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SFA Mast Arboretum * Ruby M Mize Azalea Garden * Pineywoods Native Plant Center

SFA Gardens News

Notes from the Director By David Creech

I've said it before: gardening is never easy. For many years we've fought droughts, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, winter freezes, insects, diseases, weeds, human vandalism, and politics. Who would have thought wild pigs could be added to the list? But here they are - and they're making a real mess in the Gardens. See the piece called "Pig Tales" later in this newsletter. All I can say is that at this writing it's Pigs 1, SFA Gardens 0.

Our fifth Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference in June was a success! Dawn gets an A++ as an event organizer! While attendance was a bit lower than years past, our 80+ participants enjoyed a wonderful lineup of speakers, some great field trips, banquets, book signings, a native plant sale, and a wrap up dinner and dance to remember. You can check out the Proceedings at our website: <http://arboretum.sfasu.edu>. The "Ilex you a lot - Ilex you berry much" theme will go down as another classic. We



Shoppers at the Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference plant sale.

like themes.

Since the last newsletter, this place has been a treadmill. At the PNPC, the green roof pavilion just to the south of the Bomar house is working out better than expected. A

wide assortment of dry-loving native plants is thriving. I actually think they're enjoying their roof top view of the place. Built and designed by Trey Anderson, our PNPC research associate, this may be the only green roof in the world actually designed for a controlled burn! Before we set the roof on fire, I may need to make a quick trip up to legal counsel. There are rules here, you know.



Planting the green roof pavilion at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center

At the PNPC's north edge - in the Jimmy Hinds Park along Austin Street, this circle of weeping, wailing, and worshipping baldcypress are happy in their new home. For this first year only, they're getting about 6 gallons of water per tree each day via a drip system, something we can take away next year. After all, this really is a very swampy area, perfect for bald cypress. I've had more questions - "What the heck is that?" - and comments - "It sure is weird" - on this planting than just about anything we've ever done. I guess the public is right; there really is a magical Druid-Stonehenge feeling about the place. No, there will be no sacrifices made at its center. Promise. As for where we go from here, we're studying our options.



Duke Pittman and Taylor Wynn working in the SFA Recreational Trails and Gardens

If you live in Nacogdoches, you may have noticed that there's renewed activity over at SFA's Recreational Trails and Gardens. About a month or so ago, one of our "friends" dropped by the Agriculture building with an axe in hand looking for Dave Creech. Whenever that happens, I usually find a quick exit and make my escape good. However, in this case I learned that the axe was a gift to get us back to work over there, and along with the axe came some funding support. So that's just what we're doing. Per the donor's request, we hired a student, Taylor Wynn, and he's carving out a small area - OK, it's about two acres - mainly removing privet, tallow, chinaberry, and poison ivy - working toward a clean forest floor under a high canopy of pines. Our goal is to create a garden collection of deciduous azaleas, all to be planted this fall and winter. Stay tuned.



A view of "Cypresshenge" from East Austin Street

Hot Fun at Pineywoods Summer Camp

By Kerry Lemon

It may not be the hottest summer ever but it was probably the hottest summer camp seasons experienced at the SFA Pineywoods Camp. Once again we demonstrated that it *is* possible to be outside having FUN *even* in Texas summer!

For the past nine years the education component of SFA Mast Arboretum and Pineywoods Native Plant Center has sponsored outdoor education summer camp programs for children. This year Pineywoods Summer Camp had four extraordinary weeks of camp for kids ages 4-15. Our theme for the year was "Better than Ever!" and indeed the goal was achieved with dedicated, hardworking staff, volunteers, and 79 campers.



Discovering insects on a nature hike

Beginning with Wonder Woods, for the 4 to 6 year olds, campers marveled at the "wonders" of nature all around at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center. With a focus on a new animal each day, kids learned about opossums (amazing marsupials), butterflies (with a visit from lepidopterist, Merry Anne Bright), owls (TPWD ornithologist, Cliff Shackelford), worms (Elyce brought out her personal worm farm), and fish (firsthand

experience with a cane fishing pole). There were delicious snacks, silly games, crazy crafts, walks through the Tucker Woods, and songs galore. What a great week to start off the camp season!



