



COMPOST PILE

LSHR Members Gathered For A Delightful 2011 Annual Meeting

Balmy spring weather, blooming trees and flowers provided a beautiful setting for the 54th annual auctions, business meeting, program and luncheon March 26, 2011.

Members met early at the Horticulture Center for coffee and refreshments, chatting as they stood in line to pick up eagerly anticipated boxes of plant releases. Subsequently they bid spiritedly on live plants as well as on silent auction items, traditional fund-raisers for the Society. The Treasurer reported that earnings from the auctions totaled \$4,168.

These events were followed at the Lafayette Petroleum Club by a hospitality hour, buffet luncheon and a presentation by the featured speaker. President Margo Racca presided over the business meeting at which officers were introduced and new officers were installed.

Officers installed for a term of two years beginning March 2011 included. President,
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Silver Trowel Award Presented for

***Caesalpinia gillessii*: ‘Desert Bird of Paradise’ or ‘Yellow Bird of Paradise’**



While traveling in eastern New Mexico several years ago I was amazed with all these beautiful plants that were naturalized along the roadside. Being an avid gardener, I just had to bring a few home to see if they would survive in my garden in Lafayette. Loving to share with others, I gave two away and planted one in my garden.

I knew that it was a type of *Caesalpinia* and since I had many photos of the plants and their blooms I was able to refer to some of my gardening books for the proper nomenclature. I discovered that it was the *Caesalpinia gillessii* commonly known as the Yellow Bird of Paradise or Desert Bird of Paradise. The plant is actually native to tropical America, especially Argentina, but has naturalized in many parts of the southwestern USA. They are actually in the legume family and not related to the Bird

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Nomination Period Extended to November 10th!

LSHR members are able to make nominations for **TWO** positions:

- 1) New members, persons you hope will become members
- 2) Candidates for the Horticultural Medallion Award, the highest award offered by LSHR, awarded on occasion to an individual for his or her long-time contributions to horticulture.

How to do it...

Nominations should be sent to membership committee chair, Dr. Ellis Fletcher, 341 Orangewood Dr., Lafayette, LA 70503 or USLFletch@cox.net or LSHR@cox.net.

Nominations will be accepted any time. They will be voted on by the Board of Directors at the Fall Board Meeting and must be received by November 10th. (If there are special circumstances, please contact President Margo Racca at mracca@centurytel.net.)

Nomination of an individual for membership is acceptable by e-mail since the date of electronic mailing is indicated. Reasons for nomination are not required.

Nomination of an individual for the Horticultural Medallion Award requires a post-marked envelope along with the letter of recommendation and a handwritten signature. It is mandatory to include reasons justifying the nomination of an individual for the Horticultural Medallion Award.



From the President's Desk



Expectantly we are awaiting fall and cooler temperatures with less humidity. Summer has been much like last winter—excessive in every way. Very hot and very cold, again we are short on rain and we have been required to water, water, water, in order to keep our plants alive.

The LSHR Board members are working on an exciting Annual Meeting and luncheon for you. As usual you will receive a box of plants that you will be required to grow and report back on. After all that is what the Louisiana Society for Horticultural Research is all about.

It is very enjoyable for me to receive the plants and compare how I grow them with others like you, who are growing the same plants. Our conditions are never the same and that will make the difference in the survival and hardiness of your plants. Do your best to make them grow to the maximum range and then write your reports to turn in at the Annual Meeting. You are given the “bragging rights” if yours is bigger and better. Be proud of your ability to have a green thumb.

Margo Racca
President

ANNUAL MEETING DATE SET

Please mark your calendars for the 2012 Annual Meeting to be held in the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center and the Petroleum Club on March 17, 2012. You will be advised of the details in a later newsletter. Is your Plant Release Report up to date?

NEW SECRETARY ASSUMES POSITION WITH THE BOARD

With fondest thanks and appreciation for a job well done, we wish the best for Nancy Anne Rowe, Secretary of the Board for eight years, who will be attending to other duties, and we welcome Roxanna Champagne, who will fill that position. Roxanna will have our support and sincere appreciation!

