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Winter 2008

## SFA Gardens Newsletter, Winter 2008

SFA Gardens, Stephen F. Austin State University

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# Notes from the Director

## By: Dr. David Creech

For the next few months, please be kind and gentle to the staff at SFA's garden world. They're a bit tense. I've decided that it is not me . . . it's just that time of year. Spring has sprung and with it, the garden needs attention. Weeds are saying hello. There's mulch to spread, beds to clean up, and plants to plant. But it's not the garden work that strikes terror here - it's the marathon of garden events ahead. I have developed a system to deal with this. I call it my planning the event, surviving the event, and collapsing after the event management strategy. With Barb's wonderful detail overkill, the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden symposium will kick off March 29<sup>th</sup>. Dawn, Greg and the Volunteers are wrestling to bring in the best Garden Gala Day ever on April 12th.

At the Pineywoods Native Plant Center, the details and planning of the fourth Cullowhee Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference looms ahead. From now until June, Elyce will provide programming for 50 to 100 area school children EVERY day. Then, there's the Thursday lecture series, a grafting workshop, and a seminar or two to pull off. The list goes on. As for me, I remain a calm spot in the middle of the storm, always ready to offer advice and ideas of little value.

Lest we forget, we're here for the plants and for folks who enjoy them. This came home to roost a few days ago when, during an early morning walk, I ran into a ten-foot

*Michelia platypetala* in full bloom for the very first time in our garden, in Texas, and in our region. There were no bands, no parades, and the media was conspicuously absent. Yet, it's really what we're all about. Strange and wonderful plants. Over the years, we've put together a rather long and exciting list of michelias that now call this place home. *Michelia figo*, banana shrub, is an old-timer from China and this fragrant shrub has graced southern gardens since the late 1700s, but there's been a



*Michelia platypetala* blooms in the Azalea Garden

flood of new michelias on the scene starting in the early 1990's. First it must be said that, in spite of protest groups here and there, botanists have recently lumped michelias back into the genus *Magnolia*, another taxonomic decision some of us find hard to live with. The "difference" between *Magnolia* and *Michelia* is that magnolias bloom on terminal buds and michelias bloom on terminal and axillary buds. There are other differences, but they were evidently not great enough for the botanists to stop classifying *Michelia* as *Magnolia*. Thanks for that. Besides *M. platypetala*, we have nice specimens of *M. figo*, *M. foveolata*, *M. wilsonii*, *M. yunnanensis*, *M.*

*skinneriana*, *M. maudiae*, *M. martinii*, *M. cavaleriei*, *M. doltsopa* and about fifty young trees from China seed we just aren't sure about yet.

One of the big showcase michelias in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea garden is *Michelia maudiae* 深山含笑花.

There are two thirty-foot trees and they never fail to put on a great show of fragrant five-inch wide, white flowers. They start blooming in late January and early February and then continue to open flowers into March.

Susceptible to late winter and early spring frosts, we have made seed only once in the last decade. While cruising around the internet, I ran across a garden web forum that included the following comment from a visitor from Texarkana to our garden: "I went to Stephen F. Austin's Mast Arboretum last

night and saw one of these michelias blooming. It was wonderful! The tree was around 25 ft tall, not a shrub at all, and was evergreen, with these big white flowers on it. The flowers had a fragrance that I can't describe, kind of like gardenia. The fragrance perfumed the whole garden. I am so excited about this tree and the fact that it blooms in January, when the rest of the world is so gloomy. This is a must have plant for anyone that enjoys fragrance in their garden. It may be my new favorite plant." Nothing like that comment to brighten our day. After all, we are here for the plants. So until next time, keep planting.

# Pining Away: A Love Affair With Pine Trees

By: Greg Grant

I know many of my fellow East Texans will question my sense, but I would like to announce to the world that I'm deeply in love with pine trees. It's always seemed a bit odd to me that folks in other parts of Texas that don't have native pine trees have always wanted to grow them, while folks in the heart of the East Texas Pineywoods spend their life cussing them. I've heard it all: "the pollen gets all over everything in the spring, sticky sap gets on your car, pine cones hurt your bare feet, limbs fall on your house." And then there are those needles that have to be raked all them time. (Those needles happen to make the best mulch and are the basis for an entire industry in the Southeastern U.S.).

