

Fall Comes to the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden

By Barbara Stump

Now that the weather is finally cooler (under 90 degrees) and the nights are crisp, the garden will be lighting up with color and new blooms of the season. Come stroll by the garden on the lovely new sidewalk, thanks to the hard work of contractors funded by the Texas Department of Transportation and the City of Nacogdoches. Finally, mud and wet puddles are things of the past. To add that “final touch of class” along University Drive, our new Azalea Garden Technician Jon Roach and his crew have been installing a cedar split-rail fence. We think this sets off the garden nicely and helps focus the eye on the signs and entrances into the garden. The next project is to move some purple spider azaleas up to fill in the space just behind the fence, with the added benefit of giving our extensive hydrangea collection more space to grow at the foot of the berm.

Fall is *Camellia sasanqua* time. From now until early December you can stroll along Wisely Walk and lots of blooms in Beds 5, 18, 19, and 21. These statuesque evergreen shrubs will ultimately reach about 15 feet tall and are already putting on a show. Right now look for ‘Autumn Pink Icicle’, ‘Winter’s Star’, and ‘Winter Rouge’. Around Christmastime we’ll have bright red ‘Yuletide’, rose and white ‘Hana Jiman’, and white ‘Setsugekka.’ Bright white ‘Lady Di’ shines against deep blue-green foliage, filling Bed 21 around the same time.

Once we get just a little more near-freezing temperature the small leaves of the native sugar maples (Florida maple, *Acer barbatum*) will turn bright yellow and look like flames in the garden. But best of all will be the fall show as the Japanese maples turn color. Look for crimson from ‘Aratama’ in Bed 10, yellow leaves on red branches from ‘Beni Kawa’ in Bed 11, deep red from ‘Bloodgood’ all over the garden with several by the Council Ring, and orange, red, and dark red from ‘Ozakazuki’ in Beds 2, 6, 9, and 22. We have over 200 Japanese maples selected for either spring or fall color, so a casual stroll in any part of the garden will reward you with lovely color. Most of the maples are only about 5 years old, but already their picturesque arching and spreading forms are developing. In another 10 years

when they have reached their ultimate heights of 20-35 feet tall, the garden will really be a splendid show of reds, yellows, and oranges.

With all the lovely varieties of Japanese maples theoretically available in the trade, but just not here, it’s becoming obvious that we should try to find a wider range of cultivars to offer in our plant sales. Dr. Creech met a wonderful Japanese maple grower in Virginia at one of his plant talks. Owner of Acer Acres, Elizabeth Gardner grafts 25,000 Japanese maples a year. She and Dr. Creech talked a bit about how we could provide a great place for testing some of her “sun-tolerant” varieties in some real sun conditions in the Azalea Garden. A couple of days before Hurricane Rita ripped through here, a truck came directly from her place to us with 59 cultivars, 44 of which are totally new to our collections. We have some 3-gallon sizes to plant in the garden and evaluate, but for supporters of the Arboretum, the best news may be that we have 100 1-gallons to grow on for sale for the Spring 2006 Garden Gala. See you next April 22nd!

Arboretum Staff and Volunteers Field Test New Environmental Education Program

In October, Chireno 6-8th grades participated in an exciting new environmental education program called Flying WILD! The program focuses on the conservation and importance of migratory birds. Students participated in several hands-on activities involving migration hazards, National Wildlife Refuges, stereoscopic vision, endangered species, wingspans, flight speed, olfactory abilities, and basic bird biology. SFA Mast Arboretum staff and education volunteers, Elyce Rodewald, Amanda Camp, Dylan Baggett, Vicky Baggett, and Ben Sultenfuss, traveled to Chireno High School to host the program.

Flying WILD! is a nationally sponsored program of the Council for Environmental Education. The field test in Chireno is part of an evaluation of the Flying WILD program being conducted by Dr. Alan Sowards, SFA Professor of Elementary Education, & Dr. Cheryl Boyette. To find out more about the program, check out www.flyingwild.org



SFA Mast Arboretum News November 2005

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Hurricane Rita Visits our Garden

By David Creech

All of our guests bring happiness...some by coming, others by going.

