

SERA-IEG-27 Regional Plant Evaluations

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Significance to Industry: Independent testing of new plant material at a large number of locations is crucial before a new plant is introduced. The members of SERA-IEG-27 evaluate plant material then compile results for dissemination. Their testing results offer a guide to the nursery industry when selecting the best plants for production and landscape use.

Nature of Work: The Southern Extension and Research Activities/Information Exchange Group-27 (SERA-IEG-27), initiated in 1994, is comprised of research and extension Horticulture faculty from 13 southern states and the United States National Arboretum (Table 1) (1). The goal of the group is to evaluate landscape plant material across many different areas of the southern United States. During the annual meeting, members determine which plants will be tested by the group. Plants for evaluation are then given a code indicating state of origin and numerical order of entry into the testing program. Next, plants are supplied as liners to cooperators who grow the plant to landscape size before planting out (1). From one to three plants of each selection are supplied to the cooperators. In SERA-IEG-27, both herbaceous perennials and woody plants are evaluated. Depending on the plant, the evaluation period can range from 2 to 10 years. Results of evaluation are disseminated through educational programs and publications of the participating states. Information about the program and the plants can also be found on the group's web site at <http://www.ag.auburn.edu/landscape/SERAhompage.html>.

Results of Work: To date 30 different plants have been evaluated by cooperators in SERA-IEG-27. The list of plants evaluated in the program is shown in Table 2. Final reports have been written or are under preparation for these plants: *Cornus mas* 'Spring Glow' NC96-01, *Acer oliverianum* ssp. *formosanum* GA97-01, *Styrax japonicum* 'Emerald Pagoda' NC98-01, *Pittosporum heterophyllum* AL98-01, *Cephalotaxus harringtonia* TN98-01, *Conradina canescens* FL98-01, *Lagerstroemia* 'Chickasaw' DC99-01, *Lagerstroemia* 'Pocomoke' DC99-02, *Plumbago auriculata* 'Hullabaloo' TX99-01, *Turnera ulmifolia* TX99-02, *Lonicera* × *americana* TX99-03, *Ipomoea carnea* ssp. *fistulosa* TX99-04, *Illicium mexicanum* 'Aztec Fire' NC99-01, *Iris* 'Churchill Downs' KY99-02, *Iris* 'Kentucky Derby' KY99-02, *Hemerocallis* cultivars KY99-03, *Bulbine canescens* TX00-01, *Stachys coccinea* AR01-01 and *Conradina canescens* 'SPH' AR01-02. These reports summarize the growth, flowering and other aesthetic qualities as well as adaptability in the test locations. For example, during the evaluation of *Stachys coccinea* AR01-01, plants in only two of the eight different locations survived. Survival at these two sites was due to careful siting, especially in winter, in well-drained soils.

Literature Cited:

1. Dunwell, W.C., Fare, D., Arnold, M., Tilt, K., Knox, G., Witte, W., Knight, P., Pooler, M., Klingeman, W., Niemiera, A., Ruter, J., Yeager, T., Ranney, T., Beeson, R., Lindstrom, J., Bush, E., Owings, A., and Schnelle, M. 2001. Plant Evaluation Program: SERA/IEG-27: Nursery Crops and Landscape Systems. HortTechnology 11(3):373-375.

Table 1. Current members of SERA-IEG-27.

State	Current Representatives
Alabama	Dr. Ken Tilt
Arkansas	Dr. Jon Lindstrom Dr. James Robbins
Florida	Dr. Gary Knox Dr. Sloan M. Schieber
Georgia	Dr. John Ruter
Kentucky	Dr. Winston Dunwell Dr. Robert McNeil
Louisiana	Dr. Edward Bush Dr. Allen Owings
Mississippi	Dr. Patricia Knight
North Carolina	Dr. Tom Ranney
Oklahoma	Dr. Mike Schnelle
South Carolina	Dr. Bill Bauerle
Tennessee	Dr. William E. Klingeman, III Dr. Stephen Garton
Texas	Dr. Michael Arnold Dr. Cynthia McKenney
U.S. National Arboretum	Dr. Margaret Pooler Dr. Donna Fare
Virginia	Dr. Gregory K. Eaton Laurie J. Fox
Administrative Advisors	Dr. Dewayne Ingram Dr. Jerzy Nowak

Table 2. Plants selected for evaluation by SERA-IEG-27. The entry in the number column includes the state of the sponsor and the year the plant entered the program.

Scientific Name	Number	Sponsor	Year in Trial
<i>Cornus mas</i> 'Spring Glow'	NC96-01	Tom Ranney	1996
<i>Acer oliverianum</i> ssp. <i>formosanum</i>	GA97-01	John Ruter	1997
<i>Styrax japonicum</i> 'Emerald Pagoda'	NC98-01	Tom Ranney	1998
<i>Pittosporum heterophyllum</i>	AL98-01	Ken Tilt	1998
<i>Cephalotaxus harringtonia</i>	TN98-01	Will Witte	1998
<i>Conradina canescens</i>	FL98-01	Gary Knox	1998
<i>Lagerstroemia</i> 'Chickasaw'	DC99-01	Margaret Pooler	1999
<i>Lagerstroemia</i> 'Pocomoke'	DC99-02	Margaret Pooler	1999
<i>Plumbago auriculata</i> 'Hullabaloo'	TX99-01	Mike Arnold	1999
<i>Turnera ulmifolia</i>	TX99-02	Mike Arnold	1999
<i>Lonicera xamericana</i> 'Pam's Pink'	TX99-03	Mike Arnold	1999
<i>Ipomoea carnea</i> ssp. <i>fistulosa</i>	TX99-04	Mike Arnold	1999
<i>Illicium mexicanum</i> 'Aztec Fire'	NC99-01	Tom Ranney	1999
<i>Iris</i> 'Churchill Downs'	KY99-01	Win Dunwell	1999
<i>Iris</i> 'Kentucky Derby'	KY99-02	Win Dunwell	1999
<i>Hemerocallis</i> cultivars	KY99-03	Win Dunwell	1999
<i>Bulbine caulescens</i>	TX00-01	Mike Arnold	2000
<i>Michelia skinneriana</i>	FL00-01	Gary Knox	2000
<i>Stachys coccinea</i>	AR01-01	Jon Lindstrom	2001
<i>Conradina canescens</i> 'SPH'	AR01-02	Jon Lindstrom	2001
<i>Magnolia</i> 'Jon Jon'	FL01-01	Gary Knox	2001
<i>xSinocalycalycanthus raulstonii</i> 'Hartlege Wine'	NC02-01	Tom Ranney	2001
<i>Daphniphyllum macropodum</i>	DC02-01	Margaret Pooler	2002
<i>Forsythia</i> 'Fairy-Land'	TN03-01	Donna Fare	2003
<i>Forsythia</i> 'Minikin'	TN03-02	Donna Fare	2003
<i>Forsythia</i> 'Tinkle Bells'	TN03-03	Donna Fare	2003
<i>Forsythia</i> 'Pygmy-Red'	TN03-04	Donna Fare	2003
<i>Betula nigra</i> 'Summer Cascade'	NC03-01	Tom Ranney	2003
<i>Amsonia</i> 'SPH'	AR03-01	Jon Lindstrom	2003
<i>Buddleja</i> 02-25-142	AR04-01	Jon Lindstrom	2004