



## Northwest Region Newsletter October 2010 Edition

### *News/Events*

#### **LSU AgCenter forester leads bike tour of Shreveport's significant trees**

Live oaks, magnolias, bald cypresses and hackberries were among the types of trees riders learned about in Vélo Dendro S Deux, a leisurely bicycle tour held Oct. 23 in South Highlands and Broadmoor led by Shreveport native Dr. Hallie Dozier, an urban forester with the LSU AgCenter.

Baton Rouge Advocates for Safe Streets (B.R.A.S.S.) partnered with the LSU AgCenter, Columbia Café, A Better Shreveport and Shreveport Green to bring the event to Shreveport for the second year.

The ride covered approximately 15 miles with frequent stops, the first being to plant a live oak in Betty Virginia Park with assistance of Shreveport Green for "Make a Difference Day."

The Captain Shreve, Northwood and Huntington Z clubs assisted.

Dozier said all of the species planted in the park are native to this part of the world.

Dozier told the 75 riders that when you plant a tree in your own landscape, "you need to pamper it like a baby."

She pointed out the bald cypress trees at the park. Bald cypress is the state tree of Louisiana. They are conifers, dropping leaves once a year, Dozier said, adding that they get big quickly and can be planted in tight spots.

"If planted in a wet spot, it gets knees," Dozier said. "Scientists have been trying to figure out why cypresses have knees. Nobody really knows."



The next tree visited was a live oak on Slattery Boulevard that was planted in the 1920s. The tree has been cabled extensively because the owners thought the branches were too low, Dozier said. “This tree is culturally so important to this side of town.”

Dozier said if you have room in your yard, live oaks are one of the best trees you can plant.

Matthew Linn, Caddo Parish commissioner and owner of Columbia Café, gave a history of Bayou Pierre. “This was a means of getting goods in and out of Shreveport during the log jam,” he said. “Building materials for this neighborhood came up this way from the Mississippi River.”

A magnolia that Dozier said she has climbed on Ockley Drive brought about the topic of mulch. “Mulch is the single best thing you can do for a tree,” Dozier said, adding that a thin, wide layer no more than two to four inches should be used. “The best way to mulch a tree is not high,” she said.

The owner of the home with the magnolia said prior residents left a receipt for the tree that shows it was planted in 1931. “Rumor has it that a traveling salesman sold trees up and down the street,” said Jennifer Akers.

Riders were next treated to a visit to the Louisiana State Champion sycamore tree at A.C. Steere Elementary School. American Forest’s National Register has identified it as the largest sycamore in the state.

Hackberry trees on Johnette Street planted in the parking areas between the sidewalk and curb were pointed out before the ride downtown to the Barnwell Garden and Art Center and storm-damaged trees at the Caddo Parish Courthouse.

“When you get a neighborhood with trees, houses sell,” Dozier said. “People are attracted to good landscaping.”

Benefits of trees include beauty, shade and helping the environment, Dozier said.

### **Feral hog seminar offered by LSU AgCenter**

The LSU AgCenter will present a feral hog seminar Tuesday, Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. at the David B. Means 4-H Center in Grand Cane.

Walter Cotton, supervisory wildlife damage management biologist with the Monroe district office of the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, will speak on ways of controlling wild hogs.

### **Ag Magic, nutrition program return to State Fair of Louisiana**

Ag Magic at the State Fair of Louisiana remains open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the duration of the fair except for when guided tours will be conducted for pre-registered third-through sixth-graders Nov. 3-5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Caddo/Bossier EFNEP nutrition education presentation dates at the fair were Oct. 27 and Nov. 3.

### **Hill Farm Research Station completes first flock of broilers in new houses**

The first flock of chickens in the new poultry demonstration houses at the LSU AgCenter Hill Farm Research Station has reached the target weight and has been processed by House of Raeford.

