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Repository Citation

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PNPC News

~Promoting Education About Conservation and Use of Native Plants of the Southern Forest~

Editor—Barbara Stump

Volume 2, No. 1—July 2003

In this issue we focus on education, but first a word about the grounds and facilities that provide the essential physical foundation for our environmental programs.

George and Fay Young Foundation Support Continues

In May 2003 we received another \$12,500 grant from the George and Fay Young Foundation, which will go toward constructing the final element in the Horticulture Facility. This aesthetic 30-foot x 50-foot metal building on a slab will act as the headhouse (operations center) for the horticultural research at the PNPC, house Lance Craig's office, and provide all-weather protection as needed for the PNPC-based education programs that our Education Coordinator Elyce Rodewald has been developing over the past year. This project is an essential component in accomplishing the dream behind the Darrel Morrison concept plan developed for the PNPC in 2000.

The three development projects for 2002-2003 for which we received \$12,500 from the Young Foundation have been completed. Each of these features enhances our twin goals of improving our capability to perform state-of-the-art native plant horticultural research and to present environmental education for both adults and children. Come visit to see:

- Horticulture Facility pad improvements for hardening off native plant crops
- Wooden walkway through the Bog Garden
- Trail and footbridge to the Lady Bird Johnson Demonstration garden

We deeply appreciate the George and Fay Young Foundation for their commitment to our vision at the PNPC to become a nationally recognized native plant research center by 2005. With supporters such as these we cannot fail to keep improving our facilities and programs.

Plant Collections

Lance Craig, the PNPC Research Associate, has been adding plants and plant labels throughout the grounds, especially in the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Demonstration Garden and the entrance drive into the PNPC from Raguet Street. When you visit, look for: Wax myrtle, *Myrica cerifera*; Dogwood, *Cornus florida*; Baldcypress, *Taxodium distichum*, Eastern Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*; American Beech, *Fagus grandiflora*; Red Oak, *Acer rubrum*; Red Maple, *Quercus falcata*; dwarf Palmetto, *Sabal minor*; and a number of choice magnolias: the rare Pyramid (*M. pyramidata*), Bigleaf (*M. macrophylla*), Sweetbay (*M. virginiana*). A particularly nice feature is the screen of 'D.D. Blanchard' flowering *Magnolia grandiflora*, interplanted with *Wisteria frutescens* planted along the fence line by Raguet Elementary School. Newly planted flowering native perennials include: Gayfeather, *Liatris* sps., and Swamp Coneflower, *Rudbeckia maxima*. New flowering native shrubs include: Oakleaf Hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*; Strawberry bush, *Euonymus americana*, and Sweetspire, *Itea virginica*. Lance has also mowed a grassed trail on the northern side of the property where some of our new benches are now located.

A Walk on the Wild Side—PNPC Education in the Spotlight

Education Program Summary SFA Mast Arboretum and Pineywoods Native Plant Center

	Participants	
	2002	2003 YTD
Adult Programs		
Walk-and-Talk Tours	744	395
Les Reeves Lecture Series	980	430
Saturday Seminars	83	38
Garden Guide Training	15	10
Professional Development	24	133
Camp Volunteer Training	10	14
Special Events	1285	810
Subtotal	3141	1830
Children's Programs		
Arboretum Adventures	917	762
Trees Are Terrific	2320	465
GardenQuest	398	579
Go Wild!	174	146
Bugs, Butterflies, and Blossoms	500	1000
School Gardening	66	0
Sierra Cubs Ecology Camp	26	26
Special Events	571	574
Subtotal	4972	3552

The figures speak for themselves. We have a vital environmental education program that keeps both adults and children actively involved with both the PNPC and the SFA Mast Arboretum. On the chart, note the numbers for "Go Wild" that is especially designed for the PNPC. We are only half-way through the year, and expect more participants this fall.

The Sierra Cubs Ecology Camp June 23-27 gave 26 children a week of in-depth environmental study and fun at Mill Creek Gardens native plant conservation easement on Highway 21. Arboretum volunteer Kerry Lemon, camp director, said the theme was "respect for each other and conservation of Mother Nature's habitat and its inhabitants." Fourteen adult volunteers from the Pineywoods Chapter of the Sierra Club and the SFA Mast Arboretum helped with all aspects of the camp. The campers learned basic nature sign language, used their own first aid



kits to learn first aid, and learned about snakes (and safety tips) and other animals of the pineywoods forest. They went on a fossil search and a scavenger hunt, learned how to identify trees, and practiced woods awareness. On a guided hike with a wilderness expert they learned about the special ecology of the area. They had fun canoeing while learning about the water cycle and the importance of

protecting limited water resources, then netted macro-invertebrates, which are indicators of water quality. On the final morning the campers, their parents, and all the volunteers were treated to more water activities and a picnic (for 80, thanks to Dian Avriett of the Lunch Box in Lufkin who donated the lunches all week and the picnic). At a closing ceremony the campers each shared a little of what they learned at the camp with the whole group. This is surely the model for a well-run children's environmental education program.

