

THE COMPOST PILE

NEWSLETTER OF THE LOUISIANA SOCIETY FOR HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH
NOVEMBER 2020

HURRICANES DAMAGE IRA NELSON HORTICULTURE CENTER



The Ira Nelson Horticulture Center, home to LSHR for decades, took a beating from Hurricane Laura, followed by a second thrashing by Hurricane Delta.

“There was extensive glass damage to the Conservatory, Amaryllis House and Greenhouse C,” said William Welsh, director of the center and LSHR board member.



“The Amaryllis House also sustained structural damage that will have to be repaired before any glass panels can be installed,” Welsh added.

Fortunately the sites of the annual plant release and plant auction are intact, and the Spring 2021 meeting has been scheduled for March 20, pending any interference from our Covid nemesis.

All damages to the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center will be covered under insurance policy. Repair estimates are now being collected and repairs will begin once the insurer gives the okay. The greenhouse repairs have been listed as ‘emergency repairs’ to try and get the work finished before cold weather arrives, Welsh said.



NORMAN WINTER WILL SPEAK AT 2021 SPRING MEETING

Popular Southern garden guru Norman Winter will speak at the LSHR annual meeting March 20, 2021. His luncheon discussion will be at the Lafayette Petroleum Club, following the morning’s plant release and auction. Look for more details in the spring newsletter.

A nationally syndicated garden columnist, Winter has

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Norman Winter, continued from p. 1

published four books on Southern gardening, the latest being *Captivating Combinations: Color and Style in the Garden* (University Press of Mississippi).

Currently he is a national garden columnist with Tribune News Service; his articles are read coast to coast and frequently in Canada. In Georgia he is regularly featured in the *Savannah Morning News*, *Columbus Ledger Enquirer* and *Augusta Chronicle*. Winters' articles are seen in each issue of *LiveIt* magazine and in *North Texas Farm and Ranch*.

Winter retired in 2018 as Director of the University of Georgia's

Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens in Savannah. In 2011 he became Director of the National Butterfly Center in Mission, Texas. Norman also spent almost 15 years as an Extension Horticulture Specialist with Mississippi State University.

He is a sought-after garden lecturer speaking at such well-known events as the Callaway Gardens Symposia, Southern Garden Symposium in St. Francisville, La., Georgia Perennial Plant Association, Southern Cultural Heritage Foundation, and state Master Gardener Conventions across the South.

NORM WINTER'S PRESENTATION: BLOOMS, BIRDS & BUTTERFLIES

Come learn how to have dazzling blooms that will bring in bees, butterflies and hummingbirds for the long summer season ahead. You'll be inspired through colorful combinations and tantalizing texture no matter your style of garden.

MEET LSHR'S 2020 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

CRISCIONE, SHOEMAKER AND BRYANT EACH WIN \$2,000

Two LSU graduate students and a Louisiana Tech undergrad will each receive \$2,000 from LSHR to support their horticulture studies.

KRIS CRISCIONE

A former Eagle Scout from the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, Kris Criscione grew up next to a state park and spent lots of time in nature.

"Before I knew what botany was, I was already fascinated with plants," Criscione said. "Once my time for college came, I studied Sustainability Science at Kean University (New Jersey). I knew although sustainability is vitally important, I wanted to study more of the botanical sciences."

He continued his studies in Spain, learning the horticultural and landscape sciences of the Spanish culture. "This opened my eyes to the world, and I got



Kris Criscione is using gardenias as a test plant in pine bark that is amended at various rates with fresh and aged sugarcane bagasse. His research will yield information that may improve plant growth, nutrient and water retention.

a taste of what plants have to offer."

After further studies at the State University of New York at Cobleskill, Criscione was an in-

tern for Pinelands Nursery. There he gained experience in propagation, irrigation, beekeeping, growing, and managing plants.

