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SFA Gardens Newsletter, Mar 1999

SFA Gardens, Stephen F. Austin State University

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MARCH 1999

PRESS RELEASE: The SFA Arboretum in Nacogdoches, Texas, will celebrate another fun annual "Garden Gala Day," May 22, 1999 from 9 AM until 5 PM. The event includes an all-day plant sale featuring a wide range of new, uncommon, and Texas-tough container-grown herbaceous and woody plants, a silent auction of rare plants, some special surprise entertainment, refreshments, educational booths and lectures in the garden. A Dave Creech walk and talk through the Arboretum will begin at 9:30 AM at the Heritage Garden and will end at 10:30 AM wherever he ends up. At 10:30 AM, a walking tour of the herbaceous perennials and old roses will be led by Dawn Parish, the SFA Mast Arboretum Technician and creator of so much of the "new" garden excitement at the Arboretum. At 1:15 PM, there will be a tour of the brand new Azalea Garden by Barbara Stump, the Azalea Garden Project Coordinator. The Gala is possible because of the Nacogdoches Master Gardeners, the SFA Arboretum Volunteer Corps Organization and the students of SFA Horticulture. For more information: Call 409-468-3705 at SFA or the Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce at 409-564-7351.

PRESS RELEASE: Announcing the first ever SFA Horticulture Club's Spring Plant Sale, Thursday, March 25, 1999 from 12 Noon to 6 PM. Where: At the SFA Mast Arboretum in and around the glasshouse. Plans are to have a sale every month on the afternoon of each lecture series talk (usually the third Thursday of each month). This month the club will feature house plants, fern baskets, a number of cultivars of sun coleus, and rare petunias, including *Petunia violacea* 'VIP', *Petunia violacea* 'Jade', *Petunia integrifolia*, and *Petunia integrifolia* 'WWF White'. Assorted oddities such as variegated Angel Trumpet will also be available on a first come basis. Please help support our award winning Horticulture Club and give them the opportunity to learn greenhouse production skills.

PRESS RELEASE: Dedication of the Pineywoods Native Plant Center, Saturday, March 27, 1999 from 3 PM until 5. Dedication at the Tucker House on Raguet Street, parking at Raguet Elementary and short walk. Dedication will feature a few remarks by Dr. James Kroll, Director of the Forest Resources Institute (FRI) and Dr. Dave Creech, Director of the SFA Mast Arboretum – an explanation of the resource, the mission, and what the future holds. The event will end with a planting of several endangered species and a few special natives in the garden beds in front of the Tucker House. Refreshments, walk, talk and relax. This special project is part of planning and planting for a better Nacogdoches.

NOTES FROM THE GARDEN – Dave Creech, Director SFA Mast Arboretum

When I look back two scant years, it's absolutely amazing. This Arboretum has gone from being a wheelbarrow and shovel operation to Texas Highways in twelve years – the place has got a life of its own, for sure. How in the heck did all this happen? The answer is obvious. It's people and plants. So let's take a quick look at both:

THE PEOPLE:

Greg Grant – all I can say is WOW – with us since October 1997, Greg's closing in on his record stretch at one job. He's no doubt the new color plants genius around this place - and in the South. Greg is an Instructor in Horticulture in the Department. He can teach, he can write, he can find plants, grow plants, and his enthusiasm is infectious. To be frank with you, I just don't believe the nonsense that with just a little more therapy, Greg will be perfect. As far as I'm concerned, anyone who signs his email "if I'm not making waves, I must have drowned" has got to be perfectly sane. This place, no matter what you say about it, is really all about adventuresome gardening – and Greg is one of the big wave makers here. His color plant introduction talents are recognized across the South and emphasize season long color and durability under Texas-tough conditions. The SFA Mast Arboretum is proud to be home to all that. With Greg Grant manufacturing excitement everywhere he goes, dull is not part of the vocabulary around here. Changes? Check out the south side of the Agriculture building. That's where the Arboretum started almost fifteen years ago – nothing is left standing – there isn't a remnant, nor a shred of anything that started the whole ball rolling here . . . and I admit a twinge or two on my part seeing the wreckage on the south side of the Agriculture building in progress (especially the moving of the true monkey puzzle tree, *Araucaria araucana*, from its throne in Phase 1 to the east side of the Art building – that brought a small grimace to my face – still healthy (?) at this writing)) – but it's done – and change is good - and Greg is all smiles and we have the bowling alley, polychromatic, full-sun opportunity for the two borders that will lead to the Heritage Garden and Daylily garden. That's the floral funnel Greg that describes later in this newsletter - and the Arboretum starts off 1999 with five times the perennial border space as we had in the beginning of 1998. Yikes. Bring sunshades if you visit in May.

Dawn Parish is the Arboretum Technician and she's making all kinds of things happen in the garden and in the greenhouses. She does it all with dogged determination and a willingness to endure some of the simple and interesting challenges of working in a university bureaucracy. Dawn will be wrapping up her MS thesis this summer – a thesis dealing with the reintroduction and genetic characterization of *Hibiscus dasycalyx*, the endangered Neches river rose mallow – and we are scrambling trying to figure out a way to tie her down here in the Arboretum for years and years. Dawn deals with our ever-growing population of student workers and volunteers with professional composure – she has to juggle chores and people and do it efficiently; not an easy task with so many things pulling in all directions. Dawn's a self-starter and has taken to the challenge of pulling off the spring show in the garden and in the greenhouses for the May Garden Gala Day plant sale – she'll do it. With three years experience at TreeSearch Farms (trained under Scott Reeves), she can schedule and grow a crop as good as anyone. Most important, Dawn has the "big picture" mentality that we need here to go national and the passion to love plants with the best of them. Big Plus: She can write: check out Dawn's Dirt in this newsletter.