Get a grip folks! All trees have leaves, pollen, fruit, seeds, and sap that fall at some point. These same people curse pecans for making nuts, oaks for making acorns, and crape myrtles for making those nasty blooms that fall on the patio. When it comes to nature and life in general, tolerance should be the rule: there are no perfect trees. The key to being happy in life is finding the good in all and appreciating them for just being there.

I have four little nephews in Dallas, NONE of whom will eat watermelon. Whoever heard of kids in the South not liking watermelon? It should be a law that everybody in the South has to like peas, okra, sweet potatoes, ribbon cane syrup, Coca Cola, and watermelon. It's who we are. If you live near the ocean you should love water and seafood. If you live in a desert, cactus should be your best friend. And for Heaven's sake, if you live in the Pineywoods of East Texas, learn to love pine trees or find another place to live! This seems so simple now, but it has not always been so easy for me.

When I was a kid growing up in Longview, I was taught that pines were evil trees just waiting to snap and fall on your house during an ice storm. All of them belonged in a saw mill waiting to be made into pulp or lumber. I certainly didn't hate them, but I did take them for granted as there were so many of them. And of course I just assumed that the adults knew what they were talking about.

I didn't think twice about it when I left to

attend Texas A&M University at College Station. But I distinctly remember leaving the pines behind in Crockett. It was like leaving your grandmother's house and heading into a strange strip center parking lot. Something immediately didn't seem right. I didn't just miss the pines; I missed all the tall trees. It got worse when I worked for the Extension service in Dallas and eventually in San Antonio. I finally figured it all out on my many trips home from San Antonio. My entire mood would



A loblolly pine towers over the Pineywoods Native Plant Center

change when I'd get one quarter of the way home to the Lost Pines of Bastrop. It seemed I missed the pines most of all. We've all heard how "absence makes the heart grow fonder" and it's so true. I missed the sound they made when the wind blew through them, I missed the way the needles looked after freezing drizzle, I missed the way they smelled, I missed having an endless supply of mulch, and most of all I missed the way they looked...like wispy tall evergreen cathedral supports. It was in my blood. There was no getting around it. I was hopelessly in love forever.

As a kid staying with my grandparents in Shelby County, my job was to gather "kindling" for starting fires in the heater

and fireplace. The really good stuff would be dark red-orange and smelled like straight turpentine. It would flame up just like it had been soaked in diesel or kerosene. To this day, every time I run across a nice chunk of kindling pine, I have to break a piece off and give a good sniff. One smell and I'm back at my Grandmother and Papaw's in Arcadia having the time of my life. I keep one of my great-grandmother's split oak cotton baskets full of it for starting my own fires each winter and it makes the whole house smell wonderful.

There are three pines native to East Texas and I love them all.

Short leaf pine (*Pinus echinata*) is native to northeast Texas and grows in the uplands. As the name implies it has short needles that occur in bundles of two and small cones.

Loblolly pine (*Pinus taeda*) is native to deep East Texas and southeast Texas and typically grows in bottomlands. It has longer needles that occur in bundles of three and medium sized cones. Today it's the most common pine grown for wood and pulp in the timber industry.

Longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris*) is the rarest of the three. It was native to the sandy lands of deep East Texas but after being heavily logged for its long-lasting timber is rarely replanted due to its slow growth. It's a very fire retardant species whose growth is actually encouraged by fire. It has long, tufted needles in bundles of three and the

largest cones of all. They were quite prized in my kindergarten and grade school days for making both miniature Christmas trees and Thanksgiving turkeys. There once was a giant one at the entrance to the PNPC. The stump is still there. We plan to plant a row of them behind our Marsh-Meadow.

Unfortunately the native pines of East Texas are only adapted to the acidic well-drained soils in the eastern quarter of the state where rainfall total ranges from 40-50 inches per year. They are never very happy growing in the drought-prone, alkaline, chalky soils of Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, San Antonio and beyond. If you live there and want to see real pines, come to East Texas, and I'll share the love.