Raeford's goal for this flock was a nine-pound bird in nine weeks. The flock reached that goal three days early with an average bird weight of 8.93 pounds and a feed conversion of 2.04. Feed conversion is the weight gain that results from the amount of feed used. The total number of birds processed from the two houses was 40,961.

The poultry demonstration houses at the Hill Farm will provide information to growers on equipment, techniques and management procedures to help maximize their profits. The initial flock was a "test" flock for the Hill Farm to be sure all equipment was properly installed and to train new personnel, said Dr. Bill Owens, Hill Farm resident coordinator.

"The new houses performed well, with the extreme heat of August and September providing a good test of the tunnel ventilation, cool cells and the solid wall design," Owens said.

During the growing period, the Hill Farm recorded nine days over 100 degrees.

In addition to testing the equipment and training personnel, data on the number and types of bacteria present in the intestinal tract of the chickens and the houses were collected. Beginning with chicks from the first day, samples were collected every two weeks to determine the microbial flora present in chickens and litter. This will allow scientists at the Hill Farm to monitor the flocks at these houses for bacteria important to poultry and human health, Owens said.

A poultry house steering committee made up of representatives from the LSU AgCenter, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, the Louisiana Farm Bureau and poultry producers engaged in live broiler production within Louisiana is charged with

identifying broiler house management and equipment issues for which demonstration information needs to be collected and disseminated for the benefit of the Louisiana broiler industry.

Future flocks will compare standard radiant brood heat and tube heat. Variables to be evaluated will be feed conversion rates, energy consumption, chick growth and humidity and ammonia levels.

Data collected from the Hill Farm houses will be made available to producers via a variety of AgCenter publications and meetings including newsletters, field days and other Extension Service programs and publications.

### **Lincoln Parish fifth-graders attend Water Festival**

Five hundred fifth-graders from Lincoln Parish schools spent the day at Lincoln Parish Park Oct 14-15 where specialists from the LSU AgCenter and other state and federal agencies taught them about conservation and water quality at the 2010 Water Festival.

Water education is a major youth education initiative throughout the state, said Gary Stockton, LSU AgCenter agent.

“Reduce the use” is the mantra of a water conservation campaign spearheaded by the LSU AgCenter in North Louisiana, where people in 15 parishes are dependent on the gradually disappearing Sparta Aquifer, he said.

The children learned from Jeff Brantly with the U.S. Geological Survey that the water they use in Lincoln Parish comes from the ground. He explained that an aquifer is a thick underground layer of coarse material that holds water replenished through rain.

Brantly said Lincoln Parish uses eight million gallons a day, or as much as a pool as big as a football field that is 19 feet deep. He told the students more is used than what naturally goes into the aquifer.

“It’s like a car and gas,” Brantly said. “What is eventually going to happen? You’re going to run out.”

Dr. Bill Branch, LSU AgCenter professor emeritus who was a water research specialist, demonstrated a flow meter and offered such tips on how to conserve water as using low-flow showerheads, putting a pistol grip on the hose to wash the car or washing it on the yard if it has been dry, only washing dishes and clothes when there is a full load and replacing gaskets on leaky faucets.

“Every month most families are using a tanker truck full of water,” Branch said.

At another station, children were taken through a chalked maze that explained the route storm water takes in an urban setting and the pollutants it encounters.

Dr. Bill Owens, LSU AgCenter Hill Farm resident coordinator, let children look at bacteria through a microscope in a water quality lesson. “We have to ensure water is safe by constantly checking,” he said.



Teresa Price, LSU AgCenter associate agent in Claiborne Parish where a similar program is held, helped with a relay that broke the students into two teams that had to fill a 100-gallon container with lake water a bucket at a time, relay style. It took them 15 minutes.

and feeding pets and livestock.

The lesson also taught the many uses of water--drinking, bathing, cleaning, washing, cooking, swimming, gardening

“We should conserve water because we don’t have that much,” Ketravion Smith of Cypress Springs School said after the lesson.

