” – guest lecture, SFA HRT 416 Plant Propagation, 10 attendees

Jun. 4, 2016 – “50 Nifty Perennials for Southern Gardens” – presentation, American Rose Society, Gardens of the American Rose Center, Shreveport, LA, 50 attendees

Jun. 23, 2016 – “Wild About Color: Planting for Pollinators” – presentation, Horticultural Field Trials, Overton Experiment Station, Overton, TX, 150 attendees

Jul. 11, 2016 – “#zone8mafia” – presentation, Cultivate ’16, Columbus, Ohio, 50 attendees

TOTAL:  645

Publications


COMMUNITY OUTREACH (120)

Nov. 6, 2015 – Texas Arbor Day – plant 99 pecan trees at Pecan Acres Park, 35 volunteers present

Feb. 26, 2016 – Green Forest Work Volunteer Tree Planting, NISD Ag Center, 110 trees planted, 35 student and community volunteers present

Apr. 30, 2016 – Garden Tour of Homes, Garden Capital of Texas committee, 50 attendees

Wrapped up S.F.A. Sculpture for All campaign. Started this next biennial campaign which will be installed in 2017.
Elyce Rodewald - Environmental Education Programming

Education Team
Coordinator: Elyce Rodewald
Assistant Coordinator: Kerry Lemon
Student Workers: Kelsey Brawner, Alex Marquez, Faith Reyes, Trenton Stiefel
Intern: Dalton McGinnis, Diana Chavez, Haley Jacobs
Education Assistants: Jocelyn Moore, Rebecca DeBardelaben, Savanna Jenkins, Chris Suehs, Izzabella Daniels,
SFA Garden Volunteers: Jackie Grant, Ray Goehring, Kathy Greer, Mary Beth Hagood, Ruth Heino, Kay Jeffrey, Mary Louise Jobe, Marianne Young, Cindy Sims, Pam Neely, Merry Anne Bright, DC Brown

Presentations
Coordinated and/or presented educational programs for SFA Gardens for over 13,000 participants. See table below.

Highlights include weekly after-school programs for Boys and Girls Club Members and Raguet Elementary School students, hands-on environmental education field trips for all Nacogdoches ISD elementary students grades K-5, outdoor family fun days, bi-monthly garden seminars, four weeks of summer camps and special events including the Little Princess Tea Party, Juneteenth Celebration, Healthy Nac Slam Jam and two FFA Career Development Events (horticulture judging contests).

SFA Student Involvement
Environmental Education programs at SFA Gardens advanced the University mission by enhancing excellence in teaching, learning, creative work and service and by creating new learning opportunities for SFA students. Three students completed required internships by participating as teachers in the after-school program or summer camp experience. Students enrolled in Dr. Alan Soward’s and Leah Kahn’s science methods courses also gained hands-on experience in curriculum development and
instruction in an outdoor classroom through their participation in Bugs, Bees, Butterflies and Blossoms and Wild About Science.

**Community Partners**

**Training**
At SFA, attended SMUV training, CPM training, receipts and deposits training. Attended Learn, Go, Eat, Grow curriculum training workshop in January and August.

**Service**
Serve as co-chair of nutrition committee on the Healthy Nacogdoches Coalition
Served as member of Increasing K-12 Connections committee for SFA strategic planning

**Grants and Funding**
Managed Texas Parks and Wildlife COOP grant. Grant was completed 2016.

Managed SFA Garden Membership drive and supervised collection of fees for educational programs.
## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

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Data shown are from September through August each year.
DUKE PITTMAN

Duke Pittman is our lead Arboretum Technician. He is responsible for organizing the work load of our student assistants in the garden, irrigation, landscape maintenance, project development and keeping staff morale high.

Kerry Lemon
Assistant Education Coordinator
September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016

Kerry Lemons held the SFA Gardens Assistant Education Coordinator position and she retired in August 2016.

REMEMBERING GREG GRANT AND KERRY LEMON

With two staff members moving on, I have included this document that appeared in the SFA Gardens Newsletter:

And then I looked around and they were gone . . .

