

For the Love of Life and Nature

*Dr. Jeff Kuehny
Director, LSU AgCenter Botanic
Gardens at Burden*

When life suddenly, drastically changed for everyone around the world, we were given an opportunity to stop and look inward at our own lives and those closest to us. As many of us reflected on the precariousness and fragility of life, we began to look outward for comfort and peace from the living world that surrounds us.

The term “biophilia,” meaning the “love of life” from Aristotle and other ancients, was reintroduced in the modern day by Eric Fromm as the sense of oneness with the natural and human world outside. Edward O. Wilson expanded on the term and more clearly defined it in his 1984 book “Biophilia,” where he hypothesized that we have an inner “urge to affiliate with other forms of life.” When we commune with the flora and fauna in green spaces, we subconsciously nourish our well-being. Richard Louv in his book “Last Child in the Woods” linked the continual rise in childhood obesity, attention disorders and depression to what he called nature deficit disorder.

More recently, Dr. Quing Li has conducted many quantitative studies on how immersing oneself in nature can help us relax, think more clearly, improve our disposition and renew our energy. Li’s book “Forest Bathing: How Trees Can Help You Find Health and Happiness” articulates how simply connecting with nature through sight, sound, smell and touch bridges



the gap between us and the natural world. It is projected that by 2050, 66% of the world’s population will live in cities. On average, Americans spend 93% of our time indoors. Gardens, arboreta and walking trails through woodlands like those we have at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden are essential to improving our well-being. During this pandemic, biophilia has become a popular concept worldwide as we have been made to stop and think about the world in which we live and just how we live in it.

There are numerous examples of this here in Baton Rouge. The walking and biking trails have been filled with so many people there have been complaints about the lack of social distancing while walking. According to the 2018 National Gardening Survey, approximately 77% of American households are gardening in some form, and the desire to grow plants has exploded during the pandemic. While there have been many reports about how grocery stores have had difficulties keeping their shelves stocked, retail garden centers have experienced the same phenomenon.

As the world moves through the phases of reopening the global economy and people begin to return to work and a daily routine, it is essential that the “new normal” includes biophilia. It is important that you support the botanic gardens, arboreta, parks and public outdoor spaces that will continue to provide you with a place to improve your well-being. The mission of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens is to promote the importance of plants and their environment to the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of our community. If you are not a member or if your membership has lapsed, please join Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. If you know someone who would like to be a member, give them a membership as a gift as we continue this journey through life’s perils.



Reflections From the Chair

Mary Tharp
Chair, Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens
at Burden

It is with both joy and trepidation that I embark on my year as your chair, for none of us know how this year will evolve! I thank each and every one of you for being a part of this wonderful endeavor, the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens.

I, like so many of my predecessors, began as a Master Gardener with the LSU AgCenter at the downtown location. The Master Gardeners are so fortunate to now be at the Botanic Gardens for their activities and volunteer mission.

Having been on-site for the Master Gardener projects, I was drawn early on to the Trees & Trails program for schoolchildren. I continued with that program as a docent until the COVID-19 pandemic brought it to a close.

At our May 14, 2020, board of directors' meeting, we had an opportunity to look at this coming year. The Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden are continuing to provide our Reflections in the Garden through the virtual world thanks to the LSU AgCenter and its Communications Department. As the Botanic Gardens are now open, our committees are able to meet at the pavilion, allowing for social distancing. It is once again wonderful to see our friends face to face.

The online plant sale was a challenge well met, as the April 4 Plant Sale had been cancelled.

There is still hope for an Icon Workshop this August. What this will look like is still under discussion, but certainly digital learning will be a part of the workshop.

Our beloved Wine & Roses fundraiser will be revamped, possibly as a virtual format. Keep a lookout for upcoming information on how this will evolve.

The Corn Maze is still in the works. How could we not have this wonderful family-friendly event in some fashion?

As last year's fundraisers were in full swing and providing us income, we again will make an annual gift to the Botanic Gardens this August. Our fiscal year is July 1 to June 30. We are working on a budget for fiscal year 2020-2021, which will be quite lean, but we will make the most of the virtual world to raise monies for our annual gift. Leo Borders has accepted the nomination to be our treasurer, and he was voted in unanimously. Thank you, Leo!