“A tiny leak in a toilet wastes a lot,” said Cuban Luma. “I will turn off the water when I brush my teeth,” added Ju’Quaryo Elmore.

“I want to save the planet,” said Lamoris Albritton, who wants to be a water well technician.

“All seemed to have a good time and learned the basics,” said Hazel Hunter, Lincoln Parish police juror. “I am happy to see school kids out here in an outdoor classroom on how to conserve water. They will take it home to their parents.

“Having volunteers from all parts of Louisiana is wonderful,” she added.

The event was organized by the Sparta Ground Water Commission.

### **First bale of cotton auctioned in Caddo**

The first bale of cotton ginned this year in Caddo Parish was sold to a group of bidders for \$4,100 on Oct. 28 at the Louisiana State Exhibit Museum as part of a luncheon for producers during the State Fair of Louisiana.

The cotton was produced by Dan and Steve Logan. Steve is a third generation farmer in Gilliam. The Logans grew 1,200 acres of cotton this year and Steve says December cotton has reached its highest price point since the Civil War on the New York Cotton Exchange.

“December cotton right now is \$1.22 a pound, which is unusually high,” Logan said.

The cotton was planted April 21 and harvested on Sept. 7, said Johnny LeVasseur, LSU AgCenter county agent. It weighed 503 pounds.

Contributors included the Ark-La-Tex Ag Council, Louisiana Land Bank, State Fair of Louisiana, Goldman Tractor, Scott Tractor, Bancorp South, Linc Coleman, Louisiana Ag Credit, Caddo Ag Supply, Helena Chemical, Shreveport Tractor, Crop Production Services, Farm Bureau, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Caddo Parish Sheriff Steve Prator, Gilliam Gin, Cairo Plantation and Jack Dillard.

Chris Giordano, general manager of the fair, said the luncheon was arranged to thank farmers and ranchers for all they do. He encouraged those in attendance to attend AgMagic at the State Fair.

“The LSU AgCenter has produced an interactive exhibit to teach where food and fiber come from,” Giordano said. “We need to keep ag awareness and this is one of the ways we do it.”

Dr. Mike Strain, Louisiana commissioner of agriculture, said the LSU AgCenter is important to the state. “We need the AgCenter. I need you to speak to your elected officials,” he said.

He said his department and the LSU AgCenter have faced major reductions in their budgets.

Randy Ewing, former president of the Louisiana Senate, agreed. “The LSU AgCenter is such a big part of our agriculture family. They cannot charge tuition or raise fees on students,” he said.

“They have moved away from putting pears in jars and sewing a button hole to the economy and young people and their ethics,” Ewing said. “They are really under the gun, so we have to be proactive.”

### **We Care Ministries S.A.I.L.s into basic principles of investing**

Learning to be good stewards of finances is a priority for church leaders and members of We Care Ministries in Ringgold.

The congregation has been taking part in a series of lessons, Saving And Investing for Life (S.A.I.L.), taught by Diane Uzzle, LSU AgCenter financial resource management agent.

Oct. 3 lessons included tax implications, balancing pre-retirement and post-retirement investments, managing risks, asset allocation and diversification, changing investments over time, managing costs and active vs. passive investing.

Nov. 7 topics include qualifications, preparation and certification of financial professionals, selecting the best financial professional for your needs and protecting yourself against investment fraud.

If you make wise choices about your investment team and your investments, you can feel confident about keeping your money safe, Uzzle said. "Remember that taking an active role in investments takes time and know-how, but even if you plan to leave investment decision to a professional, it's still important to make sure you have researched the history and experience of the professional you select," she said.

### **Springville Gardeners begin project in Red River Parish**

On Sept. 17, the Springville Classy Gardeners (SCG), a group of youth from the Springville Alternative School, officially started their school garden.

In collaboration with the LSU AgCenter's 4-H and Family Nutrition Program (FNP), the school has kicked off the first school garden in Red River Parish.

Using large containers, the group of approximately 20 students, planted purple and green cabbage, Swiss chard, radishes, carrots, turnips, lettuce and mustard greens.