Greg Grant, our long time plantsman at SFA Gardens has taken the Smith County Texas Agrilife Horticulture Extension position in Tyler, Texas. We will miss him professionally and miss him personally. Greg goes back to the early days of the
Arboretum and has seen this garden adventure grow and prosper. Greg’s mark on this garden’s psyche will last forever. We were lucky to have him here. Greg’s talents are enormous. He’s an award winning horticulturist, writer, conservationist, and seventh generation Texan from Arcadia, Texas. His roots and mine in Shelby county means our kinship is set in concrete. Greg is author of numerous books including, 1) Greg’s Garden-A Pineywoods Perspective on Gardening, Nature, and Family and 2) Texas Fruit and Vegetable Gardening and 3) co-author of Heirloom Gardening in the South, Texas Home Landscaping, and The Southern Heirloom Garden, and, 4) he’s finishing up The Rose Rustlers with Dr. Bill Welch. He also writes the popular "In Greg’s Garden" column for Texas Gardener magazine and writes a “Greg’s Ramblings” monthly blog at arborgate.com. His articles have also appeared in The San Antonio Express News, The Dallas Morning News, Country Living Gardener, Southern Living, and Neil Sperry’s Gardens where he wrote for almost 30 years. He is a graduate of the Benz School of Floral Design, a member of the Garden Writers Association of America, and a lifetime member of the Native Plant Society of Texas, the Texas Bluebird Society, the Big Thicket Association, and the Southern Garden History Society where he serves on the board of directors.

No one is more eager to learn than Greg Grant. With a Masters in Horticulture from TAMU and post graduate classes from LSU, NCSU, and SFASU, that fact is obvious. Greg has had a varied career path. He was a horticulturist with Mercer Arboretum and San Antonio Botanical Gardens, an instructor at Stephen F. Austin and Louisiana State Universities, a horticulturist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, director of research and development at Lone Star Growers, and with the Antique Rose Emporium. Never known for staying in one spot too long, we can proudly say we had him the longest.

If you look at plants introduced that actually made a mark in the industry and the market, Greg wins the prize. Just a few of those include the Blue Princess verbena, dwarf pink Mexican petunia, Gold Star esperanza, Laura Bush and VIP petunias, John Fanick phlox, Stars and Stripes pentas, Pam’s Pink honeysuckle, Lecompte and Flora Ann vitex, Henry and Augusta Duelberg sages, Big Momma and Pam Puryear Turk’s cap, Peppermint Flare hibiscus, and the Marie Daly, Nacogdoches (Grandma’s Yellow), and Climbing Belinda’s Dream roses. He was presented the Superior Service Award by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the Lynn Lowery Memorial Award by the Native Plant Society of Texas for horticultural achievement in the field of native Texas plants. Heirloom Gardening in the South was a Garden Writers Association Silver Award recipient.

Greg has traveled extensively to hundreds of botanical gardens throughout the United States and Europe and has given over one thousand invited and, of course, very entertaining lectures. His garden, farm, and plant introductions have been featured in

Until this leap to Tyler, Greg has lived in deep East Texas in his grandparent’s restored dogtrot farmhouse, where he tends a small cottage garden, his Rebel Eloy Emanis Pine Savanna and Bird Sanctuary, a little flock of laying hens, and terriers Acer, Lizzie, Mollie, and Sonny. Greg, we will miss you.

Kerry Lemon

When Kerry Lemon first approached me about retiring I said, “I forbid it.” Well, that didn’t work. Since 2000 she has made a huge impact on our environmental education found the resources to put her on short term contracts, primarily to handle varied summer camps for kids. She has served as camp director for the SFA Pineywoods Camp since 2002 and in that long span she has touched the lives of over 1000 children, ages 4-15. But enough was enough, and finally in July 2009 we placed her in a new part time position, Assistant Educational Coordinator for the SFA Gardens Environmental Education Programs. This was initially through a grant through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Community Outdoor Outreach Program. Since then, there’s been a whirlwind of activities that have connected kids to nature. She served as Project Director of Nacogdoches Naturally, an outdoor adventure program that includes after-school, family weekend, and summer camp programs. As the coordinator of after-school programs, she provided kids with a healthy dose of hands-on science learning, exploring nature, developing outdoor skills and gardening. Kerry also managed outdoor family day through an Earth Day Celebration, Breakfast on the Farm (Farm and Forestry Day), Great Backyard Bird Count, and an Outdoor Adventures Day. Kerry is part of the reason our program has grown from just a few kids impacted to over 15,000 school age kids getting a chance to connect with the environment and horticulture. Kerry is certified in the National Archery in the Schools Program, Angler Education with TPWD, Project WILD, Project Learning Tree, and the Leopold Project. The list goes on.