Cheryl Tate – is our Children's Garden coordinator, Director of Nacogdoches Proud, PhD candidate in the College of Forestry and just about the busiest Arboretum booster we could have on board. Cheryl is the "mother" of the Children's Garden effort and it's hard to believe that just two scant years ago she quietly suggested to me that a Children's

Garden program would be a good idea and that it would be a good move to try and get a Timber Framers Guild of North America outdoor education pavilion at the north end of the Arboretum on College Avenue. With my usual fine attention to detail, I said, "Sounds good to me, take care of it." She did.

Barb Stump – is our Azalea Garden project coordinator and a candidate for the MS with the thesis, "site analysis and design of the SFA Azalea Garden." Let me assure you, this is a massive project. Barb is a fine writer, enjoys a challenge, has a sharp intellect, is excessively organized (but don't take my word for this), manages to juggle a bunch of different life goals at once, and has pulled off a really nice adventure/venture here in Nacogdoches. She tolerates my advice (more mulch please) and has generated some outstanding publicity, community excitement and involvement, far more than I would ever have been able to do without quitting my day job. The fact that the SFA Azalea Garden project (8 acres, solid-set irrigation, 4500 azaleas, 300 Japanese maples, about that many camellias, and many exciting companion plants) is on target at the half way point is due mostly to Barbara stump. The project is amazing considering the budget (there really isn't one) is kept alive by generous donations from supporters and plenty of in-kind gifts from the nursery industry, the city and elsewhere. Now, for next years planting. Sigh.

J.C. Andersen – jack of all trades – J.C. has been on board as a graduate teaching assistant since September 1998 and he's helping to make the Azalea garden shine. JC is responsible for sunlight improvements (that's chain saw work), garden bed development (hours moving sand and mulch), keeping the equipment going and the tools in an easy-to-find place, and coordinating with Barb to supervise the student workers and volunteers trying to get to 8 full acres of Azalea garden by December of 1999 – and putting out fires as they light up. Big plate.

New Graduate Students on Board:

Emily Mason – one of our newest graduate research assistants (February 1, 1999), comes to us from Texas A & M University Horticulture and is tackling a conservation horticulture MS thesis on *Gaillardia aestivalis* var. *winklerii*, the endangered white firewheel of Southeast Texas (funded by the University Research Council). Emily has taken to the endangered plants arena like a duck to water; she's heavily involved in the Tucker house foundation landscape renovation (changing from all exotics to all natives – including a sprinkling our endangered plants work!). Emily will be on board for another year and a half – plenty of time for her to make a real mark in the Arboretum.

Kathleen Davis – Oh No, not another Aggie! Kathleen came on board February 1, 1999 with a Recreation and Parks background and will be working toward the MS in Forestry – kind of a first for our program in that I will be co-chairing her committee with Dr. Dave Kulhavy in the College of Forestry (nice example of cross-college cooperation here at SFA!). Kathleen's thesis involves research, reintroduction and the genetic characterization of *Hibiscus dasycalyx*, the endangered Neches river rose mallow. Her work is funded by a grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Elisabeth

Montgomery endowment. She is also neck-deep in the Tucker estate project, working toward our goal of turning that place into a native plants garden as good as any in the South.

Mark Norman – has been on board since September, 1998 – and is wrapping up a thesis that involves a site analysis of the 39-acre Tucker estate, a project to provide baseline data for the SFA Native Plant Center. He has mapped and recorded the data on all trees over ten inch dbh (diameter at breast height) over the entire site. While much of his work involves maps and computers and data, Mark is most comfortable sitting on a tractor knocking something down, digging something up or hauling something off. He is currently funded by the College of Forestry's Forest Resources Institute (FRI).

Grounds:

We would be remiss if we didn't mention and give praise to Gary Don Williams and Mark Holl in the Grounds Department. Both are SFA Horticulture trained and both bring a passion to their jobs, which is simply to have the best looking campus in the South. They are always there to bail us out of trouble, whether it's pulling the Kubota out of a muddy rut or loaning us a PVC fitting for an irrigation project.

THE PLANTS:

We had one of the busiest winter planting seasons ever – even without the gargantuan Azalea Garden project. A new feature is the line of *Chionanthus retusus*, Chinese fringe tree, that runs down the west side of Wilson Drive. There's 75 of them there to celebrate the 75th Share the Legacy year at SFA. This will be a striking feature in five years. A few other standouts just in the ground or about to be planted:

A new *Michelia* (Banana shrub) collection is in place, most planted on the east side of the Holly Row. The collection includes *Michelia wilsonii*, *M. sinensis* (*M. wilsonii*?), *M. floridbunda* 'DJHC 548', *M.*, *M. skinneriana*, *M. maudiae*, *M. yunnanensis*, *M. faveolata*, *M. figo* X *M. doltsopa*. Some fairly large specimens of *M. figo* and *M. X foggii* #2 are nearby – the former, an old standby with a fragrance that no one ever forgets, and the latter a large flowered, heavy flowering cultivar worthy of much greater use - fragrance that some find outstanding while others are less than enthusiastic. Three *Michelias* soon to be in our inventory include *M. crassipes*, *M. chapensis*, and *M. playtpetala*, all new China clones worthy of testing zone 8-9. Nearby is a specimen of *Parakmeria lotungensis*, a rare magnolia relative that impressed me tremendously in China two years ago. New to the garden, *Phoebe shearei*, another rare broadleaved evergreen that seems to have come through the winter in fine shape. *Mangletia chingii*, a primitive member of the Magnolia family, has also emerged from winter's slumber with good health and vigor.

