

# SFA Gardens News

SFA MAST ARBORETUM \* RUBY M. MIZE AZALEA GARDEN \* PINEYWOODS NATIVE PLANT CENTER \* GAYLA MIZE GARDEN

Volume 10, Issue 3

Summer 2015

## Notes from the Director

By Dave Creech

Let's kill Bill. That's pretty much the feeling around here. Tropical Depression Bill hit in the middle of June, and left quite a mess in his wake. Rarely does our sweet, kind and gentle Miss Lanana Creek turn angry, but she certainly changed overnight. The month of May can be best described as a monsoon with one heavy rain after another,



causing the Earth to turn soft, saturated and squishy. Bill was the final straw, and Miss Lanana left her banks to find a new place to call home. Industry Day was a mere week away and not one of our staff members said, "Let's cancel Industry Day." Nope, not even a whisper. We are the Lumberjacks! We've seen floods before, and we know the drill. When the water recedes, we head out the door

and get to work.

The inaugural Industry Day, "Wild about Woodies," came together beautifully on Friday, June 26. While Dawn Stover managed a garden clean up, she also was juggling bus scheduling, the luncheon and event planning. Approximately 70 nursery and landscape professionals toured the SFA Gardens in the morning, enjoyed a meal

at the Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building, and four lectures on woody ornamentals in the afternoon. Horticulturists Allen Owings, Louisiana State University-Hammond Re-

search Station; MengMeng Gu, Texas A&M University-College Station; Keith Hansen, Texas AgriLife Extension-Tyler; and I shared what's hot, what's not, and what might be hot, in the woody ornamental trade, if given just a little nudge.

SFA Gardens is all about trialing. I often say we're more than just another pretty face. Our collections include: first class assemblages of bald cypress, Japanese

maples, desert willow, vitex, camellias, hydrangeas, oaks, azaleas and crape myrtles. Since they're in glorious bloom right now, let's take a look at hydrangeas. In 1997, SFA Gardens began collecting a wide range of Hydrangea varieties, placing them in side-by-side trials in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. By 2005, we had accumulated more than 250 varieties. With our usual enthusiasm, we measured plant height and width, and the number, size and date of the blooms. We utilized groups of three (visitors) to rank their top picks. We then came up with a list of favorites, which included 'Ami Pasquier,' 'Blue Wave,' 'Nikko Blue,' 'All Summer Beauty,' 'Frillibet,' 'Europa,' 'Goliath,' 'Bluebird,' 'Preziosa,' 'Beaute Vendemoise,' 'Souvenir Pres. Doumer,' 'Penny Mac,' 'Endless Summer,' 'Blushing Bride,' and 'David Ramsey.' Then in 2009, we listed varieties that produce blooms later in the season: 'All Summer Beauty,' 'Decatur Blue,' 'The Original' Endless Summer, 'Penny Mac,' 'David Ramsey,' 'Blaumeise,' 'Fuji Waterfall,' and 'Twist n Shout.'

Starting a decade ago, a virtual flood

Cont. on pg. 2

Arthur Temple College of  
Forestry and Agriculture  
STEPHEN F. AUSTIN  
STATE UNIVERSITY



## Notes, cont.

of new varieties entered the market picture, most patented and trademarked to one brand or another. In 2012, Michael Dirr published a fine treatment of hydrangea breeding and advancement and remarked at the increased pace of varietal releases. In 2013, Owings and I decided to evaluate only the new varieties that are rebloomers. This cooperative project is underway, and it hasn't taken long to realize the market is packed with even more new varieties than our original estimate.

At last count, there are more than 95 new varieties of lacecap and mophead hydrangeas. Since 2006, these new varieties have credited reblooming as a key attribute, and

most fall under the umbrella of a major brand. Brands include: Endless Summer (Bailey), Forever & Ever, Cityline, Edgy, Everlasting (Plants Nouveau), Mystical, Hovaria (Kaleidoscope), Japanese Lady Series (Halo, Frau and Angel), Let's Dance (Spring Meadow), Next Generation (Ball Ornamentals) and Showstopper Hydrangeas, a series promoted by HGTV, which includes eight varieties. So which brands do best in East Texas? Give us a couple of years to sort it out. With brands, trademarks and patents making a stronger presence every year and nomenclature questions increasing, it's easy to understand variety overload.