After growing up in Austin, Kerry lived for seven years in California and spent a year studying in Madrid, Spain before returning to her southern roots and moving to East Texas in 1988. Kerry’s experience as an educator spans over three decades, including work with special needs infants, in pre-school and elementary classrooms, training adults with developmental disabilities, teaching English as a second language, providing environmental education to children and adults, and homeschooling her own two children. Kerry has been certified to teach a variety of environmental education curricula including Project Wild, Project Aquatic Wet, Project Learning Tree, Keep Texas Beautiful-Waste in Place, and Leopold Project. She is certified through TPWD
in Angler education and as an archery instructor through the National Archery in the Schools Program. In addition, Kerry was trained in Wilderness First Responder through the Wilderness Medicine Institute and is currently certified as a canoe instructor through the American Canoe Association. She speaks Spanish although she admits to being a bit rusty these days.

Kerry has lived with her husband and two children in a hand built off-the-grid home for the past 22 years. This untraditional lifestyle has contributed to her love of nature and commitment to sustainable land ethics. She has gardened extensively for many years learning about growing flowers and vegetables in the trenches and arriving at the conclusion that there is always so much more to learn from the plant world. Her family has traveled across the country (as well as to Mexico and Greece) camping, backpacking, canoeing, and hiking. She has a deep connection with the natural world and an appreciation for the gift of “wilderness” in her life. For her time here, she’s been personally and professionally committed to connecting children and families with the natural world through outdoor educational and recreational experiences. We will miss her.
Our first visiting scientist, Yuhong Zheng, ‘Jade’, arrived in August 2015, our first visiting scientist for 2015-2016. She is an associate professor from Nanjing, China on a one year scholarship from the Chinese Academy of Science. She will be tackling various research projects. One project involves looking at the DNA of our amazing collection of Taxodiums, bald cypress.

The Gayla Mize Gazebo gets a facelift on the South side of the Agriculture building – the fine carpentry of Chris Dempsey

Trialing garden gets a face lift - Chris Dempsey in action smoothing our raised beds in the trialing garden at the North end of the Mast Arboretum – Spring 2016
Big thank you to Sam Pollard’s Texas Pecan Nursery for donating 15 varieties and multiples of each - and for the City allowing SFA Gardens to add over 100 trees to Pecan Acres Park. One or two waterings in the summer of 2016 and they survived!

July 8 2016. Inspecting the *Hibiscus dasycalyx* research plot at Mill Creek Gardens with Amber Miller, USFW, Austin, TX – and Clay Sunda, S.B. Hayter Trust land manager. This is part of our endangered plant research program. We call it the “Three R’s” – Rescue, Research and Reintroduction.

Ethan Guthrie, Atlanta Botanical Garden, lecturing at the Ina Brundrett Conservation Education building. The building serves as the center of our educational effort which includes the monthly Theresa and Les Reeves lecture series, special seminars and workshops, and our environmental education program for K-12.
The Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building is the center of all the SFA Gardens educational programming.

Crape myrtle trials at SFA Gardens are by the Coliseum parking lot

Blueberry variety and selection trials at the North end of the Pineywoods Native Plant Center
Anne Sullivan is our new Program Associate and she came on board in May, 2016. She is responsible for understanding and managing the myriad of accounts of the SFA Gardens, the many details of the varied programs of the Garden, and dealing calmly with crisis management.

Kerry Lemons retired in August 2016 and her effort report has been meshed with the report of Elyce Rodewald. She held the SFA Gardens Environmental Education Program Coordinator position and we will miss her.
Taxodium Evaluation at SFA Gardens continues with a great growth year for trees along LaNana creek. T406 continues to be our favorite – no knees, nice form, and very resistant to Cerocporidacea leaf blight. May be the best of the hybrid cypress we are evaluating from the program at the Nanjing Botanical Garden in China.

