

# HORTICULTURE

## Happenings

LSU Department of Horticulture Newsletter

Summer 2002

### From the Department Head



David G. Himelrick

Hello once again from 137 Julian C. Miller Hall. The Department of Horticulture is doing well. Our faculty remains active in the classroom, providing a high quality curriculum for our undergraduate and graduate students. We are also engaged in many areas of research to better serve the horticultural industry and to improve our knowledge base. Our Extension co-workers are an important part of the team that brings the latest information to commercial producers and homeowners. One exciting change has been the complete integration of Extension faculty into the department by giving them academic rank and tenure in the AgCenter.

The new Turf and Ornamentals Research Area at the Burden Center is progressing  
*(continued on page 3)*

### Homecoming Activities 2002

We want to make this year special for the students, alumni and friends of the Department of Horticulture. Mark your calendar now, and plan to attend all the great events planned by the Department and the University for Friday, October 4 and Saturday, October 5. Come to visit with your old friends and make some new ones.

The activities start Friday evening at 6:30 at Drusilla's Seafood Restaurant. We will show you some slides of what we have been doing this past year. In particular, we will highlight the career of Dr. James Fontenot. Dinner will be your choice from the menu.

Saturday features an open house at the Hill Farm teaching facility so you can tour the newly named Fontenot building and see some of our teaching and research activities. Stop by the Hill Farm anytime from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 5.

#### *Lagniappe on the Patio*

We will be tailgating on the patio at the north end of J.C. Miller Hall starting at 3 p.m. The Department will supply the main course. You might wish to bring some food to share, but it is certainly not necessary. Bringing your own folding chairs would be a good idea. We can secure our chairs and tailgating supplies inside the building during the game. In case of rain, we will move the party inside.

Kickoff is at 7 p.m., and we will pick up where we left off after the game and allow the traffic to die down. Now, how can you pass up a truly special time like this? We expect to see you here.

#### *Fontenot Building Dedication Planned*

The long-awaited dedication of the James F. Fontenot Horticulture Building at Hill Farm is October 4. The dedication will coincide with this year's homecoming activities saluting LSU war veterans. Fontenot served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Family, friends and colleagues of his are encouraged to attend.

The department would like to take this opportunity to kick off the fund-raising activities for the University Gardens that will surround the James F. Fontenot Classroom Building. Construction has begun, and the public can get a glimpse of the Department's vision for the teaching facility. Please plan to attend!



# Ten Ways You Can Support Our Department

## 1. Undergraduate Scholarships.

Scholarships are awarded annually to good students who have financial needs. We have several scholarships in the Department, but we always have more deserving students whom we cannot assist. If you would like to sponsor a scholarship in your name or the name of someone you wish to honor or your club or organization name, we will be pleased to help you set one up. The annual amount awarded to a student by most departments ranges from \$250 to \$2000.

## 2. Graduate Student Assistantships.

Most graduate students cannot afford to pursue a master's or doctor of philosophy degree without financial aid. Our MS assistantships are below the national average at \$12,000 for a master's degree student and \$14,000 for a Ph.D. degree student. We always have many more good graduate student applicants each year than we can accept into a program because we lack the financial support. An assistantship could be initiated under your name or organization.

**3. Horticulture Club Support.** Our undergraduate student club is active each year and has several fund-raising projects. Students use the monies raised to travel to meetings, for special projects and to run the club functions. You can provide direct support to the club through a financial gift or indirectly by donating something like plant material the club could sell at plant sales on campus. Our students are the lifeblood of the Department, and we want them to have the best opportunity to be exposed to all aspects of horticulture. Your support can be critical in allowing them to experience many new ideas outside the classroom.

## 4. Hill Farm Teaching Facility.

We are planning to develop the Hill Farm into a much more public facility. With our key location adjacent to the Cook Hotel and Conference Center as well as the Alumni Center, we are poised to make the Hill Farm a must see destination for all campus visitors. Our plans for the establishment of formal plantings highlighting the best plants for Louisiana gardens should be of great interest to students and their families, alumni

and visitors to campus. To make this the showplace we have envisioned with theme gardens, a pavilion, an amphitheater, fountain, walkways, etc., we need to raise a substantial amount of money. We hope to name each of the major features of the garden in honor of individual contributors. This beautiful facility in the center of campus will be a lasting memorial to all who love plants. Please contact us for details if you would like to become a partner.