Nice catch! Bass fishing at Mill Creek Pond

We then moved on to Mill Creek Gardens for two separate weeks of Mill Creek Camp for our 7 to 10 year olds. At Mill Creek 1, we were able to continue our collaboration with the Boys and Girls Club of Nacogdoches and brought 8 kids from the Club to join us at camp. This was a unique experience for many of them, having never been to summer camp before. This year we introduced two Texas Parks and Wildlife programs, Angler Education and Archery. In addition, snake expert Kerry Barnes charmed us with some local reptiles and Andy McCrady, an SFA graduate in Wildlife Management, shared his knowledge of white-tail deer. Each week ended with fishing on Mill Creek Pond, and the now famous canoe paddle and family picnic.

Wilderness Adventures for the oldest group

of campers, 11-15 year olds, is always a special time for staff and campers alike. The pace slows down a bit as we focus on cooperation with team building activities presented by Michael Maningas and staff from SFA Outdoor Pursuits. One of our long-term campers came up with our motto for the week: "Teamwork makes the Dream Work!" Weather and high river levels prompted some last minute flexible thinking as we traveled to Caddo Lake State Park instead of our usual Neches River trip. Caddo Lake was magical. The highlight was the silent night hike looking for alligator eyes, listening to the chorus of frogs, and watching the stars. Wow – you had to be there to believe it!



Canoeing on Caddo Lake

We want to thank all the generous donors who made it possible for us to offer 22 scholarships, Nacogdoches Junior Forum for once again contributing food, staff of the Columbia Geo-Spatial Center for GPS training, and John and Cheryl Boyette for giving their time and energy without which we could not have made it. It truly is a group effort and numerous others gave time, energy, and support to make it all possible. There are no words to adequately describe the incredible experience of these four weeks. We hear stories from parents and grandparents about the excitement expressed by the kids and their eagerness to return next year. Hopefully we are helping in our small way to create a new generation of outdoor enthusiasts, future gardeners, naturalists, biologists, wildlife experts, and lovers of the natural world.



Remembering the Family Tree

By Greg Grant



Crapemyrtles (*Lagerstroemia*) are to the South what the lilac is to the North. As a matter of fact, crapemyrtles have even been referred to as “the lilac of the South.” Lilacs (*Syringa*) are pretty and of course smell wonderful, but they don’t hold a candle to all that the enduring crapemyrtle offers. And when I say enduring, I mean it. The popularity of many plants has come and gone but the crapemyrtle has reigned as the queen of small flowering trees in East Texas for the last one hundred years.

All of my people in Shelby County had crapemyrtles in their yards. After all, unlike the once blooming lilac, they bloom all summer long. They’re also tough enough to survive with no additional water and no maintenance whatsoever. According to my late Granny Ruth, her Grandmother Etta Jones had nothing in her front yard but crapemyrtles and old fashioned, reseeding petunias. Imagine how pretty that must have been in the rather drab little farming community of Arcadia. I’ve considered creating this same Monet image in my little front yard. Both are heirloom horticultural treasures.

Etta, who kept her hair pulled up tight (my Grandmother Emanis called her “onion head”) was obviously into aesthetics, as she

also abhorred everybody’s leghorn chickens marring the red clay landscape with their stray white feathers. Remember, this was in the days of swept dirt yards instead of manicured green lawns. For that reason, she kept Rhode Island Reds, whose feathers blended in with the landscape. Etta’s mother, Dump Block (yes, I said Dump!), who lived with them must have had an artist’s eye as well, as Granny Ruth said she kept the door to her room locked at all times. Apparently she kept all her little porcelain “pretties” and such in there and had no intention of letting her great-grand children destroy them. The Blocks were German. Enough said. Granny Ruth said she wanted in there to play with them in the worst way, but to no avail. My, how times have changed.