# Azalea Symposium—“Secrets of Azalea Gardens, Old and New”

By: Barbara Stump



*Rhododendron* 'Watchet'

Our theme for the annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail Symposium gives you an idea of the breadth of azalea gardening in East Texas and Louisiana. Last year's symposium, as you may remember, was a big event for us when for three days the Arboretum hosted 85 people from the national Azalea Society of America annual convention. This year, we will hold the symposium on March 29, in Room #110 of the SFA Agriculture Building at Stephen F. Austin State University from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. With the repeated cold snaps we've been having, we hope to have peak bloom in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, just as we did last year on that date.



*Rhododendron* 'Scott Gartrell'

Since we are in the oldest town in Texas, it is only natural that we start our symposium off with the history of the Bayou Bend Gardens in Houston's historic River Oaks area. Bayou Bend Gardens Curator Bart Brechter is a SFA horticulture grad who gained more practical azalea-growing experience work-

ing with the azalea gardens at Callaway Gardens in Georgia and is presently president of the Texas Chapter of the Azalea Society of America. He will present the historic design of Houston's oldest formal azalea garden (1920s-1940s) and tell how he has converted it to a totally organic public garden.



*Rhododendron stenopetalum* 'Koromo Shikibu'

Next, we will move to the newest garden, the Margie Y. Jenkins Azalea Garden at Hammond, Louisiana. Dr. Regina Bracy, LSU AgCenter's Resident Coordinator in Hammond will present the steps she and her staff took in 2006 to begin developing this garden, which aims to include as many azalea cultivars as will grow well in Zone 8b. The first plantings of Robin Hill hybrid azaleas are in, with more in process. This hybrid group was developed by Robert Gartrell of Wyckoff, New Jersey, to develop azaleas that were hardy in Zones 6b to 9b, that would bloom late, and would have some of the large-flowered characteristics of the Satsuki azaleas. We have 20 of the 69 Robin Hill cultivars that Gartrell named in the Ruby Mize Azalea Garden.

Finally, we have the wonderful opportunity to learn how master-propagator and nursery owner Ms. Margie Jenkins of Amite, Louisiana, grows her choice evergreen and deciduous azaleas. She is the green-fingered person who propagated every lovely "Purple Spider Azalea" (*Rhododendron stenopetalum* 'Koromo Shikibu') that graces the 700-foot long beds along the University Drive front of our own Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. Ms. Margie has selected some wonderful new azalea introductions, as well. She also introduced me to



*Rhododendron* 'Primitive Beauty'

two of my favorite azaleas with unusual forms—the white spider form of 'Primitive Beauty', which is actually a Southern Indica, and the nearly chrysanthemum-flowered 'Yodagawa' Azalea (*R. yedoense*).

After a lunch in the Arboretum Asian Valley azalea collection—weather permitting—we'll tour the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden, which is now a 10-year-old garden. Along the tour I will point out the most colorful azalea collections and why they are arranged as they are; tell stories about those dedicated nursery owners and Azalea Society of America members who gave or sold us so many of the plants; and yes, share a couple of design decisions we now need to correct. While we are in the garden, there will be many youngsters and mothers or grandmothers enjoying a fun garden party in the second annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail "Little Princess Garden Party."



All this for just \$25, including lunch. Bring your cameras, take some notes, and add to the wealth of azaleas in your gardens, old and new. To register for the symposium, please call 1-888-OLDEST-TOWN (1-888-653-378-8696) or download the registration form from [www.nacogdochesazaleas.com](http://www.nacogdochesazaleas.com). We hope to see you there.

# Uncommon Scents: A Common Sense Guide to Winter Blues

By: Dawn Stover



*Magnolia x 'Spectrum'* branches against a clear blue sky

Every now and then, when the “dull-drums” of winter beat on, there are bright sunny days with a hint of warmth in the air. The sky is bluer than any other time of year, and periodic bursts of color can be found sprinkled throughout the garden. The gaudy blooms of deciduous magnolias promise that there is still life in a lifeless landscape. While it’s hard to miss these beauties, there are many, almost inconspicuous blossoms seemingly everywhere. Lucky for us, and some early-bird honey bees, our noses are often the best tool in locating many a spring treasure.