LSU AgCenter agents Vicky Chesser, Joshua Salley and Cindy Smith are teaching such important concepts as healthy cooking and eating, when to plant certain crops, how to care for crops, as well as a variety of planning, teamwork and leadership skills.

The youth are aspiring to build a better school environment while learning math, science and social studies concepts.

### **LSU AgCenter gets grant to study pecan scab disease control**

The LSU AgCenter has received a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to study a new control for pecan scab disease.

The two-year grant for \$22,400 came through the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry as part of a USDA program to support research in specialty crops, which include fruits, vegetables, nuts, horticulture and nursery crops.

The pecan research will be conducted by Dr. Charlie Graham, an LSU AgCenter plant physiologist at the AgCenter Pecan Research/Extension Station in Shreveport.

"The disease doesn't pick its place," Graham said, pointing out it can occur in single trees in homeowners' backyards or in large commercial orchards.

Graham is working with chemicals called phosphites that were first identified to control pecan scab in a 2007 study of another chemical. In that study, "it gave great control of scab in a foliar application," Graham said.

The new study is evaluating phosphite-based fungicides as ground-applied, systemic controls for pecan scab. A systemic material is taken up by the tree's roots and travels throughout the plant. In this case, the phosphite would be present in the leaves and nuts, killing any of the scab-causing fungi that try to infect them.

"We know other chemicals have worked systemically to control insects," Graham said of phosphite. "Now we want to find out if phosphite can systemically control a pecan disease."

"Phosphite provided excellent control as a foliar spray in an earlier study," Graham said. Now, he wants to learn if it can be as effective when it's ground-applied.

Most fungicides work by covering the nut and leaves with a layer of chemical that prevents the fungi from infecting the plant, Graham said. But because those foliar-applied products eventually disappear, the trees have to be sprayed every two to four weeks during the growing season.

"That means six to eight and up to 10 foliar applications," Graham said. "In the test, a soil-applied fungicide will be applied only twice. That's a considerable cost savings."

A ground-applied fungicide that only needs to be used twice a season will give homeowners and small orchards a product that doesn't need to be applied with large, expensive spray equipment most don't have or can afford.

In other tests with other crops, phosphite has been stable in the plants. "It stays in place," Graham said.

Various fungicides with brand names like Fosphite, Rampart and Phostol contain potassium, sodium and/or ammonium phosphites, which have been combined with an alkali salt to reduce acidity, Graham said. Along with evaluating phosphite itself, Graham's study also will look at how the chemical activity is affected by other components of the various products.

### **Blazier receives funding**

Dr. Mike Blazier, LSU AgCenter forestry agent, reports that an AFRI Sustainable Bioenergy proposal submitted in June, "Carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions associated with cellulosic bioenergy feedstock production on marginal agricultural lands in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley" has been chosen for full funding.

The five-year, \$973,339 project is with the University of Arkansas.

### **Faculty Council elections run through Nov. 12**

Elections for the Faculty Council will run through Nov. 12

This year, Faculty Council elections are being held for the following positions: two full off-campus, one full on-campus, one associate off-campus, one associate on-campus and one assistant off-campus.

Only faculty who fall into these categories will be able to vote for their specific category.

To vote for someone or to view the current members, visit <https://www.lsuagcenter.net/departments/faculty/elections/votingActivity.aspx>.

If you have any questions, please contact Joan King, Faculty Council chair at [jking@agcenter.lsu.edu](mailto:jking@agcenter.lsu.edu).

## ***4-H***

### **Sabine Parish celebrates National 4-H Week**

During the week of Oct. 4-8, students across Sabine Parish joined 4-H members across the nation to celebrate National 4-H Week.

Posters made by 4-H'ers flooded the halls to show off the 4-H spirit at many schools.

Delicious treats filled teachers' lounges to show appreciation throughout the parish at Florien, Zwolle, Negreet, Ebarb, Pleasant Hill and Converse schools.