Please keep up with our comings and goings through DiscoverBurden.com. We are in ever-changing times, for sure.

If you would like to only receive this newsletter electronically,
please email friends@burdengardens.com.

Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden

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The newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden, which is part of Burden Museum & Gardens.

DiscoverBurden.com

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Since You've Been Gone

Our gates are finally open, and we would like to share with you some projects that the staff have been diligently working on for your return.

- The Trees & Trails bridge was renovated, and the trails are being resurfaced for greater accessibility and your enjoyment.
- Two beds in the Rose Garden were renovated, and the winning roses were planted from the American Rose Trials for Sustainability (ARTS) and the American Garden Rose Selections (AGRS) trial programs.
- The new shade house at Landscape Services is almost complete and will be ready for growing more plants for you to enjoy on the grounds at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden.
- Garden Room III in Windrush Gardens has been getting a makeover. A large live oak that had been struck by lightning was recently removed, and the foundation plants have been planted in the landscape beds.

We would like to thank the following organizations for their support.

- **East Baton Rouge Parish Master Gardeners** and the **Baton Rouge Camellia Society** for providing funds for the new shade house.
- **Everris** for providing fertilizers for growing landscape plants.
- **Louisiana Recreational Trails Program** for funding the resurfacing of the trails.
- **Altman Plants, Antique Rose, Bailey Nurseries, Certified Roses, David Austin Roses, Star Roses and Plants, and Suntory Flowers** for providing roses for the AGRS and ARTS winners rose display.



Assistant arborist D'Michael Lucas, senior arborist Glen Wilson and student intern Conan Escajeda work to remove a damaged oak tree.



Research associate Wanda Ellis poses in the Rose Garden.



Assistant arborist D'Michael Lucas and summer intern Phillip Mooney work on the Trees & Trails bridge.



Summer intern Carson Parker plants rose bushes.



Ken Owens works at Windrush Gardens.



Student intern Conan Escajeda, assistant arborist D'Michael Lucas, landscape manager Aubrey Cooper and assistant landscape manager Tyler Carr work on the new shade house.

Trees & Trails and COVID-19

Sarah Rayner
Education Coordinator

All but one of the spring Trees & Trails field trips were cancelled due to COVID-19. Schools, businesses, parks and public gardens were rapidly closing in March. Our world became a world of virtual communication. The American Public Gardens Association educators group had many webinars that I attended. While Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania has had virtual programming for years, many of the gardens, including ours, have not. The sharing of ideas has been wonderful! The LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden staff met online through the Microsoft Teams program and developed ideas to enhance our virtual programming. Our social media presence on Facebook and Instagram was ramped up with photos, videos and virtual tours.

The Botanic Gardens website was remodeled to adapt to virtual learning. We decided to call the new webpage At Home Resources. It can be found at <https://www.lsu.edu/botanic-gardens/research/education.php#parent>. I began creating curiosity cards about organisms like turtles, click beetles, armadillos, squirrels, frogs, skinks and many more so that the community could learn at home. These educational cards include links to fun facts, videos, coloring sheets and citizen science opportunities to do at home and in the community while social distancing.

The Birding at Burden webpage that I developed during the first couple of months of this year has links to websites, apps, books and other valuable information for every birder's level of experience. Last year I created a Citizen Science webpage that has information with links to projects individuals of all ages can tackle in their backyards, neighborhoods and communities.



Pond slider turtle in the lake at Windrush Gardens.

The Educator's Corner webpage was created for teachers who bring their students to participate in our Trees & Trails field trips. However, there is a wealth of activities for each grade level from kindergarten through eighth grade that can be used by parents and others to learn about our living world. Also, you can learn about the common butterflies found in pollinator gardens and in the Burden Woods and view videos of the Botanic Gardens and take 360-degree virtual tours.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the future is unknown. What will schools be like this fall? Will they be open to students or be virtual or some hybrid learning experience? School field trips will probably not take place this fall. Perhaps virtual field trips can be recorded as an alternative. I want to thank the amazing Trees & Trails docents who have been a constant inspiration to the students, teachers and me. I have said so many times that the docents are the heartbeat of the Trees & Trails program. So, Brenda Baumgardner, Ken Bosso, Janie Braud, Bridget Brister, Leo Broders, Kitty Bull, Kathy Conerly, Kerry Hawkins, John Hough, Sheldon Johnson, Jiji Jonas, Missy Jones, Nancy Jurasinski, Becky Pringle, Vicki LaPlace, Renee Major, Kathleen Meares, Alisa Mercer, Betty Pringle, Elizabeth Roberts, Art Scarborough, Jo Shriver, Sydney Snyder, Margo Spielman, Jenny Sutcliffe, Mary Tharp, Diana Wells, Gaynelle Wolff and Barbara Williams, please take a bow!