'The Original' Endless Summer hydrangea is a reliable rebloomer

While it's hard to imagine improvements, future breeding projects might include better flower shedding, stronger stems, more reblooming and burgundy foliage color. Until next time, we'll keep planting.

## Amazing Asimina

By Greg Grant

The pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) is a very interesting and small deciduous tree in the custard apple family (Annonaceae), which is known for its tropical fruit. It's native throughout the Eastern U.S., especially along creeks and streams. It can even be found in most streams across East Texas, including Lanana Creek in Nacogdoches and my beloved West Creek in Arcadia, where it grows alongside switch cane, mayapples and bloody butcher. Amazingly, this tree with tropical ancestors is native all the way up through the Midwest, where I periodically read of it being called a "Michigan banana."

The genus name *Asimina* purportedly comes from a French variation of its Indian name. The name Natchitoches also supposedly derived from the "place of the pawpaws" or the "pawpaw eaters." Nacogdoches is named for a similar Caddo tribe with such a similar

spelling, and I wonder if it didn't have the same pawpaw origins, as well. My Ximines ancestors came from Natchitoches to Nacogdoches so I have always been interested in both the culture and horticulture of these historic cities.

In the spring, small maroon bell-



like flowers emerge on bare gray pawpaw branches before the large drooping leaves appear. They make interesting cut flowers in the leafless stage and will continue to open every immature bud on the stem. The crushed leaves smell like bell pep-

pers to some. The small, somewhat banana-like fruit ripens in the late summer and is relished by possums, raccoons and other wildlife. Some folks, like Elyce and me, savor the fruit while others find its soft, fragrant, highly flavored pulp more than they can bear. My uncle Noel can eat a five-gallon bucket full! I even read that it was former president George Washington's favorite fruit.

In addition to being eaten fresh, pawpaws were historically used to make pies, custards and ice cream. One year my mom substituted pawpaws for bananas while making banana bread, and it was delicious. The only drawback is the number of large seeds in the fruit; however, breeders have made progress in selecting fruit with fewer and smaller seeds. Unfortunately, most of the breeding and selection process appears to take place in northern

Cont. on pg. 3

## Amazing Asimina, *cont.*

climates, leaving cultivars less vigorous in the hot and steamy South.

This tropical fruit relative also lures in a fascinating tropical butterfly. The pawpaw is the lone host for the beautiful zebra swallowtail, my favorite butterfly since I first spied one as a child. This prized beauty has black and white stripes, like a zebra, highlighted with touches of blue and red and a long “swallow” tail. They are a bit flighty and hard to photograph, but certainly a treat to see. In the spring, they are found deep in the woods, but by summer, populations are nectaring on lantanas and vitex in sunny gardens. Interestingly, the first generation is smaller and slightly greenish white with shorter tails. Each generation then gets larger, whiter and longer

tailed.

Zebra swallowtails only reproduce in pawpaw patches, so it’s important to preserve bottomland hardwood forests and riparian zones in their range. If you don’t have that luxury, at least plant some in your garden, and for heaven’s sake, don’t spray the odd-shaped, brown-(or green-) striped caterpillars.

Pawpaws are difficult to transplant. Luckily, we generally offer them at our SFA Gardens’ plant sales. They perform best in a well-drained soil with regular moisture and also prefer a bit of



A nectaring zebra swallowtail butterfly.

shade. They are known to sucker a bit but make beautiful miniature groves in woodland landscapes.

## In Memory: Ina Brundrett

By Barb Stump and Elyce Rodewald

We lost a great soul, friend and benefactor June 3, 2015. We had the wonderful pleasure of knowing Ms. Ina Brundrett for the last 14 years. She was a tireless spokeswoman for nature and people, encouraging individuals to enjoy the natural world, especially birds and native plants.