Pleasant Hill 4-H'ers hosted a lunch for teachers and sponsored the PBS awards for Friday. Many High School 4-H'ers held a cupcake bake sale fundraiser on Thursday to raise money for their club during the celebration.

Students at Belmont Union Christian held a paper goods drive for the school.

Ebarb High School celebrated each day of the week. Ebarb started off the week with the 4-H Pledge and a clover coloring contest for elementary students. Tuesday, 4-H members prepared goodies for the teachers and Wednesday students got to guess the number of candies in the jar for a 4-H water bottle prize. Thursday was club day and students showed their 4-H pride by wearing green shirts. The club meeting was followed by a balloon release. Wrapping up the celebration with a service project, 4-H'ers made cards to send to soldiers.

### **Red River Junior Livestock Club meets**

At the last Junior Livestock Club meeting, officers for the 2010-2011 year were elected.

Serving as officers are president, Michael Arnold; vice president, Carmen Latiolais; secretary, Miranda Robinette; treasurer, Sarah McCoy; and reporter, Sarah Warren.

They also studied and practiced for the Livestock Quiz Bowl and went over feed identification for premier exhibitor.

They also discussed the State Fair of Louisiana and the spring LSU and Southern shows.

The Ark-La-Tex Ag Council asked for 10 4-H youth volunteers to help out during the ALTAC Junior Livestock Sale on Oct. 27. They assisted in picking up buyer cards and serving the buyers.

There was also a best-dressed contest during the sale.

### **Webster 4-H'er sings national anthem to open livestock sale**



Kinsey Ellington, a fifth grade 4-H member from Harper Elementary, recently qualified to compete at the "4-H Share the Talent" contest at the State Fair of Louisiana in Shreveport on Oct. 23.

She won first place at the state fair competition in the junior vocal division, and as a result, she was asked to perform the national anthem at the opening of the State Fair Junior Livestock Sale on Oct. 27.

### **4-H Junior Leader members assist in Household Hazardous Waste Day**

A successful Household Hazardous Waste Day collection was held in Natchitoches Parish on Sept. 11.

The Department of Environmental Quality, in conjunction with Twin Valley RC & D, planned the event.

Eighty-six vehicles dropped off waste for 123 households. Some of the waste collected was 1,460 pounds of latex paint, 262 pounds of pesticides liquid and 210 gallons of used oil.

Assisting in the collection were 4-H Junior Leader members.

### **BB gun contest at fair grows**

The annual State Fair of Louisiana BB Gun Contest was held on Oct. 30.

Lisa Holmes, 4-H agent in Webster Parish, along with Webster Parish 4-H Shooting Sports volunteers, conducted the annual event.



Holmes reported 152 youth ages 9-18 registered for the competition, which has grown every year since its beginning.

Results follow:

**9 Year Olds:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Luke Vazquez – DeSoto
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Nathaniel Holland – Bossier
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Brock Breed – Bossier
- 4<sup>th</sup> Brett Webber – Bossier
- 5<sup>th</sup> Jordan Shepherd – Webster
- 6<sup>th</sup> Gavin Hall – Claiborne
- 7<sup>th</sup> Garrett Thames – Bossier
- 8<sup>th</sup> Quint Mitchell – Bossier
- 9<sup>th</sup> Ethan Martin – Webster
- 10<sup>th</sup> Gavin Beale – Webster

**10 Year Olds:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Eli Stinson – Bossier
- 2<sup>nd</sup> McKenzie Littleton – Bossier
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Cody Maness – Bossier
- 4<sup>th</sup> Alana Lewis – Bossier
- 5<sup>th</sup> Reed Bearden – Bossier
- 6<sup>th</sup> Nick Mourad – Webster
- 7<sup>th</sup> Trenton Malmay – Sabine
- 8<sup>th</sup> Madeline Williams – Claiborne
- 9<sup>th</sup> Caroline Brakeville – Caddo
- 10<sup>th</sup> Dannie Parrie – Sabine