We've taken a bump up in the *Loropetalum chinense* world from some nice specimens of 'Blush', 'Burgundy', and 'ZhuZhou' to one of the best collections in the South. There's good reason to evaluate all the varieties of this clone. Chinese fringe flower has gone from zero to one of the hottest plants in the nursery trade. The advent of the burgundy

foliage, sizzling pink cultivars (var. *rubrum* group) in the early 90's has met with great popularity in the nursery and landscape world. Cultivars under trial include: 'Blush', 'Daybreak's Flame', 'Ruby', 'Suzanne', 'Variegated', 'Sizzlin Pink', 'Firedance', 'Piroche', 'Snow Dance', 'Bicolor', 'Burgundy', 'compacta', 'Plum Delight', 'Pipa's Red', 'Zhuzhou', var. *rubrum*, and 'Razzleberry' TM. 'Ruby' is reported to be the first real compact plant in the trade; not tested long enough to know here in Texas. I saw 20-25' trees of the species in Kunming, China, and a seedling hedgerow of young plants that made me drool; also saw a 100 year old bonsai of the species in a 30 gallon clay pot that was outstanding.

New in the ground this winter, an *Abelia* collection from hell, including a number of exciting new selections – all under trial at the Children's Garden landscape. Cultivars under test include: *Abelia mosanensis*, *A. chinensis*, *A. floribunda* (died in winter), *A. serrata*, *A. schumanii*, *A. X grandiflora* 'compacta UGA,' 'prostrata', 'John Creech', 'Sherwoodii', 'Edward Goucher', 'Francis Mason', 'Hines compacta', 'Little Richard', 'Dwarf Purple', and 'Golden Glow'. We also have 12 Mike Dirr selections from a block of 300 *Abelia* seedlings that have *A. chinensis* as a possible parent. Back in August, I selected ten plants from that same block – looking hard to find a runty, dwarfy character that might have potential in the ultimate gnomescape.

Cephalotaxus harringtonia, Japanese plum yew, is another evergreen shrub/tree taking the south by storm. Long-lived, durable, deer-resistant and slow growing, this species is the ultimate woodland screen. Comfortable in almost full sun to shady conditions, Japanese plum yew is deserving of greater use in the South. The following cultivars, a special collection donated to the Arboretum via Mike Dirr at the University of Georgia, will be planted in the fall of 1999. Cultivars in the Arboretum collection include: *C. harringtonia* 'Fritz Huber' (Yucca Do), 'Gnome' (Hillier Arb), 'Prostrata' (Arnold Arb), 'nana' (Arnold Arb), 'Prostrata' (Dirr Garden), 'Hill's Long Leaf Form', 'Prostrata' (Brooklyn Bot Garden), 'Hill's Short Leaf Form', 'Goodyear', 'Short Form' (County Line), 'Tall Form' (County Line), 'Sea Island Form', 'Prostrata' (McCorkles), var. *drupacea* (Dr. Pokorny), 'McCorkle Form', 'Duke Gardens' (Bernhein), 'Duke Gardens' (Duke Gardens, NC), 'Fritz Huber' (Nursery Caroliniana), var. *drupacea prostrata* (Yucca Do), 'fastigiata' (Yucca Do), 'Duke Gardens' (UGA), 'Augusta National,' var. *drupacea* (Overlook Nursery), 'Australia form,' var. *drupacea* (Miller Arb 1980), var. *drupacea* (Hillyer Arb), var. *drupacea* (Yucca Do), 'Biltmore', 'EBG', 'UGA Bot. Garden', 'pedunculata', 'Earth Shade' (Wayne, SC), 'Augusta National', 'var. *drupacea* EBG,

'John Everett Frett form', 'UGA Bot. Garden', and 'pedunculata'. We also have the following *C. fortunei* cultivars in the trial: Arnold Arb form, 'EBG 361046', Yucca Do form, EBG 687276, Nursery Caroliniana form, and, finally, *C. grandis*. Others *Cephalotaxus* of interest in the collection include: *C. oliveri* (Piroche Planting), *C. koreana* (Arnold Arb), *C. koreana* (Ted Stevens), and finally *C. sinensis* (Arnold Arb). We also have three other *Cephalotaxus* selections established in the Arboretum. I had the opportunity to view three collections of *Taxus* and *Cephalotaxus* in China in the winter of 1996-97. Seemed to be incredibly durable trees/shrubs for the harsh urban landscape – pollution, foot traffic, and other hardships.

Also from Mike Dirr this past summer was a collection of 41 different Atlantic white cedars, *Chamaecyparis thyoides*. They are going to be grown an additional year in four gallon cans. They are vigorous and healthy in the North shade house.