Rita’s the latter. She arrived in town with great fanfare early Saturday morning September 24, 2005. I had holed up out at the house and when the full force hit . . . let’s face it, I couldn’t help but wonder if positioning my home between two patriarch oaks was the brightest thing I’ve ever done. They held. I made an expedition to town the next day – Sunday – to survey the damage. It was horrible, but it could have been worse. The SFA Mast Arboretum suffered the least. Yes, our north shade house was now a sun house and there were a dozen trees down – the line of vines was hit hard - a bunch of leaners everywhere that needed straightening – and what was obviously a couple of weeks ahead for limb and branch clean up chores. General conclusion is that it could have been much worse.

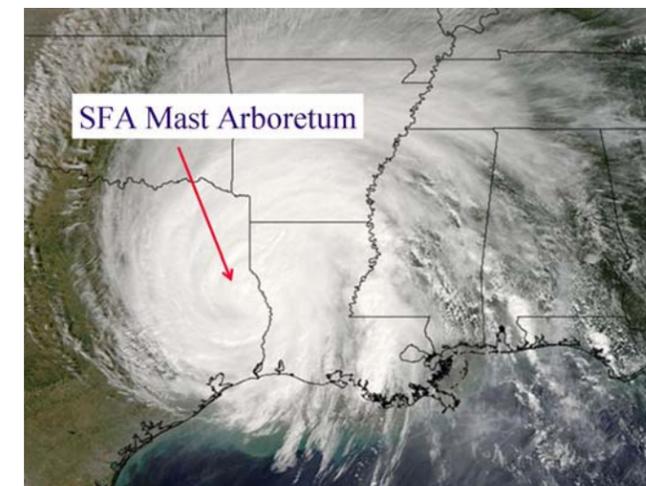
The situation over in Ruby M. Mize Azalea garden is a bit different. We had a dozen big ones fall here and Jonathan Roach has quickly managed to get the trails cleared and almost all the timber out of there within the last few weeks – thanks go out to the Physical Plant at SFA who provided us some help here! In

addition we are pleased to present an 880’ cedar rail fence along the University Drive portion of the property. Our goal here this winter is to move a few Koromo Shikibu Azaleas forward and leave pockets for annual or perennial color. Stay tuned.

The worst hit – wouldn’t you know it – was the Pineywoods Native Plant Center. I counted 38 big trees down on the front eight acres that borders Raguet Street. We are talking trees so big in circumference that our chain saws seemed to be a pitiful joke. Wonderful patriarch post oaks seemed to take the wind worse than other trees. However, a huge Cherrybark Oak by the PNPC office fell and shoved that little building about six inches to the South before crashing into the Tucker house doing extensive damage. We have our fingers crossed that some much needed help is coming via the Army Corps of Engineers. Still, all in all, it could have been so much worse. I finally reached Mike Hoke, Director of

Shangrila Gardens in Orange, Texas (250 acres) and he had this to report:

“We don’t have our normal email and web page up yet. Our main office system will not be up for about 3 weeks due to wires being destroyed and priorities. Our survey showed we lost 91% of the trees in Shangri La (250 acres). Our garden area is missing most of its trees. The bayou system is polluted



beyond belief due to fecal coliform from cities and organic matter dumped by the storm. We lost about half of our new greenhouse, although we did save most of the plants. Our maintenance building was damaged along with our Nature Classroom area. Our old greenhouse did not receive any damage . . . Our theater is severely damaged and our education center has been turned into a dormitory for crews cleaning up our gardens. Our office does not have electricity yet - along with many of our homes. We are cleaning up and starting over on our design of the gardens. We have moved from a primarily shade garden to one that is much more open. Construction will start in Dec. on the buildings. “

Of course, I was curious about a giant pond cypress, *Taxodium ascendens*, and Mike reported that, “Yes, It survived with only minor damage. Gary made the comment that it has seen many storms like this one over its 1200 years. We wonder how this storm rated. There was no storm surge in Orange even though the eye passed over Orange. It was a dry storm. However, we had a wind gust of 167 miles per hour and straight line winds over 120 for several hours. We had thousands of trees falling, slanting towards the southwest.”