"I attained a tremendous knowledge in nursery production and learned more about their stormwater management and phytoremediation practices," Criscione said. "After my internship, it was clear of how I can make the most positive impact on restoring the Earth. I loved the nursery industry and it inspired me how plants could restore ecosystems."

His interest in the environmental aspects of horticulture brought Criscione to the LSU Hammond Research Station to study with Dr. Jeb Fields.

"My goal is reducing the negative environmental impacts of the nursery industry and focusing on water conservation and the decrease of surplus nutrients inundating our waterways," Criscione said.

He will study soilless substrates stratification within nursery containers, with the goal of discovering more sustainable production practices.

“My research is vitally important because the world faces a myriad of environmental issues such as the depletion of water, surplus nutrients inundating our waterways, and soil and substrate reduction that we see in our peat bogs and prairies.”

Specifically, Criscione’s thesis research will investigate whether stratifying the substrates in nursery plant containers can reduce the leaching of water and nutrients, while also reducing the amount of water needed to produce a marketable crop.

His results could lead to a win-win outcome for the environment and the nursery industry, Criscione said.

“The more I study my thesis topic, root hydrology and physiology have started to interest me,” Criscione added. “I am excited and very curious to see how the root structure and architecture develop within the different soil layers.”

Criscione will continue for a doctorate in horticulture after completing his master’s degree.

“My ultimate career goal is to play a significant part in helping clean the Earth through the use of plants. I feel I can and I will make the biggest difference working for a university, conducting

research, working directly with the industry, and teaching young students on the imminent problems we will face.”

Meanwhile Criscione has learned to appreciate Louisiana seafood, although he gives the edge in pizza to his native New Jersey and New York.



KELSEY SHOEMAKER

Kelsey Shoemaker got interested in horticulture through her high school FFA Nursery/Landscape career development event. “That experience opened my eyes to the fascinating intricacies of plants for the first time, and I quickly found myself immersed in a new world that begged to be explored,” she said.

Her horticultural skill set grew when she became the part-time student groundskeeper at the home of Louisiana Tech President, Dr. Les Guice. “I couldn’t have asked for a better hands-on learning experience to foster my plant science education and personal growth,” Shoemaker said. “I’ve gained more confidence with landscape design and installation, pruning techniques, and various cultural practices throughout other management responsibilities.”

Shoemaker’s first research work began this fall with her mentor Dr. Paul Jackson. “We are investigating avian herbivory of longleaf pine seeds, which is a significant factor in seedling mortality for Southern container forest seedling nurseries. This line of research may create an avenue for further exploration in graduate school.”

Her career goal is to inspire others in the same way that her mentor has done for her. “I have come to realize that Dr. Jackson believes in me more strongly than I believe in myself, and he challenges me to embrace new opportunities that I would usually flee from in fear. He inspires me to pursue horizons that I never dreamed were achievable.”

Shoemaker said of the LSHR scholarship support, “I genuinely treasure your support. It encourages me to continue striving for my best in my work and studies. This award is a tremendous blessing and I am humbled by your generosity.”

MICHAEL T. BRYANT

Growing up on a ranch east of Austin, Texas, Michael Taylor Bryant got his first horticultural experiences by tending his grandfather’s vineyard.

The vines had gone feral following his grandfather’s death, so Bryant’s mother taught him how to care for the vines.

However, it wasn’t until Bryant was at Texas A & M pursuing a degree in engineering that he developed an interest in plants.

“I was having a hard time finding anything to be passionate about in engineering,” Bryant remembers. “Really, the only reason that I applied to the college of engineering was because I had an aptitude for it.”

An elective class in sociohorticulture rekindled Bryant’s interest in plants. “I learned about how people and plants interact beyond the simple need for food,” Bryant said. “And I remembered how much I enjoyed taking care



Michael T. Bryant prepares to demonstrate irrigation of raised bed gardens.

of the grape vines back at home. I realized that I had a passion for plants. So by the end of the next semester, I had switched my major to horticulture.”