Heading into bloom, we have 27 Wisterias fixing to hit good show in the line of vines and elsewhere in the garden. Most are resting in the line of vines but we have several interesting clones elsewhere; check out the *W. macrostachys* 'Clara Mack' on the gate post just to the N of the shade house. My favorite *W. floribunda* remains 'Rosea', while 'Violace plena' is a brute of a vine sporting double dark lavender flowers. *W. frutescens* 'Dam B' is in the line of vines right next to the trail, a Lynn Lowrey selection of this special native from SE Texas. If you have the intelligence to avoid the robust species, there is one species not quite so threatening: *Millettia japonica*, a deciduous Wisteria relative hardy to Zone 7, similar in all respects to Wisteria but diminutive, and much easier to keep in bounds. *Millettia reticulata*, the evergreen wisteria, can be a giant in East Texas. Check out the one on the south side of the Agriculture building that has risen from the deck and arbor and climbed to and taken over the top of a pine tree on the slope facing the intramural field. Gorgeous blooms with a normally evergreen nature even in our area (this year lost the foliage during our light ice storm).

My count shows 17 Magnolias in bloom and about the best bloom year one could ask for: No freezes (at least until this writing). Favorites include the National Arboretum "girls" with 'Ann', 'Jane', and 'Susan' at the top of my list. 'Spectrum' and 'Orchid' put on their usual good show in late February and early March. *Magnolia kobus* var. *loebneri* 'Dr. Merrill' is a standout 12' foot specimen near the holly row and put on a three week stellar show this year. 'Elizabeth' is a cross between *M. acuminata* and *M. denudata* and sports creamy yellow blooms; there's a small specimen about to take off at the north end of the holly row. One of my favorites this year and las, 'Milky Way', is one of the 'Mark Jury' hybrids with complicated parentage that includes *M. campbellii* and *M. sargentiana* in the parentage. 'Iolanthe' and 'Athene' sported a heavy show of beautiful blooms this year.

There are too many others that impress this spring. *Prunus mume*, the Japanese Apricot, put on a great February show. *Prunus campanulatus*, the Taiwan cherry, did its usual drop-dead display at the perennial border. All of the Azaleas in our 'Asian Valley' are heading into the biggest bloom show ever and I enjoyed a good look this year at R. X 'Koromo shikibu' in Asian Valley Row 2, a lavender-purple beauty that Barb Stump has emphasized heavily at the front of our new Azalea garden – three long weeks of good show. *Sinojackia rehderiana*, the Jack tree, sure needs a new name to better describe the bloom show, a carpet of white snowbell-like blooms. Finally, at this writing, the rest of the *Styraxes* are just about ready to burst into bloom out for the best spring ever. *Halesia diptera* var. *magniflora*, a silverbell from Florida, is the one to watch in the years ahead with blooms reported to grow in size as the tree gains size and strength. So far, it looks fantastic. Keep planting – DC.

DEDICATION OF THE SFA MAST ARBORETUM - November 12, 1998 - ceremonies in the back of the W.R. Johnson Coliseum. Here's the Dave Creech script for the event.

"What a glorious day for the Garden . . . we're here to honor Pat and Adlai with the promise of just how special this garden is going to be. Jerry Holbert asked that I reflect a bit on just where the Arboretum has come from, where it is and where it's going - a vision kind of thing - and he said I had a minute and thirty seconds to do it. Basically, you can sum up our past by saying we went from zero to Texas Highways in twelve years - and that's a feather in all of our Nacogdoches caps. How did we get here? This garden has prospered because of some great past and present students. Many are here today and deserve a big bravo: Barb - our incredibly organized coordinator of the Azalea garden; Dawn - who essentially runs the Arboretum; Cheryl - who led over a thousand school-age kids through a wonderful gardening program this past week. Then, there's JC and Mark, our Azalea garden warriors - and, of course, there's Greg Grant, our latest faculty addition - who's every bit the color and teaching genius in SFA Horticulture. There's the Arboretum Volunteers and Master Gardeners - many are here today - they help pull off our two annual events and keep the garden going. There's great support from James and John and Vic over in the Physical plant - they may wince when they see me coming - but they are a make-it-happen bunch all of the time. Gary Williams and Mark Holl in Grounds, Director and Assistant Director in Grounds, both SFA trained - well, they are just great, making positive changes all over campus and always there when we need help. Hats off to the city for recognizing the potential of an 8-acre easily accessed, world-class Azalea Garden as an A+ tourist attraction in our city. Their support has been critical as well as all the help from the CVB and Chamber folks. Let's not forget the nursery industry, who know the value of this place, with folks like Ray Bond here with us today and with such great donations from the big nurseries in the south. We have arrived in the nursery world. And then there's the administration - leading the charge in our 75th year and making an amazing number of great things happen. It's not an easy chore for the third floor - they have to read what I write and listen to what we want and we are just one part of a whole bunch of folks doing the same. Dale Perritt, my chair and Tom Franks, the Dean, carry the Arboretum's message up the hill with vim and vigor. Dan Angel, Janelle Ashley, Jerry Holbert, Baker Patillo, Rowland Smith - and the Board of Regents - and others at the top have to decide on what paths SFA takes to the future. This dedication is proof positive that the Arboretum is one of them. We always wanted to be a traffic stopper and it's happening now. It's a big team and "together-everyone-achieves-more" takes on special meaning here. This garden is not just plants - it's people.