LSHR MAIL AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

Louisiana Society for Horticultural Research
PO Box 1473
Breaux Bridge, LA 70517-1473
LSHR@cox.net

OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS OF LSHR

Margo Racca, President
Albert Durio, Sr., First Vice-President
Rob Barry, Second Vice-President
Roxanna Champagne, Recording Secretary
Ruth LaVaque, Treasurer

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Jeannie Kreamer 2009-2010, 2010-2011, 2011-2012
Oswald Brown 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013
Glenda Balliviero (2011 – 2014)

PAST PRESIDENTS WITH CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

Richard (Dick) Calhoun
Mary Courville
Belle Durio
Dalton Durio
Leonard Lasseigne
James (Jim) Racca

DIRECTORS OF RESEARCH

Dennis Wollard, Director
Kenneth (Ken) Durio, Associate Director

HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS OR OTHER

Aline Arceneaux (Past Treasurer)
Ellis Fletcher (Membership Chairman)
Ann Justice (Current Editor, *Compost Pile*)
Rebecca Moss (Past Editor, *Compost Pile*)
William (Billy) Welsh, (Release Propagator Coordinator)

2010 Plant Release Reports

Compiled by Glenda Balliviero

Mr. Winter could perhaps have taken its toll on several of the releases again this year; however, the beauty of the survivors tell the story of gardeners planting, caring for and reporting the results. There is never a way that all the plants can have high rankings because not only are all individual plants different but all of us as gardeners see and analyze things differently. I already had my favorite, the Yellow Lantana, before beginning the tally and felt great when it ranked number '2'. The Blue Phlox received the top star in the 2010 gardens with an average of 7.67 with the Yellow Lantana following with a 7.11. They both were favorites of many and each of them received the same number of the highest ranking of a '10'. It seems that many consider rain lilies in general to be one of their favorite plants and appreciated having two rain lilies in the release.

The most used fertilizer was Osmocote or another slow release fertilizer with Miracle Grow coming in second; however, after much scrutinizing of the highest rankings, there didn't seem to be a difference in the type of fertilizer used. I was, also, pleased to note that many people today are using and considering compost as a fertilizer. Personally, I consider the city compost my 'Black Gold'.

It was a surprise to learn that so many gardeners are strictly planting in pots rather than in flower beds and are being very successful. I have a feeling Mr. Sun, without many visits from Mr. Rain this spring and summer, could have taken its toll on many of those planted in pots since they require so much more water than plants in the ground.

There was only one report that revealed a pest or problem; therefore, this is an indication that the plants released were chosen with great consideration. As a recommendation, I'd like to suggest that the information contained on the Release Sheets given out with the plants each spring be utilized more when making plantings. In many cases the plants were planted in the opposite type of site which was a reason for poor performance.

1. *Habranthus tubispathus* var. *texanus* AMARYLLIDACEAE (Copper Rain Lily)

Avg. 5.22

Even though this was one of the plants lost by most members, those who planted in full sun were more

successful and 4 were surprised with blooms the first year. One person indicated that after moving the bulb closer to the top of the surface it began to thrive.
Pests/Problems: None

2. *Iris albicans* IRIDACEAE (White Cemetery Iris) Avg. 6.69

Most reported that the plants multiplied beautifully and when turning in release reports in March there were eight in bloom. One person indicated that hers actually was a yellowish color rather than white. Those planted in part shade were not thriving as well; however, harsh soil conditions didn't make a difference in their performance. Most indicated that the plant had added fans in growth. Pests/Problems: None

3. *Lantana 'Chapel Hill Yellow'* VERBENACEAE (Yellow Lantana)

Avg. 7.11

This plant was one of the top two to receive the greatest number of the highest ranking of '10'. Not only did it multiply and spread quickly but its yellow blooms continued until winter. The average spread of 3' to 4' feet and beautiful blooms made it a very attractive plant. It proved to be quite winter hardy and at the time of reporting was already showing new growth. Many reported it to be their favorite 2010 release. Pests/Problems: None