Soon enough, the visual onslaught that is azalea season will be upon us. While azalea season is a breathtaking time of the year, these small, simple treasures found on the rarest of sunny days can serve to rekindle our love affair with Mother Nature.

*Prunus mume* - Japanese apricot is one of the first trees to bloom in the Arboretum. It’s lightly scented blossoms are visually complimented in the soft way the blush-white petals fall to and rest on the ground, creating a soft white carpet akin to light snow. In Japan, the fruit is eaten raw, boiled or candied, is used to scent tea, is made into vinegar, preserved in sugar or pickled in salt to make a treat called “Umeboshi.” The tree at the arboretum has yet to produce fruit, more than likely due to it’s early bloom and subsequent killing frosts. It is a beautiful and easy to grow tree nonetheless. It will reach 15 feet and prefers full sun.



*Prunus mume*

*Chimonanthus praecox* - Fragrant wintersweet is an unassuming shrub with muted yellow, waxy blooms. Individual blossoms are smaller than a thimble, but they cover the entire shrub offering a small glimmer of color on dreary days. Don’t hold your breath waiting for a brilliant floral display. Don’t hold your breath in the literal sense because this little sweetie is pleasingly fragrant. I’d wear it in a heartbeat if it were a perfume. When foliage arrives, this bush sneaks back into obscurity with an uneventful display of olive-green leaves. Mix it into a shrub or perennial border for a little bit of heaven in late winter.



*Chimonanthus praecox*

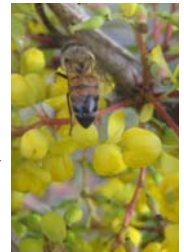
*Lonicera fragrantissima* - Fragrant honeysuckle is not one of my favorite scents, but like paperwhites, I’m sure this shrub has it’s fans. The blossoms, which appear before foliage emerges, are sweet and lemony at the same time. No matter my opinion of this particular fragrance, it’s still nice to get a whiff of something that initiates a hunt for the source. Like the wintersweet, fragrant honeysuckle isn’t boastful in the appearance of it’s flowers. Neither large nor colorful, these soft white flowers use their scent as means for attraction. Arching stems will produce bluish green foliage throughout the summer in a sunny location.



*Lonicera fragrantissima*

*Mahonia gracilis* - Mexican mahonia is another sneaky little plant. This drought tolerant Mexican native has nice enough foliage with reddish orange fall color given enough sunlight. There are plenty of bright yellow flowers in the spring, but they tend to be hidden by the foliage. The only way you might notice them is when their fra-

grance taps you on the shoulder and then knocks you in the sniffer as you turn to look behind you. Grown in full sun, this shrub is more compact and the foliage tends toward yellow-green. Given a little shade, plants will be taller and darker green. Full shade is not recommended.



*Mahonia gracilis*

*Daphne odorata 'Aureomarginata'* - Surely bringing our daphne into the spotlight will mean an untimely, and yet somewhat expected death for her. Our friend and nurseryman, Bob McCartney, saw our specimen and caught himself as he mentioned it. Due to the interest we showed in the plant, it is now doomed to die. Do you get the idea that something might be wrong in daphneville? Some people say that daphne commit daphnicide, others call it Daphne Sudden Death Syndrome, and still others say that they are simply ungrateful. You see, daphne has a bad habit of kicking the bucket quickly and without warning. With eminent doom on the horizon, why would a gardener choose such a plant? Daphne provides late winter interest with clusters of cheerful pink flowers that are amazingly fragrant. You can often smell them halfway across the garden, and they are mighty heavenly. Give her perfect drainage and moisture retentive soil, mulch the ground to keep her roots cool in summer, don’t move



*Daphne odorata 'Aureomarginata'*

her once she’s established, and definitely don’t write about her in a newsletter. Lucky for me I’ve got another little beauty tucked away somewhere that I’m not telling you about.

Take an opportunity to walk our new trails, and let your nose be your guide!