What about the future? The SFA Mast Arboretum is a great jump forward. It guarantees perpetuity. We won't be a parking lot. We will always be home to dynamic horticulture. We'll always graduate some fine students who know the meaning of work and learning and play. With this side of the creek conquered, the SFA Mast Arboretum will be an exciting garden making a bigger mark in the nursery and landscape industry world than ever before. In five years, with the Azalea Garden addition, there will be 50 to 100,000 visitors making their way through the Arboretum every year. Nacogdoches will be better place to study, work and live in. For all that we are joyous. Pat and A.T., an SFA Mast

Arboretum raises the bar - and for that we are grateful. We gladly accept the challenge. You have all of our thanks for having the vision to make it happen."

NOTES FROM THE GREG GRANT CORNER:

What's Going On Here???

As you may have noticed, the area formally known as "Phase I" is experiencing a drastic renovation. Upon completion, this area will boast two long perennial borders in front of holly hedges. They are being designed by our own Dawn Parish and will feature a unique color scheme. Look out Edith Edleman! The borders will be bisected by a long vista of

zoysiagrass turf leading to the daylily garden (our first bowling green!). Perennial flowers are presently among the most popular plants in the horticulture world. We hope that this new area is not only visually pleasing but also serves as a floral funnel to direct visitors into the arboretum. The old kiosk will become the new SFA Mast Arboretum sign.

In addition, the uncomfortable, harsh, gray gravel has been removed from the daylily garden to make room for a border of summer color to compliment the daylilies.

And since it will serve as a focal point of our vista, the structure in the herb garden has been stripped of its "snow fencing" and will be repainted. The beautiful weeping Chinese hackberry, *Celtis sinensis* 'Emerald Cascade,' will then be trained to gracefully drape over it.

If you have complaints about this rash of activity direct them to Dr. David Creech. If you have positive comments, see Greg Grant or Dawn Parish. OR as my Mom says... "if you don't have anything good to say, don't say anything at all!!!" - GG

There's been a lot of interest in new plant introductions for the past decade so I thought we'd take a look at what I've contributed.

Aquilegia x puryearana 'Blazing Stars' (Blazing Stars Columbine): A seed propagated hybrid between *Aquilegia canadensis* and *Aquilegia chrysantha hinkleyana* 'Gold Star'. Red and yellow flowers with large blooms. Introduced by Color Spot in 1999.

Bignonia capreolata 'Helen Fredel' (Orange Cross Vine): A unique crossvine from 95 year old Helen Fredel's garden in College Station, Texas. Flower color is something between *Atrosanguinea*' and 'Tangerine Beauty'...red-orange with a yellow throat. Flower size is larger than both however. Originally on an old two-story house in her neighborhood. Worth comparing.

Cynodon dactylon 'Bermuda Ghost' (Variegated Bermudagrass): A white variegated sport with pick tinges that I found while mowing the roadside in front of my parents house in Arcadia. Destined to be rare or extinct.

Ipomoea battatas 'Summer Frost' (Summer Frost Sweet Potato): A crinkled leafed, white variegated sweet potato. Occurred as a sport in my cousin's sweet potato patch in Arcadia. Destined to be rare or extinct.

Lantana camara 'Greg Grant' (Variegated Lantana): An unstable yellow variegated sport of old fashioned lantana with pink and yellow flowers that I found at a New Braunfels Church. Named and introduced by Glasshouse Works. Destined to be rare or extinct.

Lantana montevidensis 'Imperial Purple' (Purple Trailing Lantana): Purple flowered sport of trailing lavender lantana from plants obtained from Joe Toquigny in Seguin.

Lonicera x 'Pam's Pink' (Pam's Pink Honeysuckle): A bushy, pink and cream flowered honeysuckle from Pam Puryear's grandmother in Navasota. Like 'Gold Flame' without the gold or the mildew. Possibly *Lonicera* x *americana*, one of the parents of *Lonicera* x *heckrottii*. Also sent around as 'Navasota' and 'Welch', which both trace their origins back to the cuttings Pam gave me while I worked with Lone Star in San Antonio. A 2003 TAMU CEMAP promotion.

Lupinus texensis 'Texas Maroon' (Maroon Bluebonnet): An Aggie Maroon strain of the Texas State Flower. Took years of selection from original blue tinges on pink flowers in a field of pink bluebonnets in LaPryor. A joint introduction with Dr. Jerry Parsons. A 2000 TAMU CEMAP promotion.

Petunia violacea 'Jade' (Variegated Petunia): A crinkled gray-green variegated sport of a 'VIP' seedling, with violet flowers. Destined to be rare or extinct.

Petunia violacea (*P. integrifolia*) 'VIP' (VIP Petunia): A vegetatively propagated, small flowered, heat tolerant petunia with violet colored flowers. A selection from seed collected in Stuttgart, Germany. A 1999 TAMU CEMAP promotion.

Petunia x *violacea* 'Laura Bush' (Laura Bush Petunia): A seed propagated, heat tolerant, reseeding petunia that occurred as a cross between *Petunia violacea* and a block of old fashioned petunias (*Petunia* x *hybrida*). A joint introduction with Dr. Jerry Parsons, with the TAEX in San Antonio. A 2002 TAMU CEMAP promotion.

Phlox paniculata 'John Fanick' (John Fanick Phlox): A heat tolerant compact phlox with light pink flowers and darker eyes. Found it in a ladies yard on Rigbsy street in San Antonio. Named for deceased good friend and nurseryman, John Fanick.