My Grandmother Emanis’ mother-in-law, “Miss Eva” Emanis had pretty pink crapemyrtles in her back yard. According to my grandmother, Miss Eva used the crapemyrtle wood as kindling for starting fires.

That’s one I haven’t heard before. Several years ago I rooted cuttings of Miss Eva’s crapemyrtles which still survive in the woods near the Emanis Lake. I planted one on each side of my front porch and one on her grave at the Pleasant Grove Cemetery. Miss Eva was a loud talking, interesting sort. It seems like everybody on



my late Papaw’s side of the family was entertaining, especially him. With a name like Rebel Eloy Emanis I suppose it went with the territory. His people (originally Ximines) were creoles from Louisiana so I guess they brought the party with them!

I love family history as well as horticultural history. It’s a good feeling to experience a connection with the past. I’m restoring my Emanis grandparent’s old dogtrot house which once belonged to my grandmother’s Pate grandparents as well. My crude little farmscape is mostly ornamented with old fashioned, pass-along plants, especially those with family connections. To commemorate my Louisiana Spanish-French connection, I’ve planted an allé of lavender colored crapemyrtles lining my drive. They now focus the visitors view right through the open dog trot of the house.

I’ve never pruned these heirloom crapemyrtles that I propagated from the old Ezra Wheeler place down the road. They’ll grow

into the most beautiful shape on their own and will reveal a beautiful exfoliating bark to complement their spectacular summer flowers and gorgeous red fall foliage. Why would I ever want to top them? My grannies never

did, and they knew what pretty was long before I was born.

*There once was a man with some gall.
For he wouldn’t let his crapemyrtles grow tall.
When asked why he did it,
He replied like an idiot,
“Because that’s what they do at the mall.”*

Blazing Stars it's Hot Outside!

By Trey Anderson

Summertime is going full blast here at the PNPC and with that comes blooms that make the blistering heat a little more bearable. While I love all native plants equally, I admit that color is a must in order for me to say a plant is one of my favorites.

Among those favorites, one flower that stands out among the rest is blazing stars.

The blazing stars are an amazing group of wildflowers that are a member of the As-

terminal flower spikes, set atop strong leafy flower stalks. Flowers on each stalk generally open around the same time which makes this species a great cut flower. The rough and narrow leaves grow up and out from a basal tuft and sport a fuzzy, green color. You can find this plant in the wild in very dry clay or sandy soils. This is a garden worthy plant that needs little attention in the landscape.

and continue to produce a fabulous show year after year.

In my opinion, *Liatris elegans*, pinkscale blazing star, has yet to be fully appreciated by the horticulture industry, and that's a shame. This plant is best suited for those driest-of-dry locations to which you never give any attention. It is commonly found on very well-drained, low-fertility soils in the



Liatris aspera - tall blazing star



Liatris pycnostachya - prairie blazing star



Liatris elegans - pinkscale blazing star

teraceae family and the *Liatris* genera. There are many different species you can find in East Texas that are worthy of any perennial border. Of those many species, those worthy of mention are *Liatris aspera*, *Liatris pycnostachya*, and *Liatris elegans*. I have found that these three are just awesome performers in our blistering heat.

Liatris aspera, tall blazing star, is the tallest of the three listed above, although I have seen specimens of the others that are close rivals. *L. aspera* has the largest actual flower of the three, but typically fewer in number than the other two species. Generally speaking it will reach heights of 3-5 feet and flowers will be 1/2 to 1 inch deep rose-purple and appear fluffy round head. Flowers are arranged closely together on long,