Ms. Brundrett served on our Pineywoods Native Plant Center Board from 2004 to 2009 and continued to serve on the Friends of SFA Gardens Board of Directors until her passing. She was one of the first donors to purchase a park bench for the PNPC and eagerly observed our fundraising efforts for the various horticulture facilities, trails and educational programs. She even requested information and photos about the native plants at the PNPC to better assist other

gardeners in understanding the need for endangered plant conservation, sharing with them her lively interest in Dr. Creech’s three R’s program—Rescue, Research and Re-introduction. She also was active in the Tyler Reforestation Encouraging Ecological Stability program, and was a member of the National Garden Clubs, which serves all 50 states, as well as international affiliates in Canada, Mexico, and Central and South America.

An avid gardener and advocate of native plants, she created an oasis in her own backyard, appropriately designated as a wildlife habitat by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the National Wildlife Federation. She loved the nightly parade of raccoons, opossums and occasional skunks that crossed her back porch.

Ms. Brundrett, along with other dedicated community members, donated the funds to establish the conservation education building at the SFA Pineywoods Native Plant Center that now bears her name. Ms. Brundrett felt strongly about education and its importance. She said her greatest joy came from knowing that the facility “would benefit schoolchildren and help to educate them.”

“Ina’s legacy at SFA is a beautiful building with many, many windows. The sunlight shines in and reminds us in so many ways of Ina—a person full of light,” said Craig Turnage, executive director, Alumni Association and personal friend. Ms. Brundrett clearly understood and appreciated how education, opportunities and experiences could change lives.

## It's All in the Name

By Dawn Stover

Lately, I have struggled to keep up with all of the names given to newly branded plant material, especially when trying to write about them or make name plates for the garden. In this article, we will use the BloomStruck hydrangea as our primary example.

SFA Gardens uses the Linnaean binomial system of nomenclature. In this system, living things are given two Latinized names, known as the scientific name. The first name is the genus and the second is the specific epithet. This is a very precise way to define a plant. The genus describes a closely related group of plants with one or more species. The specific epithet defines individuals within a genus that share specific, marked differences from other individuals. Common names are important, but can be confusing if more than one plant uses the same common name. Take for instance a bachelor's button. In the deep South, we refer to that as the plant *Gomphrena globosa*; while in other parts of the U.S., it's the plant *Centaurea cyanus* or more commonly called, cornflower. Sometimes common names are the same as Latin names. For example, phlox and hydrangea are common names for plants in the genera *Phlox* and *Hydrangea*.

So using our primary example mentioned above, the genus *Hydrangea*, and the specific epithet is *macrophylla*. The binomial name, in this case: *Hydrangea macrophylla*, is italicized or underlined. The genus is capitalized, while the specific epithet is not, unless it is derived from a vernacular name or a person's name.

Next, we move to variety and

cultivar. A variety is a population of plants in nature that show distinct differences from other individuals. These are inheritable, meaning the differences occur in seedlings. The variety name also is italicized or underlined and is written after the abbreviation var. For example, *Hydrangea macrophylla* var. *normalis* indicates a lacecap hydrangea.

A cultivar is a group of cultivated plants that have distinguishable characteristics. Cultivars are always of garden origin and retain their characteristics when propagated sexually or asexually. We capitalize the cultivar, much like a proper name, and place it in single quotes, but do not italicize or underline. For example: *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Penny Mac.'

Now, here's where it gets a little hairy. According to the International Code of Nomenclature, any plant named after 1959 should be in a modern language and should not be Latinized. In thinking of our primary example above, one would assume the name to be *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Bloom Struck,' but here is where the nomenclature shifts when it comes to plant branding. The actual name is *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'PIIHM-11' PPAF (PPAF meaning that a plant patent has been applied for). 'PIIHM-11' is more than likely the breeder's assigned name for the progeny, and is considered a non-sense name rarely used in commerce but still legally correct.

This is where trademarked names enter the picture. It's a simple layer of protection for a breeder who may or may not patent a plant. Normally, trademarked plants produce a great deal of mar-

keting and publicity so the general public recognizes the product.