Photinia x 'Carolyn' (Red Tip Photinia): A big leafed "Chinese Type" photinia seedling with red new leaves. A joint introduction with Dr. Jerry Parsons. Named for his first wife.

Photinia x 'Oneita' (Dwarf Red Tip): A dwarf narrow leafed red tip photinia seedling. Disease resistance unknown. A joint introduction with Dr. Jerry Parsons. Named for his deceased mother in Tennessee.

Rosa chinensis 'Speedy Gonzales' (Climbing Martha Gonzales): A climbing sport of 'Martha Gonzales' that I found in a San Antonio parking lot. Very vigorous with maroon new growth. Heavy spring bloom with scattered repeat.

Rosa gallica 'Canary Island' (Canary Island Rose): A once blooming, fragrant, dark pink European rose from an old specimen in San Antonio. Brought over from the Canary Islands. Introduced by the Antique Rose Emporium.

Rosa x odorata 'Big Mamma's Blush' (Blush Tea Rose): A pink quartered old tea rose from my great grandmother, Miss Dee (Big Momma). Very close to the extinct original tea rose, Hume's Blush Tea Scented China.

Rosa x odorata 'Lemon Tea' (Yellow Tea Rose): A thornless, upright, pale yellow tea rose from a 65 year old specimen in San Antonio.

Rosa x polyantha 'Marie Daly' (Marie Daly Rose): A fragrant, pink flowered sport of the popular polyantha, 'Marie Pavie' from my mom's back yard in Arcadia. Color is pinker in cooler weather and on newly opened flowered. Mostly thornless and grown on it's own roots from cuttings. Named after one of my dearest friends whose yard I mowed as a kid. A 2003 TAMU CEMAP promotion.

Ruellia brittoniana 'Colobe Pink' (Dwarf Pink Ruellia): A dwarf pink flowered Mexican Petunia. A cross of *Ruellia brittoniana* and *Ruellia brittoniana* 'Chi Chi' from my yard in San Antonio. Plant patented and introduced by Color Spot Nurseries.

Salvia greggii 'Rachel' (Variegated Autumn Sage): A yellow variegated sport of *Salvia greggii* with white flowers. Destined to be rare or extinct.

Tecoma stans 'Gold Star' (Gold Star Esperanza): A precocious, prolific flowering "yellow bells" selected from a private residence in San Antonio. Introduced by Lone Star Growers. A 1999 TAMU CEMAP promotion.

Verbena x hybrida 'Blue Princess' (Blue Princess Verbena): A prolific, heat tolerant, perennial verbena that I obtained from the Royal Horticultural Society's nursery at Wisley, in England, on a trip with J.C. Raulston. A 1998 TAMU CEMAP promotion.

Verbena x hybrida 'Pinwheel Princess' (Pinwheel Princess Verbena): A blue and white pinwheel striped sport of 'Blue Princess' from the SFA Arboretum's former Hibiscus bed in Phase I. What appears to be an identical sport found by former SFA grad Matt Welch in North Carolina. We'll make it a joint introduction if they are the same.

Verbena x hybrida 'Snow Princess' (White Princess Verbena): A dwarf, white flowered seedling of 'Blue Princess' Verbena from my mom's yard in Arcadia.

Verbena x hybrida 'Tiger Rose' (Tiger Rose Verbena): The most vigorous of any perennial verbena. Has gaudy magenta flowers with purple stripes. Possibly the virus-free

version of 'Fiesta'. From my Great Aunt's yard in Arcadia. The most common old verbenas in East Texas.

DAWN'S DIRT – Notes from Dawn Parish, Arboretum Technician

I had written a nice little piece for Dawn's Dirt back in January about all of the sleepy things waking up with our early spring in the arboretum. Well, it's March the first and you still haven't received your newsletter! So here it is and as I rewrite this, I'll include all of the things that have come and gone as well as the new arrivals.

We had some real treasures this year that truly chased away the winter blues. The deciduous trees and shrubs proved to be show stoppers with the mild winter. We were lucky enough to escape any hard freezes that would have destroyed that delicate winter color. *Prunus mume*, *Prunus campanulata*, *Prunus jacquemontii*, *Chimonanthus praecox* (Fragrant Wintersweet), *Lonicera fragrantissima* (Fragrant Honeysuckle), and *Hammamelis vernalis* (Witch Hazel) made a graceful appearance among the cheery, fragrant *Narcissus* blooms. What a year for the deciduous Magnolias!!! I hope that you all had the chance to wander around and see the blooms of 'Royal Star', 'Spectrum', 'Milky Way', 'Vulcan', 'Heaven Scent', 'Galaxy', 'Iolanthe', and 'Athene'. Our yellow blooming, deciduous Magnolia, 'Elizabeth', has finally opened her blooms this week after much anticipation. *Hyacinthus orientalis* (Roman hyacinths), *Leucojum aestivum* (Snowflakes), and late varieties of *Narcissus* are making a grand finale for the late winter blooming species.