My conclusion is that yes, Rita was a bad and mean spirited guest in our county but it could have been worse - much worse - and while the garden looks a little rough, we now have all kinds of sunlight gardening opportunity we didn't have before. Let's keep planting.



SFA Pinewoods Native Plant Center lost 38 large trees, and the Forest Resources Institute sustained damage during Hurricane Rita.



Bugs, Bees, Butterflies, and Blossoms Festival Receives Award

Stephen F. Austin State University and Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful were recently awarded a Texas Community Forestry Award by the Texas Forest Service, the Texas Urban Forestry Council, and the Texas Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture. The award was given for the Bugs, Butterflies, and Blossoms Festival held at the SFA Mast Arboretum for the past 7 years. The Festival (now know as Bugs, Bees, Butterflies and Blossoms or BBBB) was started under a Kellogg Foundation grant by Alan Sowards, Assistant Professor-Elementary Education, and Cheryl Boyette, Educational Consultant and former Executive Director of KNB. Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful and the SFA Mast Arboretum have continued the sponsorship of this highly successful program. BBBB brings over 100 pre-service elementary education teachers and 2600 K-third grade students together for four exciting days of outdoor environmental education. Pre-service teachers, under the direction of Alan Sowards, prepare lessons and learn first-hand how to create an effective field trip for elementary students.

Kent Hutchison, Exective Director of Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful, accepted the award during the annual Texas Tree Conference in Waco. “It is an honor for Nacogdoches to receive this prestigious award,” Hutchison said, “Dr. Sowards and Ms. Rodewald work all year with students and community volunteers to develop and promote this children’s program. I am proud of KNB’s partnership with SFA to promote forestry and environmental education to more than 2600 students annually.”

Elyce Rodewald, Education Coordinator at the SFA Mast Arboretum and Pinewoods Native Plant Center, said “It is such a pleasure working with Dr. Sowards, Dr. Boyette, Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful, and all of the elementary education interns to create this exceptional environmental education event. We also have tremendous support from the Pinewoods Beekeepers Association and the SFA Mast Arboretum Volunteers.”

Plans are already underway for Bugs, Bees, Butterflies, and Blossoms 2006. For more information, contact Elyce Rodewald at erodewald@sfasu.edu or 936.468.1832.

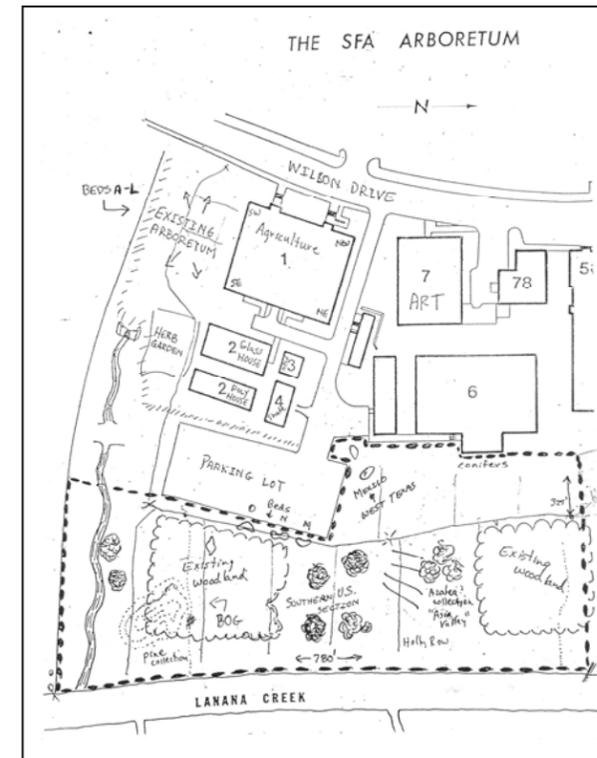
Arboretum Then and Now

By Dawn Stover

I came across some old maps of the arboretum this morning as I was searching for information on a plant here at the arboretum. Elyce has been ever so politely asking for newsletter articles, and these maps provided the inspiration for my musings, and will help me wrap up our 20th anniversary year. One map in particular looks as if it’s based on an old campus map, with computer drawn buildings and parking lots surrounded by “rough”, pencil sketches of the original bones of the arboretum. The garden titles are handwritten in Dr. Creech’s handwriting, clearly in the days when it was still decipherable.