Nature is always here for us. It is a refuge for hope and untold dreams. For so many of us, our backyards have become our sanctuaries. Now restrictions are slowly being lifted, and the gates to the Botanic Gardens have opened to the public. The trails are tranquil. The gardens are beautiful, just bursting with life. Nature awaits us. Stay safe and have a happy summer!



Rose Garden row three maintained by M.L. Bell.

Honoring Volunteers

*Haleigh Judge
Receptionist and Social Media Manager*

For National Public Gardens Week this year, the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden decided to celebrate our volunteers a little differently. While we couldn't all gather to celebrate everyone, the Botanic Gardens staff took a moment to thank our amazing volunteers in their own special way with a video. The Botanic Gardens also chose to honor three outstanding volunteers with an appreciation gift. Each volunteer received a container garden of Louisiana Super Plants created specially by the Botanic Gardens horticulture team.

Marie-Luise Bell was honored for her dedication to the Rose Garden. Wanda Ellis calls Bell "one of our most dedicated Rose Garden volunteers." She's been tending to row three for many years and always seems to contribute more than we expect.

Simone Kramer was honored for her time and dedication working in the Ione Burden Conference Center. Since retiring from the AgCenter as administrative assistant to LSU Vice President for Agriculture William B. Richardson, Simone has chosen to share her time and talents with the Botanic Gardens. She has continued to support the Botanic Gardens as a volunteer receptionist as well as a volunteer coordinator and a Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden board member.

Kitty Bull was honored for her dedication to children's events. "If there's a children's program in the garden, Kitty is sure to be there, sharing her appreciation for imagination and all things creative," said Jeff Kuehny, resident director of the Botanic Gardens. Kitty is also a member of the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden and a longtime Trees & Trails docent.



Simone Kramer



Kitty Bull



Kerry Hawkins and Mary Tauzin

Extraordinary Service

Kerry Hawkins received special recognition in deep appreciation for his extraordinary service to Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. At the March board meeting Mary Tauzin presented Kerry with a paver in his honor to be placed in the Memory Garden adjacent to the pavilion. Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Friends organization, and Kerry served as its heart as a two-term board member, serving as vice chair, chair and the corn maze lieutenant kernel.

Kerry's involvement goes above and beyond board service. He herded little rascals as a Trees & Trails docent. He was head chef and No. 1 burger flipper at endless Corn Maze days and nights. He did desk duty answering phones and creating spreadsheets for Wine & Roses reservations. He greeted guests and toted refreshments for Reflections in the Garden programs. You name it, and Kerry has done it for many years, always with kindness and humor and his trusty pocketknife at the ready to lend a hand.

That multifaceted volunteerism and commitment are what exemplify Kerry, whether it is in service to the Friends group, the Master Gardeners, his church or to his family. Count on Kerry to make a difference and provide those surrounding him with an example to follow. Thank you, Kerry Hawkins!

Campus Connections

Dr. Jeff Kuehny, Director, LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden

It was a bittersweet social distancing farewell for some of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden student interns. The student internship program has grown to become a key part of our relationships with the LSU campus and Southern University to provide students with lifelong learning skills and service to the Botanic Gardens. These young minds bring their creative spirit and inspiration to the staff at the Botanic Gardens. In turn we hope to teach them life skills and help them develop a working knowledge of the areas of concentration that they are studying. Many of you have met these students either working as volunteers at the gardens or through your participation at programs and events.

You may know **Allyson Huval**, who has been working with us for over three years. Allyson helped build our current website and has been responsible for improving and maintaining it. She has also assisted with public relations and social media while earning her degree in mass communication from LSU. Allyson will begin working on a master's degree at Yale Divinity School this fall. We will certainly miss the colorful, creative spirit that Allyson embodies through her love of adventure and embracing her God-given talents.