The beginning of March feels like full blown spring. It's hard to imagine that we've already seen 80 degree temperatures several times this year. Early spring excitement can be found everywhere in the arboretum. In phase 2, *Prunus gracilis* and *Malus 'Flame'* (Crabapple) are in full show. As you walk through the Elking Environment and the Herb garden note the verbenas and *Cercis chinensis 'Avondale'* (Chinese Redbud) offer their blooms. As you walk through the shade garden look for *Crataegus marshalii* (Parsley Hawthorn), and *Loropetalum chinense 'Burgundy'* (Chinese Witch Hazel). The Japanese Maples are also showing some interesting, colorful foliage as they break from dormancy. As you move through Asian Valley, you are sure to spot the cheery white blooms of *Crataegus viburnifolia* and *Exochorda macrantha* (Pearl Bush), and your nose is bound to lead you right to a huge, specimen *Michelia x foggii #2* (a Banana Shrub). What a whirlwind of Latin mumbo-jumbo! Please feel free to stop me and ask for directions if you are able to visit.

I am looking forward to seeing a rejuvenated volunteer organization back in the arboretum this year. I invite you to join us on Wednesdays if you can. As a volunteer you will have the opportunity to work alongside with our student workers in their daily activities, or to choose activities that you enjoy doing or would like to learn. Please keep in mind that sometimes some activities take priority over others, but I will do the best I can to accommodate your requests. Sometimes we have to pull weeds before we can plant roses. I realize that many of you have hectic schedules but still want to lend a hand. Periodically we will be having major volunteer days on the weekends to accommodate

big projects and busy schedules. Some of these events will of course include the plant sales, but also planting of the new perennial borders and future azalea garden plantings. Keep your eyes and ears open!!! Contact me at 468-4404, or by email z_parishd@titan.sfasu.edu with any questions.

The Student Environmental Association has proposed a Weed and Feed day in the Arboretum. The tentative date will be Saturday, May 1. It will give us a chance to do some major "sprucing" up before the sale and give us an opportunity to interact with enthusiastic students. Keep that date open, and I'll add details as I get them.

Garden Gala Day will be upon us before we know it! The date is set for May 22nd. We need all the extra hands you can spare. Generally, the two days prior to the sale are filled with setting up and last minute cleanup. Sale day presents a need for cashiers, traffic control, and answered questions. We will be having a dinner and early plant sale for volunteers the evening before Gala Day at the arboretum under the red and white tent. This will be a pot luck dinner where the Arboretum provides the meat (Dr. Creech is thinking brisket and his special sauce) and you bring your favorite dish and favorite family members. If you have any brilliant ideas to make this year the best ever, please let us know.

NOTES FROM THE AZALEA GARDEN – BARBARA STUMP

Movement in the Azalea Garden ... some planned, some not. Yes, friends, the SFA Azalea Garden is still in place, even after the flood of January 28, 1999! By many accounts the water level reached TWO FEET over the tops of most of the plants, but thankfully began receding by 10:30 or 11:00 the same night. The big surprise was that Bowers Creek running along the north edge of the garden jumped his (her?) banks by the culvert under University Drive and moved without much grace across the middle swath of the newly planted garden. We found azaleas and camellias under piles of water-borne brush and mulch and put them back where they belonged, replanted, remulched and reprimanded them for leaving. Perhaps they'll decide to stay. In some total, we had about 150 plants out of their spots; that's not bad considering the 2500 plants in place on the front three acres of the Azalea garden. We may have lost another hundred down La Nana's greedy creek as she swept in from the west past the Tower and across our plant storage area. Biggest losses: Dr. Creech's rare hollies and deciduous magnolias, still in their containers near the tower.

Bloom is already beginning in some areas: the Narcissus tazetta 'Erlicheer' donated by Nacogdoches Proud bloomed magnificently University Drive, as are a few of the newly planted Purple Spider Azaleas, Rhododendron x 'Koromo Shikibu.' The sprinkling of camellias put on a modest show but promised much for the years ahead. The garden was fertilized with 1000 lbs of cotton seed meal and another application is planned in the near future. On our list: more signage, more interpretation, and, thank you Dr. Creech for reminding me, more mulch.

On the fund-raising side, Nacogdoches Proud helped sponsor a "Love in Bloom" project celebrating Valentine's Day (and in May, Mother's Day). All proceeds go to the SFA Azalea Garden and the valentine effort brought in \$825 for the Azalea Garden project. For mother's day, you can donate \$25 for an azalea, \$50 for a camellia, and \$150 for a Japanese Maple. To place your order call: Nacogdoches Proud, 560-5624, the SFA Mast Arboretum, 468-1832, or stop by the Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce office, 513 North Street, 560-5533. In another fund-raising effort, Dr. Creech and new graduate student Kathleen Davis helped me pull together a grant application to the International Paper Company Foundation for signage and interpretation in the garden.

Volunteers can still help build the garden, preferably in small groups; call first, please. We also need donations of *Liriope spicata*, either the big dark purple or "Silver Dragon." Notify Dawn Parish (468-4404) if you have plant donations. Thanks for all your continued support of this wonderful and mind-boggling project. Barbara Stump, SFA Azalea Garden Coordinator (468-1832).

NOTES FROM THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN – CHERYL TATE

The Growing Minds partnership will develop and implement two school gardening curricula—butterfly gardening (developed by SFA) and vegetable gardening (developed by TAMU). The curricula will be provided to participating schools, and will be accompanied by professional development programs for teachers at two stages of training:

1. In-service training will be offered to public and private elementary schools. Both urban and rural school districts will be served including schools in and around College Station, Houston, Nacogdoches, San Antonio, Stephenville and Tyler, Texas. In-service training will provide teachers with curriculum materials and support in using school gardens to meet required curriculum content specified by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).
2. Pre-service training will be offered through undergraduate science education courses at the partnering institutions. This will assist in establishing collaboration within each institution by linking departments specializing in subject content such as horticulture with those specializing in education. . Links such as these are vital to improve science education.