**5. Burden Turf and Ornamentals Research Area.** We are developing a 20-acre area at the Burden Research Center on Essen Lane at I-10. We envision this site as a world-class facility for conducting turfgrass and ornamental research and extension. The project is costly since we have started with only a large field. We have a new entry to the site, and roads have been constructed. We have city water but hope to drill wells in the future. We also plan construction of equipment buildings and greenhouses. The container production yard is under construction. If you would like to contribute, we would be pleased to talk with you about how you might help.

**6. Foundation Account.** As with most departments on campus, Horticulture has an LSU Foundation Account for unrestricted gifts to the Department. We always need funds for incidentals such as buying hot dogs and hamburgers for a cookout to welcome students back to campus and many other events. We also use such funds to honor outstanding students with plaques at our Spring Awards Banquet. Additionally, our very limited state support does not allow for the purchase of major pieces of equipment such as a pickup truck or special laboratory equipment. It is difficult for the Department to obtain funds for such necessary purchases. This is an area of perpetual need. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

**7. Special Research Projects.** Our faculty and students are mission oriented and service minded. Much of our research focuses on solving industry problems. Our scientists are willing to help wherever they are needed, but modern research is very expensive and labor intensive. If you would like to propose a

special research project we will be happy to discuss the estimated costs and how we might become partners in the investigation.

**8. Endowed Professorships.** The University has a mechanism to honor current faculty and to attract outstanding new faculty. For a gift of \$60,000, the state will match it with an additional \$40,000. This money is then placed in a special account, and the interest is used to supplement the salary and program of the selected faculty member. Our department has only one such professorship given in the name of Ola Cook Holmes by her son. This is a truly lasting honor for both the sponsor and the recipient. The initial amount can be accumulated over time and is a wonderful way to support the faculty in our department. Please let us know if you would like details.

**9. Endowed Chairs.** In this case the University has established a mechanism by which departments can create a new faculty position. A gift of \$600,000 is matched with \$400,000 from the state, and the interest is used to pay the new faculty member's salary. With state and federal support cutbacks or level funding, combined with increasing costs, the university has not refilled many vacated positions in the past decades. This has led to shrinking departments and reduced programs. Teaching, research and extension have all declined. You can help us to increase our numbers and strengthen our program. The University has trained specialists to work with you on the sensitive issues of estate planning. A named endowed chair professorship can be a perpetual gift to the students and the horticultural industry.

**10. Political Support.** Budgetary and other decisions made each year dramatically affect our department. Your willingness to contact state and federal legislators about funding and other key issues is critical. Your influence with campus administrators can also be of great value to us. Our future is tied closely to the political support of our alumni and friends. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to support the Department of Horticulture.

## Horticulture Students Receive LNLA Scholarships

Paul Mumma, a senior in ornamental horticulture at LSU, was awarded a 2002 scholarship from the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association. He is a native of Jefferson and a resident of Loranger. His parents own Gene's Greenhouses in Loranger. Mumma is a TOPS scholar and a past recipient of the Blanche and Dennis McCloskey scholarship.

John Young, a current master's student in ornamental horticulture at LSU, was also awarded a 2002 scholarship from the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association. He is a native of Mamou and has been employed while a student at LSU and is an LNLA certified nursery professional. Young is also a Louisiana licensed landscape contractor and horticulturist.

Visit our Web site at:  
[www.horticulture.lsu.edu](http://www.horticulture.lsu.edu)

### Department Head

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nicely. We hope to make this a world-class facility with the financial support for the project coming from Chancellor Richardson and our commercial ornamental and turf industry. Stop by the Burden Center on Essen Lane at I-10 the next time you're in Baton Rouge. It is a beautiful place, and some of the projects under way should be of interest.

You don't have to wait until Homecoming to come back to campus for some fun and fellowship with old friends. Don't forget that you're invited

## Alumnus Named Young Nurseryperson of the Year

Bobby Young, a graduate of the Department of Horticulture, was named the Young Nurseryperson of the Year for 2002 by the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association. Bobby is the owner of Bobby Young Plants in Forest Hill. He received the award at the Gulf States Horticultural Expo held in Mobile.

## Department of Horticulture Students Involved in Research

The College of Agriculture annually supports undergraduate student research projects in various departments across campus. In horticulture, we have several undergraduate students teaming with professors in research efforts.

Paul Mumma is studying effects of potting media composition on fire ant colonization with Ed Bush and Linda Bui.

Randi Hodges is also working with Bui on fire ants. Her project addresses the perceived avoidance of contact insecticides.