Liatris pycnostachya, prairie blazing star, is one of the showiest *Liatris* species. They typically grow to around 2 to 4 feet in height and have smaller, denser flower spikes than the tall blazing star. This plant does very well in full sun if it is tightly planted next to other plants. Tighter planting allows for better "neighborly" support for the flower stalks, which in turn allows them to grow taller and fuller than normal. There are a few selections that have been made in the trade for other colors such as white and darker pink. *Liatris pycnostachya* can be found in the wild in prairie settings where either the soil is very clayey or sandy. All in all, this is one durable beautiful native plant for your garden that can withstand our extreme temperatures

uplands of East Texas. The flower on this blazing star is different from the others in that it has a later bloom time. It has a charming, whitish-pink flower and sometimes sports showy yellow bracts that are often confused with the flower. If you have an area by the mailbox that never gets attention, this plant would generally do great there. The overall height of this plant is around 2 to 3 feet; and rarely will you find one greater in size. I've even encountered one freak of nature roughly 4' in height with a very dense flower spike. I think there's opportunity for selection there!

Mark your calendars:

Fabulous Fall Festival - October 2, 2010, 9 am!

Did You See the Size of That Thing?

By Dawn Stover

Some of you may have noticed those gigantic grasshoppers here and there. You know, those big, so-ugly-they're-almost-pretty, yellow and black things that are "so big they can't even fly!" These behemoths are known as eastern lubber grasshoppers.

Eastern lubbers are found in the southeastern US, following the coast from South Carolina west into the Gulf States to Texas, as well as a little pocket in middle Tennessee. Periodically they occur in large enough numbers to make an economic impact. You'd think an army of 2 ½ to 3 inch-long grasshoppers munching away would make an impact. Although their coloration varies, adults are generally a dull yellow with variable black spots and markings. The hind wings offer a hint of rose-red. The eastern lubber molts five times before reaching adulthood, and looks rather different in each stage.

Females will dig two-inch holes in drier soils to lay up to 50 eggs in the summer months. Each female will lay two to three masses of eggs which lie in the ground until early the next spring. You may notice a small throng of baby grasshoppers munching on expiring paperwhite foliage. I've seen this happen, but due to my distaste for the limp, lingering foliage I tend to look the other way rather than applying a pesticide.

These lumbering lubbers are more show than go. Their wings are too small for flight and they can only jump a very small distance. They are aptly described as "clumsy" as they walk and sort of crawl to their next destination. Despite their hefty size, they are not hefty feeders. They easily consume less than their more dainty relatives. The damage becomes truly bothersome or economic in years where numbers are relatively high. Here in the Arboretum, they seem to prefer soft, fleshy leaves, feasting noticeably on many of the crinum throughout the garden.

An added oddity of this Jurassic-looking creature is the fact that they can be quite toxic to birds and small mammals, making them violently ill. Their unique coloration is a warning to potential predators to stay away. Loggerhead shrikes are the only avian species able to consume eastern lubber grasshoppers with their habit of impaling prey on thorns. This allows the toxins in the grasshoppers to dissipate after a day or two. In addition, the lubber has the ability to emit a foamy spray in conjunction with a loud, intimidating hiss. And if that weren't enough, they can spit up partially digested plant materials mixed with semi-toxic compounds. So there are plenty of reasons for a predator to stay away from this slow-moving target.



Grasshoppers can be managed by managing their source of food. Keeping scruffy vegetation, especially near damp or wet areas, beat back will go a long way in suppressing the eastern lubber population. The young grasshoppers remain in clusters and can be "dealt with" en masse. Since the adults are so slow, they are easily hand picked and thrown into soapy water. Once they reach the adult stage, they are not easily controlled with commercial pesticides.

For now, the impact in the Arboretum is less noticeable than the spectacle of giant yellow and black grasshoppers. More often than not I'll run across a guest who has seen one and lingers observing in a state of amazement. I may employ some measure of control in the future, but for now I'll enjoy hearing "Wow, did you see the size of that thing?!?"