As a horticulture student, Bryant landed a job as groundskeeper for the Bush Presidential

scholarship winners, continued from p. 3

Library in College Station. “The main take away that I got from working there was the need to plan. The library had events nearly every month, so it was necessary that I plan out my maintenance tasks so that the plants would be showing off the most.”

Bryant’s crew had to prepare the presidential library grounds for the funerals for Barbara and George H. W. Bush, utilizing manpower from other crews around campus.

As a graduate student at LSU, Bryant, like Criscione, is deeply interested in environmental aspects of horticulture. He is researching soil remediation, chiefly dealing with lead and lead compounds.

“Lead is in the soil nearly all across the globe,” Bryant noted. “Most areas that haven’t been affected by human activity have contamination levels under 200 parts per million. However, due to the use of tetraethyl lead as a gasoline additive, urban areas and areas near highways that were active before the 1980s have increased in their background lead levels. These levels are usually under 1,000 parts per million, except for notable areas like New Orleans, which had some

areas with lead levels in the several thousand parts per million.

“There are also areas near historic mines, smelters, and lead-acid battery recycling plants with levels in the tens of thousands of parts per million.”

Bryant’s research uses Asiatic jasmine, ardisia, and mondo grass to see if they could be hyperaccumulators of lead pollutants. If his lab research shows that these plants are able to absorb lead pollutants, they will be used in field trials in historically contaminated soils.

Bryant hopes to continue horticultural research at the doctoral level. “Ultimately, I want to teach. I love the research that I am doing, and I love learning about phytoremediation. And I want to share that with the next generation of professionals and scientists.”

Bryant envisions future investigations into how contaminants move in the soil and the interaction between those contaminants and plant roots.

“From this research, I am sure we will have a variety of options for removing or degrading every contaminant under the sun. I am excited to work with other researchers to make that our reality.”

THE GARDENER: FRANK CABOT CREATES A HORTICULTURAL WONDER



Botanical gardens aspire to artistry, and “The Gardener,” a documentary about Les Quatre Vents garden in Canada, is itself a pleasing, inspiring work of art.

“The Gardener” focuses on the horticultural work of Frank Cabot, who devoted his ample financial and intellectual resources to designing a world-renowned garden that appeals to all the senses.

Les Quatre Vents overlooks the St. Lawrence River near La Malbaie, which is about 80 miles downstream from Quebec City.

Cabot inherited the property and in 1975 began to enlarge a garden begun by his mother and grandmother. The original Cabot domain was 90 square miles.

Cabot’s vision was apparently unencumbered by any formal horticultural or landscape architecture training. And an idiosyncratic, thoughtful vision it is.

“I see visiting a garden as basically an emotional and sensual experience, as well as something that is filled with surprise,” Cabot says.

Cabot emphasizes that viewing

MOVIE REVIEW

a garden is a very private, individual experience, done pensively and thoughtfully. Observing how visitors interact with Les Quatre Vents, Cabot says, “The good ones look at things quietly and drink them in and think about them. And they begin in a way to have a conversation with the garden. They listen to what it’s saying.”

Cabot, an American, fought in World War II and traveled the world thereafter, visiting gardens and gaining inspiration from all over the planet.

“I consider myself a world-class plagiarist,” Cabot remarks. For example, he created a water course inspired by Geoffrey Jellicoe’s Shute House in Dorset, England.

From English horticulturist Tony Schilling, Cabot plagiarized the use of Himalayan plants to adorn a ravine. He was also inspired by Schilling to install a rope bridge above the ravine to provide views of the plants.

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Frank Cabot, continued from p. 4

The swaying, pendulous rope bridge provided an element missing in many conventional botanical gardens: fear.

“I like to think that if people go through this garden, all of their emotions will have been exercised a bit,” Cabot says.