4. *Phlox divaricata* POLEMONIACEAE (Blue Phlox) Avg. 7.67

This plant received the overall **top ranking** plus it

2010 Plant Release Reports *continued*

ried with the lantana in receiving the greatest number of 10's. Most who rated it the highest had planted it in areas receiving morning sun or filtered sunlight. It was considered by many to be very healthy without a lot of fertilizer, having multiplied well and proven to be winter hardy. It was making its spring debut in full bloom at the time of the report with flowers reaching up to 24" in height. Pests/Problems: None

5. *Phlox pilosa* 'Forest Frost' POLEMONIACEAE (White Prairie Phlox)

Avg. 4.89

Even though beautiful white star-shaped flowers were gracing many members' plants in March, almost half of those reporting said they had lost their plant. In examining the reports it seemed that those planted in full sun or receiving evening sun usually were not survivors. One reported that deer were not attracted to this plant which made it a survivor in their area. Another indicated the blue phlox planted in front of the white phlox had provided a beautiful spring show. Several really liked its dainty foliage which made it special. Pests/Problems: None

6. *Rhodophiala bifida* AMARYLLIDACEAE (Oxblood Lily)

Avg. 5.39

Many members indicated that the bulbs were very young; therefore, they would have to mature before blooming. Several did indicate that they replanted them in pots and that they were slow in multiplying. Stunting bright red flowers did bloom for two members who had planted their bulbs in full sun; therefore, that may be a clue for others. Pests/Problems: None

7. *Tradescantia pallida* 'Variegata' COMMELINACEAE (Variegated Purple Heart)

Avg. 6.38

Most members considered this plant attractive, colorful or pretty and one referred to it as having a 'Hot Color'. Several felt that it was very prolific and had spread for several feet while one indicated that it was slow to grow. Many planted in hanging baskets where it profusely trailed. Most considered it to be winter hardy even when not protected and another said that it was hit with a weed eater and lawn mower

but still returned. It seems that those that bloomed and had the brightest variegated foliage were in full sun. Pests/Problems: None

8. *Vitex rotundifolia* VERBENACEAE (Roundleaf Chaste Tree)

Avg. 4.91

This plant had an early death in the gardens of about one-third of those reporting. Most of those said that they died almost immediately. An armadillo seemed to favor this plant in one garden by digging it up several times after being replanted in several parts of the garden; however, the gardener said it did put up a gallant fight. Even though it had a low point average it received multiple good reviews. Its leaves were attractive to many and one said she would use cuttings for arrangements. Few reported flowers; however, many said that it was cold hardy and spread rapidly. Another indicated that if it was planted in a moist area it could become invasive. Pests/Problems: One reported that fungus, white flies and mildew were problems.

9. *Zephyranthes* 'Prairie Sunset' AMARYLLIDACEAE (Prairie Sunset Rain Lily)

Avg. 6.36

Even though the average rating with this rain lily wasn't high, there were many that indicated it was their favorite. In fact, one member gave it a 10+ saying that it bloomed the entire summer. Those that bloomed were in part shade and had good drainage; however, several preferred to leave them in a pot to enjoy on the patio. It seems that many consider rain lilies in general to be one of their favorite plants. Pests/Problems: None.



Margo Racca; 1st Vice President, Albert Durio, Sr.; 2nd Vice President, Rob Barry; Secretary, Roxanna Champagne; Treasurer, Ruth LaVaque; Director At Large, Glenda Balliviero (2011-2014). Directors with unexpired terms not needing election are: Jeannie Kreamer (2009-2012) and Oswald Brown (2010-2013).

Guest speaker for the Petroleum Club event was *Passalong Plants* author, Felder Rushing – a long-time favorite of the members. Recently retired from the Extension Service as Mississippi’s leading consumer horticulturist, Rushing informed and entertained the audience with his topic, *Slow Gardening*, with an emphasis on horticultural interests that employ the senses.