When Elyce isn't busy organizing these programs, she has made sure there is at least one speaker on native plants for the monthly Arboretum Les Reeves lecture series and at least one Saturday Garden Seminar with a similar topic. May 3rd, "Native Plants of East Texas" was led by Matt Welch—SFA biology graduate student and Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden technician—took 14 people through a seasonally flooded bottomland and forested seep community to find rare spring ephemerals. Matt said this group was the most interested and excited group he has ever led on a plant hunting expedition. The yellow Sawtooth Nerve, *Tetragonatheca ludoviciana*, shown below is one of the treasures the group found.



Another partnership in education that could benefit the PNPC is the highly successful "Bugs, Butterflies, and Blossoms" program put on for the past three springs as a combined effort of Keep Nacogdoches Beautiful (KNB), the SFA Elementary Education Department, and the SFA Mast Arboretum. Dr. Alan Sowards has now made participation in this program part of his elementary education teacher-training program at SFA and KNB's executive director, Cheryl Boyette would be happy to organize another event in conjunction with the PNPC. This program has become so popular that 1,000 school children had to be turned away due to lack of volunteers. ***Sounds like an opportunity for another event on another day at the PNPC.***

We encourage all teachers, students, and parents to visit the PNPC this fall and to look beyond the classroom for the "best part of education." Programs are offered either free or at a simple cost-recovery basis. **To schedule a guided tour or classroom visit, call Education Coordinator Elyce Rodewald, at 936-468-1832 (erodewald@sfasu.edu).**

Second Lone Star Regional Native Plant Conference

This major educational and research transfer event for adults was hosted by the PNPC May 28-June 3 and ramrodded by Elyce Rodewald and her cadre of SFA Mast Arboretum volunteers and SFA Hospitality program interns. Over 230 people from all over the US registered for a full range of 19 fabulous lectures such as prairie restoration, butterflies and dragonflies of the Cajun prairie, native plants as cut flowers, and endangered native plant preservation work at Mercer Botanic Gardens in Houston. The conference began with five field trips within driving distance of Nacogdoches: East Texas Pineywoods overview, Little Cow Creek in Newton County (mesic creek bottom habitat), Naconiche Creek (sandy upland and acid bog creek bottom habitats), Mill Creek Gardens (three different habitats), and Weches Outcrop (home to many Central Texas species). The conference is the South's only native plant conference held in association with the Cullowhee Native Plant Conference of the University of North Carolina. The plan is for the PNPC to continue to host this biennial event, because it gives us such great exposure as well as bringing in noted native plant experts. The next one will be in 2005.

PNPC Board Corner

The board met June 26, 2003, to begin the process of evaluating the mission for the PNPC and to begin planning for a capital campaign. According to SFA Physical Plant estimates, the cost of implementing a facilities plan that Dr. Mike Legg and Dr. David Creech developed based on Darrel Morrison's master plan for the PNPC would be about \$1.4 million. Dr. Jerry Holbert, Vice President for University Advancement, showed the board a presentation that organizing a major capital campaign would require a focus on large donations, a separate capital campaign board, and 18 months to two years. However, the theme of all of our discussions was that the people make the PNPC what it is, not just the built facilities. The number one issue facing us in 2003-2204 is to permanently fund Elyce Rodewald's salary, since it is due to her hard work developing educational programs with clear results and excellent record-keeping that is actually spreading the word that the Pineywoods Native Plant Center as a major research center and a center for environmental education for all ages. She is currently funded half time on a Texas Forest Service Urban Forestry grant and half time through an EPA environmental education grant.

Mark Your Calendars

October 16, 2003: Paul Cox, "Plant Conservation Efforts at the San Antonio Botanic Garden" (Les Reeves Lecture Series, Room 110 Agriculture Building, 6:30 p.m.)

Contact Information

For native plant horticulture questions, call Lance Craig:
936-468-4104 or lcraig@sfasu.edu

Between newsletters, watch our Web site for updates: click on the Native Plant Center button on the Arboretum Web site:

www.sfasu.edu/ag/arboretum

Photos thanks to Elyce Rodewald.