# SFA Horticulture Students Take Top Honors

Stephen F Austin State University Public Affairs Press Release

Members of the Stephen F. Austin State University Horticulture Club participated in the J. Benton Storey Student Horticulture Competition at the southern regional meeting of the American Society for Horticulture Science in Dallas, Feb. 4.

The SFA club earned the first place Overall Team award as well as the Club Share award, which includes \$100 for the team's travel expenses to Orlando, Fla., in July.

Six universities entered the competition, including SFA, Texas A&M, Oklahoma State, Mississippi State, Murray State University, and Texas Tech.

"We couldn't be more proud of the way these students represent horticulture at



Front row Rebecca Pledger, Iris Clawson, Andrea Schroeder, Christina Keim. Back row Bryan Deak and Chris Capps.

SFA," said Dawn Stover, club adviser and research associate of agriculture.

Team members are Andrea Schroeder, Ar-

lington senior; Iris Clawson, Houston senior; Christina Keim, Lubbock senior; and Chris Capps, Cypress junior. Bryan Deak, Houston senior, and Rebecca Pledger, Brenham freshman, both horticulture majors, participated as individuals.

In addition to the Overall Team Award, the team received the first place Woody Ornamentals Award and the second place Fruit and Nut Crops Team Award and Greenhouse Floral and Foilage Plants Team Award.

Individual awards went to Keim, earning first place in Woody Ornamentals and third place Overall Individual. Clawson earned third place in Woody Ornamentals, and Pledger earned second place in Vegetable Crops.

## Bob McCartney - the Man, the Myth, the Legend, and our Friend

By: Dr. David Creech

SFA's garden world is special because of all the plant-crazy folks who visit us from time to time. Bob McCartney is one of them. Bob's a salty plant enthusiast who makes this garden a better place, by his plants and by his visits. Bob toured the place February 11, 2008 (he's been here before), and we swapped some plants, told some stories and then he jumped back into his truck and headed east - on his way back to Shreveport to give a talk at the Master Gardeners World of Gardening conference. Bob has carved out an exciting plant world in Aiken, South Carolina. He's owner of Woodlanders ([www.woodlanders.net](http://www.woodlanders.net)), an edgy mail order nursery chock full of interesting plants. Bob's many introductions to the trade are legend. While it's true he has a bent to mostly native plants, Bob's no purist. In fact, he's not at all against a showy well-behaved exotic parked here and there in a landscape. In fact, Bob feels that native-plants-only purists are often enthusiastic simply because they are thinking that they are doing something green. "You can do a landscape with entirely natives but I'm not convinced it makes you any more holy," he once said.

Bob has been a gardener since he was a child growing up in the country. He came

to Aiken in 1980 from Colonial Williamsburg Foundation where for 10 years he collected, propagated and introduced natives and a wide range of seldom cultivated species into the Colonial Williamsburg gardens. One of the interesting things about Bob's life in Aiken, is that, over time, he has managed to kind of "own" the town as far as trees are concerned. Over the last 28 years, he has filled every nook, cranny, park and median with interesting, rare and unusual trees. Actually, Aiken is really a citywide arboretum that has taken in both public and private property. Bob has done most of the planting, documentation, and stewardship for the trees by himself over all the years.

At his home, he tends a longleaf pine forest on 61 acres where he's working to restore this small parcel of land to a

reasonable facsimile of the longleaf pine ecosystem, an ecosystem that once covered 90+ million acres of the South from southeastern Virginia to east Texas at the time of the early European colonization. Bob is an enthusiastic proponent of large-scale longleaf ecosystem restoration work and he's connected to efforts by various federal, state and private land agencies throughout the South.



Bob McCartney stands next to the *Podocarpus* collection in the Arboretum

# Nothing Like a Good Fire in the Neighborhood

By: David Creech

The fourth annual controlled burn at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center came off without a hitch February 27, 2008. With two fire trucks, police, Hardy Meredith's photojournalism class, Forestry students, local TV and press, and a gaggle of Raguet Elementary students watching through the fence, the Texas Forest Service used the day as an opportunity for training. With the wind blowing gently to the east, the fire was not as strong in past years, perhaps because we were a bit late,



a bit wet, and a bit short on good fodder to drive the fire. It's true that the wind shifted a bit and drove a "tiny" bit of smoke to the South into the kiddos and teachers and everyone ran away, but all in all it was a great day for the garden. We had a burn - we educated, we entertained, and we enlightened Nacogdoches citizens about the importance of fire ecology in the Pineywoods.