A recently completed undergraduate research project was Theresa Johnson's work with Ed Bush and Don LaBonte on DNA fingerprinting of liriopse and mondograss cultivars.

to tailgate with the faculty, alumni, students and friends of horticulture before every home football game. We start three hours before kickoff and always have plenty of great food. Bring a dish to share if you have time; if not, just come on over anyway. Bringing a folding chair is also a good idea since all that eating makes you want to sit down before going back for seconds.

We are also proud to announce that Paul Wilson is the recipient of the Ola Cook Holmes Endowed Professorship in Horticulture. We will plan a special recognition ceremony

## Faculty Recognition

Faculty members Dan Gill and Allen Owings were recently named award winners by Louisiana County Agricultural Agents Association and National County Agricultural Agents Association. Gill received the Distinguished Service Award. Owings received the Achievement Award.

Ed Bush was promoted from assistant to associate professor effective July 1.

in the future. Our students continue to do well both academically and in their careers. We are very proud of their accomplishments. Please keep in contact with us, and make sure we have your correct address. If you have some classmates with whom you haven't communicated for awhile, use this letter as a good excuse to call them and say hello. Ask if they received the newsletter. If not, please send us their mailing addresses.

Stop by and introduce yourself when you are on campus. I'm always interested in making a new friend.

## Ornamental and Turfgrass Research Facility at Burden Center

An exciting new development is taking place at Burden Center. After two years of discussion, the LSU AgCenter administration has provided the "go-ahead" and financial support for development of a new ornamental and turfgrass research and demonstration area at Burden Center on Essen Lane in Baton Rouge. This will involve moving current research activities to this area and also allow for expansion and creation of much needed new research opportunities. A 20-acre site has been chosen. It is located north of I-10 and fronts Essen Lane. It is immediately across Essen Lane from the new Shaw Building. Plans call for turfgrass plot development, container yard creation and landscape plant evaluation area development to be occurring in the next 6-9 months. Chancellor Richardson has pledged \$250,000 in support of this project, and the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association is providing almost \$60,000. The first field day at our new facility will be in the fall of 2003. Watch for more details!!

## Upcoming Educational Programs

The 8th annual Louisiana Plant Materials Conference, co-hosted by the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, will be November 6 in Baton Rouge.

Watch your mail for an announcement from Jeff Kuehny and Pat Branch of the Department of Horticulture for their annual Poinsettia Open House, normally held the second week in December. Contact Kuehny at 225/578-1043 for information.

## Recent Educational Programs

The Department of Horticulture held a Landscape Irrigation Workshop on July 16 at Burden Center. Bill Branch from the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering gave a presentation on soil-water-plant relationships and trouble shooting.

Jeff Kuehny and Pat Branch represented the LSU AgCenter at the Mid South Greenhouse Growers Conference held in Jackson, Miss., in June. This annual event is co-sponsored in cooperation with Mississippi State University and the University of Arkansas.

Ed Bush and Allen Owings represented the LSU AgCenter at the annual meeting of the Southern Region - Information Exchange Group on Nursery Crops and Landscape Systems held in June in McMinnville, Tenn.

A Nursery Production Short Course was held June 18-19 at Burden Center. About 60 attended and heard information

on fertilization and irrigation management, weed control, new plant varieties, fire ant research and many other topics. Ed Bush, Allen Owings, Robert Trawick (Extension Associate) and Jeff Kuehny participated in the program.

Tom Koske represented LSU AgCenter at the SERA-IEG / Turf meeting at Auburn University on June 2-5.

Carl Motsenbocker and Leanna Smith (graduate student) presented a seminar, "Development of Garden-based Instruction in Louisiana Public Elementary Schools," at the National School Gardening Symposium held at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

Carl Motsenbocker and Roger Hinson (Professor, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness) were invited to present a seminar and poster at the International Society of Horticultural Science meetings held in Toronto, Canada. Both presentations were

based on the LSU AgCenter project with USAID to develop an agricultural reconstruction and strategic development plan for the Government of Honduras.

Ed Bush and Don LaBonte presented a poster, "Phylogenetic Relationships Among Commercially Important Ornamental Liriopogons," at the In-Vitro Biotechnology Symposium in Orlando June 22-29.

Anthony Witcher (graduate student) competed in the Bryson James Student Competition in Atlanta on August 1. The title of his paper was "Evaluation of Fertilizer and Irrigation Production Systems for Large Containers."

Attendees from six states converged on Baton Rouge June 16-17 for a southern region meeting of the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers. Area cut flower farms were visited, and Jeff Kuehny and graduate student John Young provided an overview of their cut flower research efforts.