Cabot placed a life-size sculpture of a wolf to greet the garden-goer as he rounds a corner. To arouse humor, Cabot installed a Dixieland Band sculpture, whose members are human-size frogs.

One of Les Quatre Vents’ most remarkable features is a multi-story tower inspired by French *pigeonnieres*. Upstairs in this structure Cabot built a Swedish room with botanical prints and china hand-painted for this room.

Cabot was stationed in Japan just after World War II. To add a Japanese tea house to Les Quatre Vents, he hired a master carpenter from Japan whose first act was to select and cut trees specific to the project. After the wood dried for two years, the carpenter devoted the following three years to building the house, using traditional Japanese wood joinery.

Another Asian feature of Les Quatre Vents is a Chinese moon bridge, whose reflection in the pool below forms a perfect circle.

Yet another feature is a wood sculpture inspired by the governor’s palace in Delhi, India.

Les Quatre Vents is much more than the sum of its many beautiful parts, and Frank Cabot is much more than an arranger of pretty plants. He is a philosopher

with distinctive insights about man’s relationship with plants.

“Gardens are not just physical and natural, they’re metaphysical; they’re time-transcendent, incorporeal,” Cabot says. “They have an extra, numinous spirit if they’ve been successful. And you sense that.

“Gardens satisfy a need in humans that not everybody recognizes or has,” Cabot says. “But when they do it’s a marvelous experience. I like to think that [Les Quatre Vents] does that for people.”

Frank Cabot aspired to artistry, and succeeded. So does this documentary. It intersperses Cabot’s insights and those of international garden writers with delightful video of Les Quatre Vents. The documentary is accompanied by a marvelous sound track that includes compositions by Debussy, Saint-Saens, Schumann, Ivanoff, Bach, and original compositions written for this documentary.

Best of all, “The Gardener” is free on Amazon.com to Prime members. Here’s the link, which likely will not last forever:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B07DJBFGJL/ref=atv_dp_share_cu_r

—Mike Maher



Chinese moon bridge



Sight line along a water course



Japanese Tea House



The Pigeonniere

Indian Pink

story and photos by Dr. Ellis Fletcher

If there ever was a plant with an inappropriate common name, it would be Indian Pink. The trumpet-shaped, conspicuous, brightly colored flowers in no way can be considered pink.

Flowers, each nearly 2 inches long and vivid scarlet red, are upward-facing and open one at a time on one-sided terminal spikes. Each flower is distinctly canary yellow inside, while the five-pointed corolla lobes at the top flare to form a perfect yellow star.

Flowers appear in late spring with most major flushes developing during warmer weather. Depending upon location and culture, flowering may be evident until fall. Just as many popular early-blooming native plants are past their peak, especially those with individual flowers lasting only a single day, Indian Pink begins its show!

Indian Pink, *Spigelia marilandica*, was an LSHR plant release in 2011. Other common names are Indian Princess, Native Pink Root, Pink Root, Woodland Pink

AN LSHR FAVORITE RELEASE



Root, Worm Grass, and Yellow Star Flower. Whereas Yellow Star Flower does refer to the flower, other common names have little or nothing related to appearance of the flower or plant.

Regardless of the name by which this unique and outstanding native plant is known, it is a winner for many reasons. This

clump-forming, herbaceous perennial with foliage and flowers 12-18 inches tall has to be considered an impressive and almost carefree plant. With outstanding adaptation to a wide geographical area, landscape location and intended use, one is often puzzled by quite variable cultural or maintenance recommendations that are circulated as well as

propagation technique. Many assume because this plant normally occurs in woodland situations, it requires these same conditions when cultivated.

Although it blooms well in shade or partial shade, Indian Pink grows and flowers best in sunny locations. Regular irrigation benefits plants in well-drained soil, but plants are tough enough to withstand times of drought. Obviously, plants in full sun require more frequent watering than plants in shadier locations. Slightly acid soil types appear to be ideal for superior performance.