I’m not sure the age of the map, but it definitely predates my arrival in 1997. The shade garden is simply called “Existing Woodland” and is bordered by a bog and a pine collection. To the north of the woodland is the Southern U.S. section, an area that today is kind of a catch all for plants needing a home. The bones are still southeastern natives, but you can find a whole lot of other things in there too. Moving further north, the azalea collection and “Asia Valley” are labeled, followed by another “Existing Woodland.” The lines of vines are no where to be found.

My “Then” for the arboretum began in 1997, and yes I know to some I’m still wet behind the ears, but to others I’m an old fart. This is a fence I’m comfortable riding, because I appreciate where we’ve been, and I look forward to seeing where we’re going. In 1997, phase one was still called phase one, but now is home to two massive, mixed perennial borders with a wide grass allee leading visitors into the garden. There’s an ornamental grass border and an observational bee hive on the south side of the borders, and “phase two” is soon to be home to an ornate gazebo. The bog is now home to a clumping bamboo collection, and is flanked to the north by collections of Hidden Gingers and various members



of the Iridaceae family. The hostas and ferns in the shade garden have been slowly replaced with peacock and shell gingers, and many other hardy tropicals. The hostas are providing a healthy diet for the slugs, and many of the ferns have relocated to the stumpy in the azalea garden. The conifers have spread over an entire hillside, punctuated with the Monkey Puzzle Tree that was moved from phase one. It’s doing very well, by the way. Asian valley has three more beds, and the lines of vines, not in the original drawing, is home to wisteria larger than some small cars.

While there have been small plant collection battles won and lost over the years, there have been some pretty major additions to the arboretum in my seven years here. We now have 10 acres of azaleas in the Ruby Mize Azalea Garden, a Timber Frame pavilion in the Kingham Children’s Garden, and 40 acres down the road a bit known as the Pinewoods Native Plant Center. There was one full time employee other than faculty in 1997, and we now have 3 full time employees in the gardens, a full time education coordinator, and a part time development coordinator. Perhaps it takes that many people to keep Dr. Creech in line? The employees might argue that we’re understaffed.

We have a monthly lecture series, Saturday seminars, and special conferences. The plant sales draw a moderate crowd, and the Mize Azalea Garden plays a huge role in the annual Azalea Trail throughout Nacogdoches. Dr. Creech always referred to us as an attractive nuisance for the campus, and we’d like to think we still are. If you’re getting this newsletter, it means that you noticed that nuisance, and we’re important enough in your life to receive your support. Hopefully we will continue to grow, learn, educate, entertain, and garden with the best of them. And hopefully, you’ll be right there to see us along the way, for the next twenty years and more. Thank you for letting us into your lives. Happy gardening!

Horticulture Graduate Student Begins Work With Cypress

LiJing Zhou has been with us less than three months and she's already totally immersed in the wonderful world of SFA Horticulture. She is currently



developing a master's thesis project involving Taxodium. Working with bald cypress is exciting work; it co-mingles the landscape value of this tough and durable native with all kinds of

ecological needs wherever it is adapted. As part of our work, we are cooperating with Dr. Donald Rockwall at the University of Florida in Gainesville and Ken Krauss at the University of Lafayette's Wetlands Research Center to submit a proposal for a collaborative project to acquire, select, propagate and promote superior Taxodium clones for use in landscapes and for use in wetland reclamation projects. The SFA Mast Arboretum is uniquely poised to participate in this project simply because we already have one of the best Taxodium collections in the USA. With numerous large trees of known cultivars and some interesting genotypes in our inventory, we have a good start. In addition, we are blessed to be working with three inter-specific hybrids now in our inventory (T302, T27, and T140), the result of our cooperative work with Professor Yin Yunlong of the Nanjing Botanical Garden. One of the biggest challenges to long-term genotype X environment study with Taxodium is that it takes space! Space can be precious at a University and we are now working with the Physical Plant to determine if we can make this an on-campus project - somewhere along the LaNana creek floodplain. Stay tuned!