## Congratulations 2003 Horticulture Scholarship Recipients!

Scholarship Name	Recipient
James F. Fontenot	Manuel E. Aldana Cecelia McGregor Thomas McHaro Maria Paz
William L. Hawthorne	Dexter Fontenot Paul Mumma Terri Schexnaydre
Travis P. Hernandez	Julia Fernandez Dexter Fontenot Justin Fuselier Damask Grogan Brent Guilbeaux Kyle Haydel Timothy Quebedeaux Terri Schexnaydre
John E. Love	Justin Fuselier Mickey Kleinhenz Timothy Quebedeaux
T.K. McKnight	Dexter Fontenot Paul Mumma Timothy Quebedeaux Terei Schexnaydre
John J. Mikell	Dexter Fontenot Timothy Quebedeaux Terri Schexnaydre
Julian C. Miller	Dexter Fontenot Justin Fuselier Brent Guilbeaux Kyle Haydel Mickey Kleinhenz Jessica LaBorde Paul Mumma Stedman Nall Sergio Nay Timothy Quebedeaux Terri Schexnaydre
Nicole Munn	Justin Smith
Donald Newsome	Manuel Aldana Jessica LaBorde Maria Paz

## Congratulations, May 2002 Graduates!

Patricia Borskey	Jared Giovingo
Adam Bowers	Ronald Johnson, Jr.
Joy Bruce	Franklin Larue II
Susan Callahan	Aaron Wade

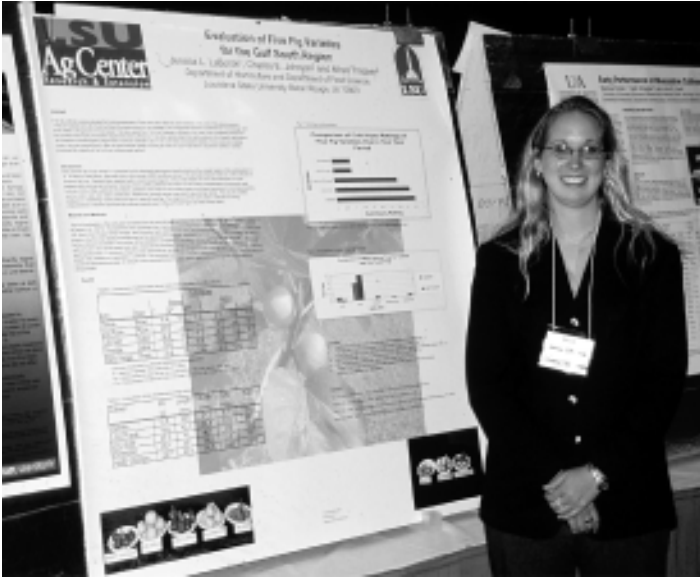
## LSU Horticulture Collegiate Scholars

Joy Marie Bruce	Eugene Paul Mumma
Veronica Lynn Cole	Timothy John Quebedeaux
Jared D. Giovingo	James C. Ransom III
Edward Ryan Heard	Justin David Smith

*ASHS Collegiate Scholars Honored – Students are selected from the top 15% of their major, based on academic standing.*



*Dr. Charles Johnson instructs students in front of the newly named James F. Fontenot Horticulture Building. See story on page 1.*



## LaBorde Wins Poster Competitions

Jessica LaBorde, a senior from Covington and a member of the Horticulture Club, won the Undergraduate Poster Competition at the Southern Region of the American Society for Horticultural Science meeting in Orlando. Her poster, "Evaluation of Five Fig Varieties for the Gulf South Region," received high praise for craftsmanship and the quality of the research she performed under the guidance of Charles Johnson. Upon graduation, she plans to continue as a graduate student in the department.



*Another happy customer at the Spring Plant Sale enjoys the wide selection of herbs.*

## Other news...

In May, the Hort Club elected new officers for 2002-2003. They are: Tim Quebedeaux, president; Candace Aiken, vice president; Shelly Roy, secretary/ASC representative; Patrick Quebedeaux, treasurer; and Terri Schexnaydre, reporter.

On the heels of the most successful Fall Sale in recent history, the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Spring Plant Sale surpassed all expectations. The two-day event in April offered a wide selection of annuals and perennials as well as vegetables, houseplants, trees, shrubs and fruit crops. A popular item this spring was the large selection of herbs grown by the Club. More than 20 species of herbs including eight different basil varieties were available to the eager public.