The Growing Minds school gardening curricula will promote active, student-centered learning through real-life experiences occurring in the garden environment. Students will be able to practice skills including observation, problem solving, and making predictions as they participate in garden activities. Activities incorporate the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) guidelines for science, with interdisciplinary ties to other subjects provided as appropriate. This allows teachers to participate knowing that they are fulfilling their curriculum requirements, and allows students to develop needed skills specified by curriculum guidelines.

Through the SFA Arboretum Children's Garden we are now working to expand the Butterfly Gardening program to TAMU Commerce and 2 Commerce area schools and the East Texas Arboretum in Athens, Texas.

This year SFA will train 250 pre-service teachers in using the Arboretum as a teaching resource through the Butterfly Gardening Program. This will also introduce the Arboretum to 50 in-service mentor teacher and over 2,500 K-7 school children.

A real boost to the "Children's Garden" program was a \$15,000 donation from the Mary Burch Foundation of Sand Diego, California. The donation was delivered February 7, 1999, by Patty Ellison, SFA Division of Nursing faculty member, whose sister and brother-in-law, Rose and Patrick Patek, are directors of the foundation. The contribution will utilized to finish up the hardscape via the addition of a flagstone patio that will surround three sides of the pavilion; this will provide increased seating area and tie visitors to the surrounding colorscape. In addition, the donation will used to purchase additional equipment for outreach and some student docent assistance for the avalanche of school tours we are experiencing. Stay tuned!

NOTES FROM THE HERB GARDEN – SETH BATES, Herb Garden Curator, 14 years old and the youngest Freshman in Horticulture in the world?

As some of you have noticed, the Herb Garden has been undergoing some extensive renovation in the last few months! The most apparent change is the removal of the vetiver from the south side of the garden, which has opened up more space as well as giving the formal beds at the entrance much more sun. To keep the formal feel of the entrance intact and mimic the lower garden, the vetiver is being replaced with two varieties of upright Japanese holly, *Ilex crenata* 'Sky Pencil' and 'Steve's Upright,' which are being evaluated for heat tolerance.

With the removal of the vetiver, there is now enough space to begin a knot garden just past the formal beds on the right. A key feature in many herb gardens, knot gardens are based upon intricate patterns of beds and interlaced clipped outlines. They take some time to establish, but ours should be completed by next spring. When finished, the knot garden will be one of the highlights of the Herb Garden.

Finishing out the lower garden will be the development of a 'hidden' garden around the arbor and bench. The upright Japanese hollies will be continued around the arc, completely enclosing the bed, bench, and arbor in the center. The inside of the upright holly ring will feature a low hedge of *Rosa* 'Martha Gonzales' and 'Arp' rosemary, adding both color and fragrance to the 'hidden' garden. With a much-needed renovation and two new features, the Herb Garden should have a great year!

HORT CLUB SHINES IN MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE!

January 28 - February 1, 1999. With eight students and Dr. Bea Clack (Chemistry-Biotechnology) to the annual Southern Region meeting of the American Society of

Horticultural Science, Memphis, Tennessee. With 11 teams competing, the SFA Hort Club Horticulture judging team took: 1) third overall team award; 2) 2nd place fruits crop team award; 3) 2nd place greenhouse floral and foliage plants team award; 4) 3rd place overall individual award (Carey Von Simpson); 5) 1st place fruit crops high individual award (Carey Von Simpson). SFA Team: Carey Vons Simpson, Seth Rodewald-Bates, Wendy Wendover, and Clint Formby. University of Georgia first and Oklahoma State University second. We beat A & M's team quite handily. At this conference, Dawn Parish, SFA Mast Arboretum Technician and MS student, presented her thesis work in the Norman F. Childers graduate paper competition at above annual meeting: Genetic characterization and conservation horticulture of *Hibiscus dasycalyx*, the endangered Neches river rose mallow.

Other significant trips in the past six months:

With 7 students and Greg Grant - attended the International Plant Propagators Society Conference, Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 18-21, 1998; tours, lectures and IPPS plant auction with SFA Arboretum plants a big hit.

November 12, 1998 - four Horticulture 321 greenhouse management students to the annual Greenhouse Growers Conference, College Station, Texas. Greg Grant escorted the students.

February 25-27, 1999. With six students, to the annual conference of the Texas Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta. Austin, Texas.

THE WRAP UP:

How's that for a lot going on? More plants and more people than ever before with adventuresome, exciting gardening happening whether we want it to or not. The Arboretum is a bigger and better place because of support – and that's because of support in the form of words and support in the form of donations.

If you want to pitch in and make something happen: here's the contact list:

Dave Creech – Professor, Director 409-468-4343; dcreech@sfasu.edu

Greg Grant – Instructor, New Color Plants - 409-468-1729; ggrant@sfasu.edu

Dawn Parish – Arboretum Technician - 409-468-4404; z_parishd@titan.sfasu.edu

Cheryl Tate – Children's Garden - 409-468-1832; ctate@sfasu.edu

Barb Stump – Azalea Garden - 409-468-1832; bstump@inu.net