Aug 8, 2016 – field expedition to the home of Magnolia pyramidata

The fig collection at SFA Gardens along LaNana creek and the intramural field is now back in action after a year in limbo. We’ve added sand, improved the drainage and have accumulated new varieties for the planting. Image in Aug 2016.
August 9, 2016 – Greg Grant supervising our nursery pad expansion. New irrigation system on a controller and a fine firm platform for plant growing.

Gayla Mize Garden – new plants and drainage improvement in the garden. Koromo Shikibu in full bloom on the University Drive face of the garden

Mast Arboretum – a new trialing garden – new plants and better maintenance
GOLDEN KIWIFRUIT – THE FIRST EVER CROP IN TEXAS!

Brock Vinson in Sept 2015 harvesting our second and biggest crop of golden kiwifruit! Plots are along LaNana creek and Starr Avenue and we harvested 880 lbs from about that many square feet of canopy = about 20 tons per acre extrapolated. Best variety is ‘Golden Dragon’ in terms of yield. We added new rows and posts. A proposal submitted to the Texas Department of Agriculture, Specialty Crops Block Grant, with TAMU Horticulture’s Tim Hartmann as co-PI was submitted in the spring 2016 and word received that it was approved. The $35,000 award will be beginning Dec 1, 2016. In Aug 2016, Colin and Elisabeth Stevenson, Auckland, NZ – Miko Asia, Ltd. visiting our region for potential joint venture growing their proprietary varieties. Will golden kiwis be a commercial crop in Texas? Time will tell.
MOODY GARDENS PROJECT

With a grant from the Moody Foundation our work began in the Spring 2016. It’s a wonderful full sun spot by Moody Gardens just on the South side of the Airport, a big open field and only 4 to 5 feet above sea level. Elaine Harris is beginning her MS thesis project here under the direction of Dr. Ken Farrish. Elaine Fowler MS thesis under the direction of Dr. Steve Wagner in Biology. Sabino Bilon and Jose Flores of Moody Garden are great help in getting the first of our collection together!
MEXICO MOUNTAIN SUGAR MAPLE PROJECT

Acer skutchii – the rare Mexico Mountain Sugar maple plots at the Science Research Center showing the effects of a terrible dry spell . . . 09-27-2015 image and a drought since June. This amazing tree is very drought and alkaline tolerant and has great promise in Central Texas and other harsh climates.
Environmental Education at the SFA Gardens in 2015-2016
Standouts in 2015-2016

- Cleome ‘Senorita Rosalita’
- Gomphrena ‘Fireworks’
- Gulf Fritillary on Little Bluestem ‘Standing Ovation’
- *Hibiscus dasycalyx* at Boggy Slough, Texas
- Callistemon ‘Hot Pink’
- *Acer fabri*
Jimmy Hinds Park Development is funded via a gift from Barbara Finney. A major goal for the year was to bring irrigation to the 2 acre patch, install an interpretive sign, and create a world class muscadine grape vineyard (56 varieties and counting). We also painted the boardwalk with grit paint to be more ADA compliant.
June 2016 consultancy to China with a focus on Taxodium and Blueberries

Liu Yulian, Dave Creech, Xiang Xibai and Yin Yunlong – Sweet Olive Research Center

Shangdong coal pit Taxodium planting
Minland Farms near Shanghai

Minland Blueberry
Since 2003

About us
Minland Blueberry planting professional cooperatives was founded in 2003 and currently has a base area of 300 acres. We mainly focus on blueberry cultivation. But our products also include other high-quality fruits and vegetables such as cherry, red dragon fruit, kiwi, and Japanese persimmon.

Minland is the national farmer demonstration cooperatives. Our Blueberry is accredited as "Green Food" by the Ministry of Agriculture Green Food Development Center. Moreover, we are recognized as the "Fifth High-quality and Normative Blueberry" by the Shanghai forestry bureau. We maintain the highest standard of Blueberry quality, and the newest technology is always in practice. The farmers and local government members are all very happy with the results.

We sincerely invite you to explore our Minland Blueberry Farm. You will experience nature, relaxation and health care, making the life more colorful. Let's enjoy the fragrance of the earth, the beauty of the sky and the peace of the heart.