## \*\*\*\*\* Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference \*\*\*\*\*

**May 28-31, 2008**

*Join a unique blend of naturalists, horticulturists, nurserymen, landscapers, and gardeners to learn more about current topics in native plant conservation, propagation, research, and landscape use.*

**field trips \* workshops \* lectures \* plant sale**

For complete conference and registration information: <http://pnpc.sfasu.edu>

# Who is Teaching? Who is Learning?

By: Elyce Rodewald

Each semester, SFA Forestry students in Dr. Mike Legg's Outdoor Recreation class spend 5 lab periods at the Pineywoods Native Plant Center learning about three premier environmental education curricula: Project Learning Tree, Project Wild and Project Aquatic Wild. These programs have been extensively field tested, meet state and national standards, are interdisciplinary, activity-based, and develop higher order thinking skills. Forestry students learn to present activities that are appropriate for many different topics, learning styles and age levels.

The SFA students then become teachers as they put theory into practice. In February, during their final lab at the PNPC, the forestry students led Raguet Elementary fourth and fifth graders in "adopting" a tree at the PNPC. Raguet students investigated and observed their tree; they measured its height and circumference, and even wrote poems about their tree.

As forestry professionals, SFA graduates

will be asked to make public presentations to adults and often to children. Becoming certified in these three environmental education curricula is one more way to prepare students for the "real world." One student commented, "This experience was rewarding and helpful. I will use this information throughout my career in urban forestry. I enjoyed seeing the attitudes of the children...the group work helped me overcome my anxiety with public speaking." Another student said, "I enjoyed sharing my knowledge and experiences with these kids and helping them to enjoy the outdoors more... even the teacher said that she learned something new about how to measure trees."

Elyce Rodewald, education coordinator and facilitator for Project Learning Tree, comments, "In this project, we are all teachers and we are all learners and everyone seems to benefit from the experience." One Raguet Elementary student obviously agrees, "I enjoyed the field trip. I met nice people

like Tiffany. I love learning, and I learned outside!"



SFA Forestry student teaches Raguet Elementary students how to measure tree height with a clinometer

# New Man on Campus

By: Dawn Stover



Dr. Jeffrey Adkins is our new professor of horticulture at SFA. We'd like to take this opportunity to tell you a little about the man who replaces Dr. Creech in the classroom. There are a few misconceptions that need to be addressed before we begin. First, for those of you worried about him melting come July, Dr. Adkins is not from Rhode Island, but is a true southerner by birth. Second, Dr. Creech remains the director of the Arboretum/Azalea/PNPC world. While Jeff would certainly be a good fit, his responsibility remains with the students and with his plant breeding efforts. We will all cross the "new director" bridge when Dr. Creech is good and ready to hand over the reins. Perhaps if I could flower another one of the corpse flowers...where's the fertilizer?

Back to our subject: Dr. Adkins grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, with two brothers and two sisters, where his siblings and mother still reside. His wife Stacie has many local ties. Her dad and step mom live in Conroe, and she has two step-uncles in Nacogdoches County. The Adkins' have four daughters with very beautiful names: Miranda, Piper, Meadow and Willow. Stacie and the girls

are finishing out the school year in Rhode Island and dad tries to visit about every three weeks or so. We look forward to meeting the rest of the Adkins clan when they are able to join us in Nacogdoches.

Dr. Adkins chose the field of horticulture because he's always had a fondness for plants. His first job was at a retail garden center in Georgia, where he spent nearly ten years through high school and afterwards in landscaping. He had taken college courses several years after high school, and enrolled full time at the University of Georgia when he was twenty-six. As graduation approached, Dr. Adkins took a good hard look at the industry and decided that grad school was the way to go.