Fall Festival Plant Sale Successful

This year's Fabulous Fall Festival was dedicated to generating "matching" funds for the Meadows Foundation grant – a wonderful grant that supports the incredible educational outreach program of the SFA Mast Arboretum and Pineywoods Native Plant Center (that's Elyce Rodewald!) and the creation of architectural drawings for a proposed PNPC Environmental Education Center at the PNPC. In spite of Hurricane Rita just the week before, electricity still out in many areas of the county, and tons and tons of brush to haul away, there was still a lively crowd at the starting gate for our annual Fabulous Fall Festival. Dawn Stover with assistance from the SFA Mast Arboretum Volunteers and student assistants produced perhaps the best "crop" ever – quality, numbers, and diversity – everyone came away loaded down with exciting plants, all heading back to many homes that suddenly have more sunlight than a week earlier! The sale generated an amazing \$18,000. While less than last year's fall event – everyone felt it was proof positive that there are plenty of adventuresome gardeners who have their priorities right. Plants!



Bill Elliott, Wyndell Westmoreland, and Barb Stump discuss deciduous azaleas at the Fabulous Fall Festival Plant Sale.

Special thanks to our Fall Fandango Sponsors for a delightful evening in the garden honoring our 2005 SFA Mast Arboretum Members!

**Amanda Haralson
Thomas Livesay
Moore Building Associates
SFA Mast Arboretum Board
of Advisors**

SFA Horticulture Program Grows Successful Alumni

Every August the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association hosts an enormous trade show known as the Nursery/Landscape Expo. Hundreds of exhibitors showcase everything imaginable for the landscape and nursery industry. Close to 10,000 people attend the show to learn about the latest and greatest trees, perennials, annuals, grasses, equipment, chemicals, software, garden décor, water gardens, ceramics, and more. Each year, the SFA Mast Arboretum hosts an educational booth designed to recruit potential students to the SFA horticulture program and to inform Expo visitors about recent projects, collaborations, and developments at the Arboretum. The SFA Mast Arboretum booth is also a favorite place for SFA Alumni to meet old friends, catch up on the latest Arboretum news, and to swap "Creech stories." Here is an update on students and colleagues who helped make the SFA Mast Arboretum what it is today.



Sylvia Courtney ('77): Ludy Greenhouses. "I was the first woman horticulturist on campus, and have been actively involved in horticulture ever since. Our company recently built the new biology greenhouse on campus."



Aubrey King ('77): Owner of King's Nursery, Tenaha, TX. "After working in another field I realized I was fighting nature...instead of appraising houses, I was landscaping them."



James Wilhite ('80): Owner of Wilhite Landscape and Lawn Care, Tyler, TX. "SFA prepared me quite well because my advisor was able to let me have a customized curriculum."



Carlton Colmenares ('84): Manager of a research farm near Waller, TX.

James Powers ('85): Charrette LLC, Regional Sales Manager

Jani (Binkley) Faulkner ('86): Homemaker and Homeschool Teacher "SFA taught me independence and the skills necessary to manage a nursery in Dallas. It also enabled me to teach others and my children the fascinating truths of science and agriculture. I've been teaching for 12 years and continue to enjoy sharing the knowledge acquired at SFA."



Tom Henry ('88): Tree Town USA, Head Grower at North Texas location. "SFA taught me to value working with people...I still don't like Jujube."



Mark Holl ('91): Assistant Grounds Manager at SFA. "My degree in Forestry was tough, but it is the best education I could have."

Jason Powers ('92): H & N Landscaping and Nursery. "My experience at SFA was very positive. Creech is a great story teller, and I always looked forward to class. I got great hands-on experience through labs and Horticulture Club."

Erin Smith ('95): Head grower, Mae's Nursery,



Shawn Geiman ('95 and '97): Owner of Shawnee Trees, Katy, TX.



Eric Whatley ('97): Tree Town USA, Head Grower at Mill Creek location. "My long term friendships and good relationships are what I value most from SFA."

Rachel Emrick ('98): Arborist, City of Lufkin. The Arboretum has undergone a metamorphosis in the ...years I've been involved. ...Dr. Creech built it by years of selfless labor and research along with the



students who flowed through the program over the years. The arboretum has and continues to provide opportunities for students and has influenced many careers."