Viburnum luzonicum

By Dave Creech

Viburnum luzonicum – the Luzon Viburnum, is a survivor. I've admired our original specimen for about 25 years and the fact it's still alive here for all that long, well, that's plenty of testimony to its rugged nature. Our first plant came via Lynn Lowrey about 1986, and I promptly planted it right next to a telephone pole near the front of the garden. Lynn Lowrey, plant hunter, role model and never prone to get too excited, said "this is a good plant." That it is.

In our region and in most winters the bush is fully evergreen with dramatic fall color. Foliage transitions from green to reddish to dark purple, and finally fades to almost black, which persists well into the winter, particularly if temperatures are relatively mild. At least from our experience, the spe-



Viburnum luzonicum in fall color in the Arboretum

cies has been rock solid in hardiness, having survived four degrees in December, 1989, and a ten degree event in January 2010. Our single old specimen regularly carries a good cloak of foliage well into January. Spring bloom is not overwhelming – basically a

modest show of flat white clusters, but it's certainly charming. Flower fragrance is not a high point. For an exam question, one of my Landscape Plant Materials students wrote that "an up close inspection of the flower fragrance leaves one fondly reminiscing of a men's locker room." Flowers are soon followed by yellowish berries that transition to red in the fall and finally become jet black in early winter. Leaves are 1 to 3 inches long, and foliage is attractive, somewhat olive green and clean. It is listed as native to a broad range from the Philippines to southern China and Indochina. For whatever reason, I have yet to encounter the species in China. Propagation is very easy from cuttings and seed, and there are opportunities for improvement.

Pig Tales

By Dave Creech

Citizens of East Texas, take heed! Wild feral hogs have declared war. Here are some basic wild pig facts to scare you. These critters are invasive exotics – they’re not from here. In our area, there are really no predators, save man. They eat anything. Each sow can have a litter after three months, three weeks and three days – that’s every 120 days. With seven to ten piglets in a litter, you do the math. They carry pseudorabies, tuberculosis, other nasty diseases, and they smell bad. They are dangerous to humans. If you accidentally run into a mama and her brood, things can get dicey quick. Don’t forget they’re very fast. You will never outrun an angry boar or sow. They destroy gardens, habitats, ecosystems, and my normally cheerful outlook.

First, who are these guys and why are they here? Well, they were given to us originally by the Spanish around three hundred years ago. They escaped. Without understanding the consequences, true European and Russian boars were introduced later here and there, and they also escaped. Domestic pigs of more modern vintage and variety have escaped. While hog cholera in the 1930s almost eliminated them, they survived and rebounded. What we now have is a swarming pool of pig genetics, in the millions, and they’re looking in our windows thinking they can take our land. We’re here to say: no you can’t!

Herds of feral hogs have been testing the Raguet area for several years. It’s been an interesting evolution. First, they came slinking in from the north under the cover of darkness, running their trails in the forests along LaNana Creek. It didn’t take long before the neighborhood was chock full of scary feral hog tales – many otherwise happy citizens waking up to find their back yard rototilled, bushes scattered here and there, and flower beds destroyed. We shouldn’t fault the pigs too much. After all, we agree with them – the Raguet area really is a pleasant place to live, work, play, eat, and, of course, multiply. No mountain lions, no bears, plenty of woods, and maybe an arrow whisking by every now and then. To a pig, this spot on earth seems rather tranquil and fun. So, the pigs thought it over. They’ve settled in. They’re going for it.

To be honest, I always figured, heck, all those pig problems are north of SFA. Surely, they won’t cross Austin Street. That ended about a year ago. At first, it was just an occasional sighting or sign down in PNPC’s bottomland. We could live with that. Then there was evidence they were rummaging around the Tucker House and stream. We were unhappy.