**11 Year Olds:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Elliott Byrd – Bossier
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mary Claire Boothe – Webster
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Devon Salvaterra-Hammack – Bossier
- 4<sup>th</sup> Austin Bush – Caddo
- 5<sup>th</sup> Lizzy Wilson – Caddo
- 6<sup>th</sup> Haidyn Holley – Webster
- 7<sup>th</sup> Colton Sibert – Caddo
- 8<sup>th</sup> Matt Treece – Webster
- 9<sup>th</sup> Seth Vollmer – Webster
- 10<sup>th</sup> Aidan Roberts – Claiborne

**12 & Over:**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Kathlyn McEachern – Bossier
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Michael McEachern – Bossier

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Allie Morgan – Webster
- 4<sup>th</sup> Ellen Bush – Caddo
- 5<sup>th</sup> Henry Andrews – Webster
- 6<sup>th</sup> Alex Sauer – Bossier
- 7<sup>th</sup> Tony York – Caddo
- 8<sup>th</sup> Matthew Mulkey – Lincoln
- 9<sup>th</sup> Brawley Andrews – Webster
- 10<sup>th</sup> Nikki Crain – Webster

### **Youth promoting Green Campus Week Contest and Cash Awards**

Litter prevention, beautification and recycling were hot topics for Natchitoches Green Campus Week, Oct. 4-8, made possible through a Keep Louisiana Beautiful grant written by Courtney Hornsby, director of promotion and programming for the City of Natchitoches, in collaboration with the LSU AgCenter.

The grant has several components, one in which established a youth service learning project.

Gwen Fontenot, 4-H agent, put together a team of “Green Ambassadors” to design, develop and implement the first clean campus contest. The goal of the contest was to encourage private and public school systems and young people to become involved in helping keep Natchitoches and surrounding areas clean.

Students in each participating school volunteered their time to pick up litter, plant flowers and greenery and beautify their individual campus. In return, schools received support and educational supplies.

The Green Ambassadors carefully planned all the logistics of the project while keeping with the underlying goal of creating a meaningful environmental change.

Local schools were asked to submit portfolio entries during the week of Oct. 4-8. Schools were judged on the demonstration of their exceptional, environmentally improved campuses.

Categories included litter prevention, abatement/prevention, beautification and recycling/waste reduction activities.

This project does not require schools to perform new tasks, but to submit documentation of what they have already done to make their campus clean, healthy and attractive.

The project enables schools to showcase their hard work, compete for cash prizes and use the prize money to further improve their campuses through litter cleanups or prevention efforts (add trash cans or decorate existing ones), beautification (develop or maintain a garden, paint buildings/structures etc.) and recycling awareness and collection to reduce waste.

Awards are first place, \$175 and banner; second place, \$75 and plaque and third third place, \$50 and plaque.

The 2010 Green Ambassadors are Tanner Hernandez, Daniel James and Taylor Roberts from St. Mary's; Leneigh Hennigan, Anne Mertens and Jack Mertens, Christian Scholars Home School; Lesley Tucker, Natchitoches Central High School and Abi and Rena Yount from Lakeview High School.

## *Employees*

Gwen Fontenot gave birth on Oct. 19 to Andrew Brooks Fontenot. He weighed eight pounds, seven ounces and was 21 inches long. Congratulations!

Welcome, Dera Killingsworth, administrative coordinator in Natchitoches Parish. She is married to Mitchell Killingsworth and has two married daughters, Catherine Tracy Earheart of Mobile Ala., who has two boys, Reese, 9, and Aiden, 8, and one girl, Emma Catherine, 3. Her younger daughter, Stacey Amanda Byles, lives in Natchitoches and has a son, Parker, 7.

Killingsworth's husband is a pilot who flies out of Baton Rouge and is an avid trap shooter with several Louisiana single and double championships.

She likes to buy antique jewelry.