Indian pink, once established, performs well with minimum attention. Seedlings, and sometimes cuttings, may make little growth their first growing season but they make up for their slow start the following spring.

The easy-to-grow nature and showy flowers make this plant a favorite of humans as well as butterflies and hummingbirds. If there is a ruby-throated

hummingbird in the neighborhood, it will find Indian Pink. Deadheading old flowers results in color during most or all of the entire growing season. As plants go dormant the foliage quickly loses color, stems wither and disappear as if nothing was there. So, don't forget their specific location. Volunteer seedlings are small and appear both close to, and some distance from, the parent clump as seeds are "ejected" from their seed pods with some force (explosively dehiscent). Propagation by the average gardener is generally by division of clumps that increase in size with each growing season.



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LSHR plant people, send me your news!
I welcome articles and photos about your favorite plants,
growing techniques and plant lovers.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

2020 has certainly been a unique year in regards to health and hurricanes. I am sure each of you had your life affected in some way. Hoping none of you had issues with Covid-19, but I know the guidelines alone have changed your lives.

This year's storms did so much destruction. My heart goes out to all who had their homes or other possessions badly damaged. Plants had their share of battling high winds, and many lost their battle. Greenhouses throughout the southern coast line took the brunt of destruction. The Ira Nelson Horticulture Center was battered by Laura and awaits extensive repairs. I'm sure every garden was affected in some way.

Many of our gardeners had their plant homes destroyed and are still waiting to get new homes for them before winter hits. Past presidents Margo and Jim Racca had their greenhouse devastated

by two hurricanes, and Glenda and I watched as ours was tossed about and fell to the winds of Zeta. Our great grandson recently visited and looked at the slab where the greenhouse once sat, held his hands up and said "All gone, Nana, even the plants!" Determined Glenda scavenged plants that could be saved and has various areas of ICU, recovery and rehab set up to give each plant the loving care it deserves.

Hopefully, most of your LSHR release plants from spring have survived. Now is a great time before winter to check on them and make any notes so your report sheets can be properly filled out next spring. Hoping we won't get too many reports saying "All destroyed by hurricane —"

May 2021 be a great year!

— Norman Balliviero

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

ALLEN BULOT THIBODAUX, LA	JOEL HELMER HOUMA, LA
AMY WANDER LAFAYETTE, LA	PAUL JACKSON RUSTON, LA
CHARLES HELMER HOUMA, LA	RACHEL ADAMS LAFAYETTE, LA
HOPE MARKS ARNAUVILLE, LA	STACY LEE LAFAYETTE, LA
JIM CAMPBELL COVINGTON, LA	WALT PHYTHIAN OPELOUSAS, LA

PEOPLE

At the fall LSHR board meeting, the following roster of officers was proposed for March 2021 - March 2023:

President Robert Barry
First Vice President..... Albert Durio
Second Vice President... Sarah Schoeffler
Recording Secretary Maxine Ducrest
Treasurer JoAnn Pugh
Board Member/Director at Large
2021-2022, 2022-2023,
2023-2024 Roxanna Champagne

The proposed officers will be voted on at the annual meeting March 20, 2021.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Wrapping up the year 2020, let us be thinking to pay dues for 2021 early. The renewal form below can be printed and cut out, copied, or handwritten with ALL information to send with your payment before December 31, 2020.

Any changes in your information, please note so records will be updated. The email address information will be used only for the society's needs and confirm emailing list for the *Compost Pile*.

The board has set the spring meeting for March 20, 2021. You can remember this as the Saturday after St. Patrick's day! More information will be in spring newsletter.

Looking forward to 2021 to be a great year and we will enjoy our flowers and gardens.

— JoAnn Pugh

Membership Dues Notice

FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2021

Active \$15 Sustaining \$25 Donor \$100 and up

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Please print this form or copy all info and mail with your payment to:
LSHR, P. O. Box 51366, Lafayette, LA 70505
due by December 31, 2020