visitors. partnerships, and, as always, Native Plant Center, continuing to evaluate and improve programming, nurturing

We look forward to creating an all-incredible vision, and generous amounts of hard work. student involvement, administrative support, generous donors, capable staff, an
to building community partnerships, the importance of dedicated volunteers,

The growth of the SFA Gardens facilities and education programs is a testament to over 17,000 in 2010. Since 2005, each elementary student in Nacogdoches

The number of program participants has steadily increased from 2,000 in 1999

By 2001, word had spread that the gardens were a valuable educational

In March 1998, the Timber Frame Guild of North America raised a remarkable

curriculum for SFA Elementary Education majors, and funding for an outdoor

In the fall of 1985, Dr. David Creech presented his first ornamental horticulture

If you walk through the Gardens at Stephen F. Austin State University today, you might find the gardens emerge from the tangled jungle of invasive privet, flowers, or school children learning in an outdoor classroom. It is hard to imagine that in 1985 the Gardens were just an idea. The rest is history. Today, the SFA

By 2001, a Kellogg Foundation TxLINC grant allowed Cheryl (Tate) Boyette and Dr. Alan Sowards, elementary education professor, to continue the development of curriculum and community partnerships for the Growing Minds

The education program offered at the gardens has blossomed as well as the facilities. In the early years, Creech or the graduate students might lead an impromptu "walk and talk" tour for elementary students visiting the SFA campus, but the main focus was on building a living laboratory for students in horticulture, biology, environmental science and botany. In the mid-1990s, a graduate student at SFA recognized the incredible potential of the gardens to be a premier environmental education center for area school children and citizens. The student was Cheryl Tate, and she pursued the development of curriculum-based programming, for elementary students, pre-service teacher training, and crisscrossing curriculum to educators in science programs were soon developed for the K-8th grade, and student teachers were recruited and trained. The SFA Elementary Education and SFA Gardens partnership continues to grow for the Bugs, Bees, Butterflies and Blossoms Festival. This outdoor science education event impacted 2,000 students that year. A one-day educational event called the Spring Fling was held in the Classroom pavilion. SFA students presented 21 different hands-on science activities to school children and area families. The event was repeated in 1994, 1995, and 1996.

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