Success has encouraged the Hort Club to continue improving its selection and quality. The Fall Plant sale is slated for October 17-18. Fall garden mums, pumpkins and winter annuals are being grown for the sale. The Club will also offer strawberries, winter vegetables, a wide variety of winter-hardy herbs and maybe a few surprises. Be sure to mark it on your calendar!



*Hort club members Terri Schexnaydre (back) and Randi Hodges supply a little muscle to the Horticulture Club's Spring Sale.*



*Horticulture Club President Lance Heltz (left) ponders over a customer's question at the Spring Plant Sale.*

## Memories of Hilltop

By: Dan Gill

When I attended LSU in the '70s, one of my most amazing discoveries was what is now the Hilltop Arboretum. As an undergraduate majoring in horticulture, I had the opportunity to visit Hilltop Nursery on several occasions in conjunction with classes I was taking in landscape architecture and plant materials.

A visit to Hilltop was (and is) a wonderful adventure. Emory Smith, who owned the property and developed the plantings, traveled all over Louisiana collecting native plants and planting them on his property. There were a variety of habitats at Hilltop, from sunny open areas to woodland shade and even a ravine. This provided students an outstanding opportunity to study native plants and learn how to recognize them in a natural setting.

Emory was remarkable himself. He was very knowledgeable about the plants he collected and was always happy to share information. He was really before his time in encouraging the use of native plant materials in the landscape. In his efforts to promote the planting of natives, he propagated his plants and sold them on site at Hilltop Nursery. Believe it or not, he simply placed the plants in containers with name and price out for people to see. Once you had made your choices, you simply put the appropriate amount of money in the container provided and left. It was strictly on the honor system. That's just the kind of guy Emory was.

Ultimately, Emory Smith donated Hilltop to LSU to establish an arboretum of native South-

ern trees, shrubs and wildflowers to be used by both the University and the public. The public dedication of Hilltop Arboretum took place March 28, 1982. It is still a wonderful place to visit and fulfills Emory's vision. The following is an excerpt from Hilltop: My Story by Emory Smith. I think it expresses a lot about this remarkable man and the legacy he left for us.

"I am thankful for all the people who have told us what our

woods have meant to them because I wanted to make this something more than a beautiful landscape design. I wanted to make those pathways tell something of the story of what life has taught me. It is to appreciate nature with its beauty and wonder and mystery and to know ourselves as the guardians of nature for the future. It is the love of people, all kinds of people, and the certainty they are what makes life worthwhile."

## Gardening in the Humid South - New Book from O'Rourke and Standifer

Our two self-proclaimed "crotchety old horticulture professors," Ed O'Rourke and Leon Standifer, share an immense love of gardening, a vast knowledge of all things horticultural and a hearty sense of humor. In *Gardening in the Humid South*, they combine these traits to provide a practical and entertaining guide to gardening in the region they know best, the humid subtropics of the lower South.

In chapters with titles like "Bulbs and Things That Act Like Bulbs" and "Weeds: Telling Good Guys from Bad Guys," they offer friendly how-to advice on a broad array of issues, including choosing and preparing a cultivation site, raising fruit, growing in containers, using fertilizer and preparing for cold weather.

In *Gardening in the Humid South*, two of our emeritus faculty share their contagious enthusiasm for their avocation and show that despite the hard work, gardening is, above all, fun.

### Alumni - Where Are You Now?

Tell us what is going on with your life and career. Classmates like to know what other classmates are doing! Here's your chance to share your news with the LSU Department of Horticulture alumni and friends. This information will appear in an upcoming *Horticulture Happenings*.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME TEL: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ WORK TEL: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL : \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS OF: \_\_\_\_\_

FAMILY MEMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

NEWS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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## Nursery and Landscape Golf Shootout Held in May

The Department of Horticulture hosted its second Nursery/Landscape Golf Shootout at the LSU Golf Course in Baton Rouge on May 31. Eight teams participated in the event. First place prizes were \$50 pro shop gift certificates. Special thanks to Jon Ducote of BWI Companies and the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association for serving as the corporate sponsors. Also, thanks are extended to the LSU College of Agriculture and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry for their support. Additional sponsors were George Johnson Nursery, Baton Rouge Landscape Association, C.J.'s Nursery, Southeast Louisiana Nurserymen's Association, Louisiana State Horticulture Society and the Metro Area Horticulture Foundation. Thanks to artist Henry Lastrapes of Baton Rouge for his donation of a watercolor for a closest to the hole prize. Contact Allen Owings at 225-578-2222 for information on plans for the 2003 golf shootout.



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