You may not have had an opportunity to meet **Caleb Ryan**, who has been working with the staff at the Food and Fiber Research Facility. Caleb has been the quiet one, but he takes initiative and works well with everyone. He has been an invaluable help in implementing, maintaining and harvesting the All-America Selections vegetable trials. Caleb finished his bachelor's degree in ag economics and is headed back to north Louisiana to work on the family farm, Ryan Farms, where they grow and sell all types of fresh produce.

Haleigh Judge has been with us for just over one year, but in that short time she has taken our social media platforms to great heights. During the pandemic she has helped the Botanic Gardens remain a relevant part of our community by sharing gardening information and introducing a new audience to the Botanic Gardens. She completed her degree in mass communication and will continue her studies at LSU this fall. Haleigh will also continue working at the Botanic Gardens, focusing her efforts on both public relations and social media and helping us improve our outreach programs for the gardening community and all those who yearn to learn more about horticulture.

Preston Dumont came to us from the AgCenter Global Network office. Dr. John Russin introduced me to Preston at his retirement party and asked me to help shepherd him through the remainder of his degree. Preston became one of our star Learning by Leading interns, developing the sweet potato demonstration plot for the 2019 Corn Maze and coordinating a research project on satsumas with five other students. Preston will be presenting the results of this work, "Determination of Sensory Liking and Purchase Intent of Louisiana Satsuma Varieties," at the American Society of Horticultural Science national meetings this summer. After graduating with a degree in horticulture from the School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences, Preston's goals are to work in the fruit and vegetable industry and pursue a graduate degree.

Conan Escajeda also participated in the Learning by Leading internship program and graduated with a degree in urban forestry from Southern University. Some of you may have met Conan while he was working with Glen Wilson and D'Michael Lucas, our two arborists, learning how to properly maintain urban trees. Conan has led the effort to help catalog over 2,500 Arbor Day trees that have been planted and establish their value. Conan started working for Bartlett Tree Company at their New Orleans branch the week after graduation.

CC Berryman started working with the Botanic Gardens just this spring. She has been working with the landscape crew to plant the annual color for the spring landscape, install the new rose trial winners in the Rose Garden and renovate the landscape in front of the Orangerie. CC graduated from the School of Renewable Natural Resources.

We are so very proud of these graduates, and we are very thankful for all they have contributed to enhance your experience at the Botanic Gardens. For Allyson, Caleb, Preston, Conan and CC, who are pursuing their next great adventures in life in other locations, we wish them the very best in their endeavors. We are excited that Haleigh has chosen to continue to work with us, so the next time you visit the gardens please congratulate her on the completion of her degree.



Allyson Huval



Caleb Ryan



Haleigh Judge



Preston Dumont



Conan Escajeda



CC Berryman

Tomato Tips

Keith Lewis

Research Associate Coordinator

This spring marks the seventh season the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden has performed trials for All-America Selections. We had over 50 varieties of tomatoes to be used in home gardens that we evaluated primarily for taste. We diligently went out day after day during ripening and forced our staff to eat tomato after tomato after tomato. Someone had to do it! The good news is we found a couple that will certainly be named and released this fall. The bad news is you won't be able to get your hands on them until the spring of 2021. But don't worry, you can get your hands on some of the top varieties we looked at over the past seven years. Here are a couple of ways you can find the most current new releases.

First, the All-America Selections (AAS) edible trials don't just look at tomatoes. They evaluate everything from herbs to potatoes. These trials are done nationally at gardens and universities like ours, and the best of the best get released each spring. You can go to the AAS website at all-americanselections.org and find a complete list of winners, starting with the most recent and going all the way back to the 1940s when the trials began. In general, the newer the variety, the better the quality because the breeders and growers continually try to "one up" their last release. That means newer varieties usually have better taste and disease resistance and more fruit. However, there are exceptions to that rule. For example, the Celebrity tomato is an AAS winner from 1984, but it continues to win blind taste tests every time we compare it to new tomatoes in its class.