The following persons were thanked for their services in making the meeting successful:

Registration: Aline Arceneaux, Ruth LaVaque, Edna Wheeler, Linda Bourg, Roxanna Champagne and Glenda Balliviero

Plant releases: Billy Welsh

Auction plant acquisitions: Rob Barry, Billy Welsh, Albert Durio, Norman Balliviero

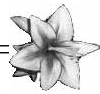
Plant auctioneers: Albert Durio, Heidi Sheesley

Auction clerks: Rob Barry, Margo Racca

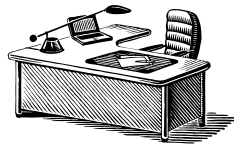
Floor duties: Jim Racca, Leonard Lasseigne, Dennis Wollard

Silent auction: Rebecca Moss, Jeannie Kreamer

Hospitality: Ellis Fletcher and Ann Justice



From the Treasurer’s Desk



Dear Members,

It is always a pleasure to visit with our members - however briefly - at the annual meeting. Many, many thanks to Aline Arceneaux, Linda Bourg, Glenda Balliviero, Roxanna Champagne and Edna Wheeler for their help with registration for this year’s meeting. Your help made all the difference!

Is your name and mailing address correct in our records? Please take a moment to look at the mailing

of Paradise genus – *Strelitzia*. They are actually shrubs, but can also grow into trees.

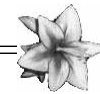
I planted my small plant of approximately 6” into a pot for the first winter and then transplanted it into the ground in a sunny location along my cement driveway. It grew quite rapidly but only produced a few flowers the first summer. It did die back during the winter but quickly grew into a small tree by the end of April and produced the most beautiful flowers throughout the spring and summer. The specimen I entered in the 2010 Lafayette Garden Club Flower Show received the Horticulture of Excellence Award and then was awarded the Silver Trowel for Horticulture by the State Garden Club Federation this spring.

Unfortunately, by the end of last summer I noticed my tree was losing its leaves and beginning to die back. By the time I realized the area in which it was planted did not drain properly I had lost my plant.

Having gathered seeds from the blooms, I shared with many friends, and kept many to plant in early spring. Unfortunately, I was not successful with the seeds germinating. A neighbor with whom I shared the seeds brought me one of the small plants he’d been fortunate to germinate. He told me that he immediately planted his seeds in the late summer and was successful in their germination. Lesson learned – the seeds should be planted when fresh and it is a good idea to soak them in water for a few hours before planting. The joy of sharing had turned into the joy of receiving!

I have now planted my new plant in an area that receives a lot of sun with very good drainage at the top of a hill and have amended the soil into a medium course texture. I don’t think I will get blooms this year but hope that next spring I will again have a beautiful specimen plant with beautiful blooms. And “Yes” I will share the seeds with friends if and when the plant produces them.

By Glenda Balliviero



label on this issue of the Compost Pile. Membership cards will be issued with the name as it is on your mailing label. A name is very personal, and a correct address is important. Please send corrections to me at the return address of the Compost Pile or to Ruthiesgarden@cox.net.

LSHR values each member, so be sure to keep your dues current. Looking forward to seeing each of you again at the next annual meeting!

Ruthie LaVaque
Treasurer

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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A Favorite LSHR Release – Foxtail Fern

By Ann Justice



The Foxtail fern, which was released by LSHR in 1986, resembles a foxtail and a fern but in fact is neither. The Foxtail fern is a member of the asparagus genus, and one of the so-called asparagus ferns. The “fern,” like the asparagus plant, is actually a member of the Liliaceae, or lily family, and spreads by seeds and tubers rather than by spores. The Foxtail cultivar is called Meyersii, and the fern sometimes goes by the names Meyers fern, or Asparagus Myersil fern.

This gorgeous plant is as tough as Aspidistra, just as beautiful, and tolerates lots of our hot afternoon sun.

In memory of . . .

The Members of the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Society for Horticultural Research express their sympathy to the family of

JoAnn Fletcher

for the loss of their loved one.