Trademarked plant names should be indicated with a trademark or registered trademark symbol or written in a different typeface to prevent confusion with the actual cultivar name, often small caps are used, for example: BLOOMSTRUCK.

There are a few problems with trademarks. The first, trademarks are invalid if they are used to indicate a specific product or plant. A trademark should be used to indicate a product origin or a brand. In reality, BLOOMSTRUCK is an invalid name, but with all of the marketing behind it, that's the name consumers recognize. However, if the trademark indicates a series, it is valid. BLOOMSTRUCK is part of the Endless Summer series of hydrangeas noted for its repeat blooming characteristics. Endless Summer is used correctly as there are several plants sold under that brand.

The second trademark issue arises with non-patented plants. Propagation is restricted for patented plants, but not for trademarked plants. Because of that, the same plant can receive multiple trademarked names from multiple sources. *Spiraea thunbergii* 'Ogon' is known at Hines Nursery as Mellow Yellow spiraea and called Gold Thread spiraea at Greenleaf Nursery Company.



## Summer Fun

By Kerry Lemon

It is summer newsletter time. I am excited to share information about summer camp, because I have been working hard on every aspect of it for the past month. There is no doubt that all the preparation, planning and creativity that goes into the summer camp is rewarded by the joyful experiences of all involved.



When I was young, I spent my summers wandering the creek bed of Shoal Creek in Austin. The neighborhood kids and I played in the gully that led to the creek, climbed trees, explored the large storm drainage pipe that ran under the street and pretended we were ancient people living off the land. My family spent summer vacations camping in Ruidoso, New Mexico, and there are legendary tales of getting lost on hikes and being visited by black bears in our campsite. I never attended a summer camp, although I remember my brother returning from Boy Scout camp covered from head to toe with poison ivy and impetigo. As an adult, I have been lucky to assist with creating outdoor experiences for youth, giving them the chance to learn, explore and embark on their own adventures.

For the past 14 summers,

through SFA Gardens' outdoor education summer camp programs, I have guided youth around the East Texas' woods. Every year is a unique adventure with an exceptional combination of children, staff members, volunteers and professionals. Every year I am heartened to witness how much fun everyone has in spite of the heat, humidity,

bugs, rainstorms and all other surprises Mother Nature presents. There is much discussion regarding our culture and its disconnect from the natural world. Yet, given the opportunity, these children immerse themselves in the experience and embrace the excitement surrounding their outdoor adventures.

SFA Pineywoods Camp offers recreational activities, including archery, fishing and canoeing. We attempt to emphasize the inner-connecting relationships between all aspects of nature. We want our campers to appreciate the joys of being outside while also learning to be aware and safe. Most are half-day camps, so they are relatively short and sweet.

Highlights from the first three weeks of camp include: making new friends, creating frog masks, catching ladybugs, singing camp songs,



looking for grasshoppers, learning about snakes, practicing archery, creating leaf prints, climbing trees, nature photography, playing at the creek, weaving, creating volcanoes,



making music, investigating owl pellets, hiking and setting up tents, as well as making Dutch oven apple crisps and frozen yogurt.

This year, we are excited to offer a third week for campers. The additional week will be in partnership with the Solid Foundation, a local mentoring program in Nacog-



doches. We concluded the camp season with our Wilderness Adventure Experience for campers aged 12 to 15.

As always, SFA Pineywoods Camp is a group effort with many coming together to make it happen. This is accomplished through the hard work and devotion of numerous people. We are immensely grateful for all of the endless support.



Stephen F. Austin State University  
Arthur Temple College of  
Forestry and Agriculture  
P.O. Box 13000  
Nacogdoches, TX 75962  
936.468.4404  
sfagardens@sfasu.edu  
sfagardens.sfasu.edu  
Facebook: SFA Gardens

*Come grow with us!*

## **A Lasting Legacy**

By Dawn Stover



The Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building was dedicated on Jan. 27, 2014. Its purpose is to connect students of all ages to the natural world through education, conservation and outreach. This building is a culmination of Ina's lifelong support for education, as well as gardening. While she is already missed, the impact of her giving will last many lifetimes.