If you don't want to grow plants from seed, you can look for some of the new AAS releases at local nurseries. Clegg's sponsored part of our Garden Fest last year and gave out sample AAS-winning plants to everyone who participated in our taste tests. They carry some of the more popular new AAS-winning varieties and others that are not AAS varieties but do well in our region.

If you are planning on growing tomatoes in your fall garden, you will want to choose varieties that are heat-tolerant and will set fruit even when we have nighttime temperatures in the 70s. Those varieties have clues in their names that tip you off that they are summertime plants. Heat Wave, Solar Set and Florida 91 are a few of the best for our area.

If you are looking for some of the best for your springtime garden, here are a few that we think you should consider. Some are AAS winners, and some are varieties that have proven superior quality and taste.

Cherry tomatoes: Sun Gold and Sun Peach have incredible flavor and yields. In taste tests these two standouts win by a landslide every time.



Large red slicers: As we already mentioned, Celebrity is hard to beat for taste, but a couple of others that you might try that have great taste, size and disease resistance are Bella Rosa and Mountain Merit.

Heirloom-type tomatoes: The public strongly pushed to see heirloom tomatoes brought back several years ago, but because of severe disease problems and very low yields, it didn't seem practical to bring these old varieties back. What evolved from that public demand was a new hybrid tomato developed from the old heirloom varieties. One of the new releases is a series called Chef's Choice. There are six varieties in the series, and all are good, but the Orange and Yellow varieties are the most impressive. They both have great yields and good disease resistance and produce giant tomatoes each between 1 and 2 pounds!

Best of luck in your fall or spring gardens!



Wine & Roses From a Distance

Our traditional evening of Wine & Roses will take on a new shape this October. So we can continue to share the spirit of the event and the beauty of the gardens, we will be offering an opportunity to win baskets of wine, roses and Randy Roussel's latest book of nature photography, along with other special prizes!

More information will be available soon.



LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens
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PHYSICAL LOCATION: 4560 Essen Lane, Baton Rouge, La. 70809 | 225-763-3990 | DiscoverBurden.com

Please check our website for up-to-date information on these events.

July 2020			
July 6	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden	Reflections in the Garden ONLINE. "The Latest and Greatest Varieties on the Market." Dr. Allen Owings, horticulturist.
July 15	7 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.
July 18	8 a.m.-12 p.m.	Green Stick Workshop Online	Details TBD.
July 23	6:30 p.m.	Herb Society of America, Baton Rouge Unit	Monthly meeting. "Herbal Pestos" with Ginger Musso of Season to Taste.
August 2020			
Aug. 3	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens	Reflections in the Garden. "Design for Bringing the Outdoors In." Claire Major, owner, Artvark, Ltd. Art and Interiors. Members free, nonmembers \$10.
Aug. 4	6 p.m.	Master Gardeners EBR	Monthly meeting.
Aug. 17-21	8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Byzantine Icon Workshop	Details TBD.
Aug. 19	7 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting. Location TBD.
Aug. 27	6:30 p.m.	Herb Society of America, Baton Rouge Unit	Monthly meeting. Location TBD.
September 2020			
Sept. 1	6 p.m.	Master Gardeners EBR	Monthly meeting.
Sept. 14	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens	Reflections in the Garden. "Utilizing Natives for Successful Landscapes." Dr. Heather Kirk-Ballard. Members free, nonmembers \$10.
Sept. 16	7 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.
Sept. 24	6:30 p.m.	Herb Society of America, Baton Rouge Unit	Monthly meeting. Annual meeting and Herb of the Year presentation.
October 2020			
Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	TBA	Corn Maze at Burden	Corn Maze 2020 every Saturday in October. Exciting new details TBA.
Oct. 5	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens	Reflections in the Garden. "Copper for Water Gardens." Buddy Holmes, owner, Waterfall Forge. Members free, nonmembers \$10.
Oct. 6	6 p.m.	Master Gardeners EBR	Monthly meeting.
Oct. 21	7 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.
Oct. 22	6:30 p.m.	Herb Society of America, Baton Rouge Unit	Monthly meeting. "Herbs in Religious Rituals" with Art Scarbrough.

Visit our website: www.LSUAgCenter.com

PUB 3672-20-SU 450 7/20

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