He completed his master's work at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Mike Dirr. His research involved a comparative study with *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Endless Summer' and other known hydrangea cultivars to observe for remnant characteristics. As he wrapped up his graduate work, Dr. Adkins made some crosses with 'Endless Summer' and *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Veitchii' which ultimately led to the discovery of *Hydrangea* 'Blushing Bride', a compact shrub that blooms on new wood – providing blooms throughout the growing season.

Dr. Adkins then moved to North Carolina State University to work on his PhD with the now current director of the JC Raulston Arboretum, Dr. Denny Werner. Dr. Adkins wanted to gain some experience in molecular genetics, and began his research on genetic flowering components of *Buddleja davidii*. His tenure as a doctoral student consisted entirely of lab work, and while he was grateful for the experience, he was ready to get his hands back into the dirt.

Dr. Adkins enjoyed research and teaching as a graduate student and coupled with the job stability and typical salary line, he decided that teaching at the university level was a natural fit. Becoming a university

professor also allowed him time to accomplish a wide variety of horticultural endeavors while remaining involved in the nursery industry. At the most basic level, we can classify Dr. Adkins as a plant breeder and propagator, but it's evident that he loves all things horticulture. So far, he seems to like our students, and they've expressed the same sentiment of him.

When asked what he is looking forward to growing here, he mentioned that he could grow most of his favorite plants in Rhode Island as well as Texas. His plant list includes *Hamamelis*, *Fothergilla*, *Clethra*, *Aesculus*, *Hydrangea* and *Viburnum*. He is looking forward to growing the wide variety of azaleas that do well in our climate, as well as seeing rebuds and dogwoods in the south again, as they are not quite as pretty in the north. The one thing that really put a twinkle in his eye was the thought of a long spring progression and the general flora of the south - evergreens in particular. Without pine trees, winter can be quite grey in Rhode Island and spring doesn't occur until May, with summer right on it's heels. One thing that he will miss about his northern homestead is it's proximity to the coast. Apparently Dr. Adkins is quite a salt water fisherman. Are there any CCA members out there who'd like to show him around our coast?

As far as his role in the Arboretum, Dr. Adkins is still waiting to see where he fits in, and probably trying to catch his breath a little bit. He will definitely play a big role in the breeding and introduction of new plants. As soon as he has taught his entire course load at least once through, and after his family is here and settled, perhaps we will all have a clearer vision of how he will fit in the public garden world here at SFA. He hasn't had much opportunity to work with volunteers in the past, but he's eager to participate in all of our events and eager to be introduced to the Arboretum community. Look for him at the lecture series and at the plant sale for an opportunity to say hello.





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

SFA Mast Arboretum  
PO Box 13000  
Nacogdoches, TX 75962

Phone: 936-468-4404  
Fax: 936-468-4047  
www.arboretum.sfasu.edu



## Upcoming Events

Grafting Workshop - March 18 (936-468-1832)

Azalea Symposium - March 29 (936-468-4129)

Garden Gala Day Plant Sale - April 12 (936-468-4404)

Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference - May28-31 (<http://pnpc.sfasu.edu>)

## Camellia Flower Show and Plant Serendipity

By: Barbara Stump

February 9-10 the Arboretum hosted members of the East Texas Camellia Chapter of the American Camellia Society for one of their five regional flower shows. Room 110 of the Agriculture Building was a symphony of perfect blooms in every color of *Camellia japonica* and *C. reticulata* that will grow around here—from the brightest white, palest pink, to the nearly black-red of 'Black Magic', with many white-variegated colors as well. Chapter President Hal Vanis is also the nurseryman who grew many of the camellias that were donated to the azalea garden project in 1998-1999. Browsing among the dozen and a half plants that Hal brought for sale, I found *Camellia japonica* 'Dr. J.C. Raulston' and set it aside right away. Dr. Creech and I have already planted this brilliant red double-flowered camellia in a prominent spot in the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden. The late Dr. J.C. Raulston began an arboretum at North Carolina State University that was named for him after his death in 1996. This planting commemorates his years of plant-sharing and mentoring of our very own Dr. David Creech. So remember to keep those eyes open - you never know when you may have a chance to see or buy a plant with a legacy. After the flower show, Hal donated a dozen of his camellia plants to our garden continuing the plant-sharing tradition.



Dr. JC Raulston