Heather Thormalen ('98): Fort Worth Botanical Garden



Dale Ermi ('98): Creekside Nursery "I moved from Wisconsin and SFA really helped me learn Texas plants."



Clint Formby ('00): Regal Chemical Sales. "I had a great experience at SFA!" Clint, pictured with Dr. Creech, is recovering from a skateboarding injury.



Holly Ardoin ('99): Color Spot Sales

Derek Landre ('00 and '01): University of Texas Physical Plant Landscape Services.



Seth Rodewald-Bates ('01): Landscape Architect at Sasaki Associates "Life is not a movie! Hands-on experience at the Arboretum is invaluable!"



Jason Rucker ('01): Tree Town USA, Quality Control. "Working in the Arboretum helped foster my dedication to the field."



Chad George ('01): Landmark Nurseries, Inc, Manager in Kirbyville location. "My education at SFA got me the job that I wanted."

R. Missy Corne ('02): Starting a nursery in Fairchild, TX.



Chad Cauble ('03): Manager, Clint Horticulture
Emily (Hinch) Cauble ('03): Buyer, Clint Horticulture



Wes Schuler ('04): LMI Landscapes



Rick Bertke: Owner of Evergreen Lawncare in Nacogdoches. "I was a biology major, but I still bring samples to the soil lab and ask Dr. Creech questions. I usually have to chase him down the hall to talk to him!"



Nathan Unclebach ('05): Manager, Nacconiche Gardens, Nacogdoches.

SFA Mast Arboretum 2006 Events

<http://arboretum.sfasu.edu>

Plant Sales

April 22, 2006—Garden Gala Day 9 a.m.-2

p.m. Plant sale on the Stephen F. Austin State University Intramural Fields. Check Arboretum web site one week before the sale for plant list.

October 7, 2006—Fabulous Fall Festival 9

a.m.-2 p.m. Plant sale on the Stephen F. Austin State University Intramural Fields. Check Arboretum web site one week before the sale for plant list.

Les Reeves Lecture Series

Hear great horticulturalists from all over the United States. The lectures are free and open to the public. No reservations required. A rare plants raffle is held afterwards.

Third Thursday

7:00-8:30 p.m.

Agriculture Building, Room 110

Wilson Drive

JAN 19: "Having Fun in the Garden" with Jeff Abt, local gardener, landscaper, garden writer and a long time friend of the garden.

FEB 16: "Camellias: Something Old, Something New, Something Yellow, Something Blue?" with Bobby Green, horticulturist, nurseryman, and plant enthusiast from Fairhope, Alabama.

MAR 16: "Magnolias rule the world!" with Gary Knox, woody plant evaluation, lecturer, author, and research scientist, University of Florida/IFAS.

APR 20: "Soul of the Garden" with Tom Spencer, television producer and host, freelance writer, photographer, and radio personality from Austin, TX.

MAY 18: "Colorful Gardens for Sun or Shade" with Bill Welch, Extension horticulturist, author, lectures far and wide, and friend of our garden.

JUNE 15: "Propagation Secrets You Must Swear Not to Tell Anyone" with Mark Crawford, horticulturist, physiologist, and can root a fence post from Valdosta, Georgia.

JUL 20: "Going Native and Lovin' It" with Greg Grant, PNPC Research Associate, author, lecturer and gardener extraordinaire.

AUG 17: "I'm back and I'm not leaving" with Aubrey King, third generation nurseryman, singer and friend of adventuresome gardening.

SEPT 21: "The 12 Steps of Successful Gardening" with Neil Sperry, Mr. Texas Horticulture extraordinaire from Dallas, TX.

OCT 19: "You've got a plan? Well I Have an Idea About That!" with Keith Hansen, Extension horticulturist and gardening enthusiast, Tyler, TX.

NOV 16: "Everything Including the Kitchen Sink: Container Gardening Gone Wild" with Dawn Stover, Research Associate, SFA Mast Arboretum, Herbaceous Perennials, and the Queen Bee of the Garden.

DEC 14: "The Most Amazing Garden Talk Ever" with Dr. David Creech, Director of the SFA Mast Arboretum.

3rd Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference May 25-28, 2006

Hosted by the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center in association with the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference in North Carolina. Mark your calendars now!