Baiting hogs with rotten peaches in East Texas

This spring, the front entrance bed was hit hard, and small woody shrubs were scattered here and there. We’re angry now. Then, a couple of weeks ago – much to our surprise – the marauders extended their sneaky nightly treks south into the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. I think here they’ve found heaven – deep mulch, easy to root garden beds, and great shrub cover. So nice it seems that they decided to make a stinky hog wallow in one garden bed before moving on to tear up the north side of the Azalea Garden. The handwriting was on the wall. Enough is enough. You might ask exactly what was the final straw. Well, I came up on a rare *Halesia diptera* ‘Lady Catherine’ at the PNPC down along Tucker stream - a weeping silverbell gift from Dr. Ken Tilt at Auburn – laying askew, thrashed and looking sad. This was too much. A staff meeting followed, our jaws tightened, and a plan to do something was hatched. This will be an epic conflict and defeat is not an option.

Feral hog control in East Texas cities is just that – control. No one expects to get the problem to zero. SFA’s Wildlife faculty members in the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture are the best in the world – and then there’s an army of enthusiastic Wildlife students looking to be part of a real world experience. Dr. Billy Higginbotham (SFA Forestry graduate), Texas AgriLife, Overton, Texas, is in high demand for pig control seminars, research projects, and demonstration projects - and Billy led a discussion in Nacogdoches on feral hogs in East Texas and what can be done. What we have learned is that there is a strategy for a community like ours to bring numbers down to a manageable level. It’s not a simple quick fix. It’ll have to be an ongoing program – and SFA, the City of Nacogdoches, and all our citizens need to be on board. If nothing is done, then the problem will only get worse. Jacksonville is a nearby case in point, where pig populations exploded, and for a while pigs owned the town. That problem is more or less now being attacked in fine East Texas fashion. Still, their advice is simple: take care of the problem before it gets away from you. It would be bad enough if the only purpose of our garden was the visual pleasure we provide to tourists, local citizens and other passers-by, but these darn intruders are destroying research efforts and robbing SFA students of valuable educational opportunities.

If you are interested in donating to the feral hog control effort, contact Trey Anderson at the PNPC, 936-468-4104.



Building a hog corral at the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden

Good Neighbors Help New Gardens

By Barb Stump

You know how beautiful our “Native Azalea Trail” section of the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden is when the deciduous species and cultivated varieties bloom yellow, red, orange, pink, and white, scenting the whole area with spicy honeysuckle-like fragrance. Some of these plants have been in the garden for 12 years, others for 8 and 10 years and are beginning to reach heights of 10 feet or more. The great thing about deciduous azaleas is that their structure is like a tree, with many branches reaching upward from each terminal node. Each node has one or more terminal nodes from which many funnel-shaped flowers bloom. Every year I am amazed at the increasing number of flowers, especially from our plants that are multi-trunked specimens.

About 30 % of the deciduous azaleas in the garden are actual species, such as the yellow *Rhododendron austrinum*. The rest are cultivated varieties bred by breeders or selections by breeders and nurserymen. Examples are ‘Aromi Sunrise’—a variety bred by the late Dr. Eugene Aromi using heat-tolerant *austrinum* crossed with a big-flowered Knap Hill Exbury azalea, ‘Hiawatha’. Several plants in Bed 25 made

their typical extravagant show this April.

Because it is obvious that I love these plants, and because they deserve to be known by more gardeners, we plan to make growing and using deciduous azaleas our theme for the March 12, 2011 Azalea Symposium that is part of the annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail events. Our own Ruby Mize azalea collections will give participants inspiration and will show them how much room to leave in their home gardens for these large showy plants.

Recently, the Texas Chapter of the Azalea Society of America met at my home in Nacogdoches to attract new members by showing people how to stick evergreen cuttings. We had local people and people from Shreveport, Jasper and Houston as well. The mission of the ASA is to increase appreciation for azaleas through education and hands-on projects. In keeping with this mission, our service project for this year is to obtain and donate nearly 100 deciduous azaleas to the new SFA Recreational Trails and Gardens project. This garden is right across University Drive from the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. Thanks to hard work by SFA Gardens Technician Duke Pittman

and horticulture student Taylor Wynn, a space has been cleared of privet and limbed up so that appropriate deciduous species azaleas and other native plants can be planted there. This fall, when the weather is cooler, our chapter will help Duke with the planting. An example of the deciduous azaleas the chapter purchased from Doremus Nursery in Warren, Texas, for this project is the “Texas Azalea”—*R. oblongifolium*, a beautiful late-blooming fragrant white. To learn more about the local chapter, contact me at bstump@sfasu.edu or 936-468-4129.



Rhododendron oblongifolium - “Texas Azalea”

Pineapple Pleasure

By Dawn Stover

Over the years, we’ve grown many a pineapple lily (*Eucomis comosa*) here in the Mast Arboretum. I have so wanted to like them, but until recently have been wholly unimpressed. Admittedly, there are times when I am wrong, and this time it took a long time to learn my lesson. For years, we considered this a shade plant and they did in fact grow in the shade. They did eek out an anemic bloom or two that usually flopped gracelessly to the ground before fully opening. Then I saw a nursery grown specimen in a black pot, on black weed barrier with nary a spot of shade in sight. Hmmm. I’m willing to try any plant three times, and I was still on my first attempt. Number two landed in the old perennial border that was slowly being eaten by a chameleon plant gone awry. The last chance: a spot with good soil, a fair amount of sun and the last hope. These plants have been in the ground for three summers now



Eucomis comosa ‘Sparkling Burgundy’

and are absolutely stunning! Right plant, right place, you know.

One of our loyal volunteers, Sherrie Randall, is really good about sharing plant experiences when she comes in each Tuesday. Not long ago she says “Dawn” in such a

way that I know she’s been really impressed with something and is ready to share. Her pineapple lilies are blooming impressively for the first time too. I’m pretty sure ours were planted at the same time and the lesson we’ve both learned is one of placement and patience.

These sturdy perennials are nearly trouble free and entirely rewarding when located in the right spot. We grow a variety called ‘Sparkling Burgundy’ with strappy wine-red foliage. No relation to the pineapple, the flowers appear in clusters on thick stalks, arranged perfectly around the stem and topped with a tuft of foliage. The resemblance to the pineapple is cause for the common name. Full sun and rich soils are most appreciated, and keep the heavy bloom stalks from flopping. We have some new varieties - sited correctly - and can’t wait to see their performance. At least in a few years.



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

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Come grow with us!



SFA Gardens to Host Arcadia Dogtrot Tour

Join us for a special treat as we tour two of Greg Grant's restored dogtrot family homes in the Shelby County Community of Arcadia, Saturday September 11 from 9:00 am until 1 pm. Dogtrot house were the original "green" houses, built with dog runs or breezeways through the middle of them for air circulation. Of course dogs could circulate through them as well! Constructed without electricity, heating, A/C, or plumbing, these homes were designed for air flowing through the middle to pull air through cross ventilated doorways and windows in a Southern climate where the hot humid summers were much more unbearable than the brief winters. These vernacular homes were once common throughout the South but have all but disappeared in our modern society. One belonged to his maternal grandpar-



ents and great-great-grandparents while the other belonged to his paternal great grandparents where he also grows an annual crop of sugar cane for syrup making. In addition we'll take a look at Greg's pocket prairie

where he rescues and grows native wildflowers from imperiled local roadsides as well as his tall grass prairie restoration project. Greg's neck of the woods is also home to over 100 bluebird houses that he has constructed and erected. He'll point out his many children as they twitter about. Greg Grant is co-author of *Home Landscaping-Texas* and *The Southern Heirloom Garden*. He is also a contributing editor to *Texas Gardener* and Neil Sperry's *Gardens* magazines. Greg rarely hosts tours so don't miss this special opportunity to take a peek into his home life. Transportation is provided from the SFA Mast Arboretum. Space is limited so advanced registration is required. Cost is \$25 for SFA Gardens members and \$30 for non members. To register call Elyce Rodewald at 936-468-1832 or e-mail erodewald@sfasu.edu.