

THE COMPOST PILE

NEWSLETTER OF THE LOUISIANA SOCIETY FOR HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH
FALL 2021

BELLINGRATH GARDENS DIRECTOR TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL MEETING MARCH 19

Dr. Todd Lasseigne, who recently completed his first year as director of Bellingrath Gardens near Mobile, Ala., will serve as luncheon speaker for the LSHR annual meeting.

The luncheon will be held at the Petroleum Club in Lafayette's Oil Center. Look for more details in the spring 2022 issue of this newsletter.

A native of Thibodaux and graduate of UL Lafayette, Lasseigne has substantial experience as director of horticultural gardens.

Prior to joining the Bellingrath staff in September 2020, Lasseigne was president and CEO of the Tulsa Botanic Garden. And from 2005-2011, Lasseigne was director of the Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden in Kernersville, N. C.

His first botanic garden administrative appointment was at the J. C. Raulston Arboretum



Dr. Todd Lasseigne

at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, as assistant director from 2001-2004.

Lasseigne earned his doctorate from N. C. State, and his master's degree from the University of Georgia.

Regarding his undergraduate days at UL (then USL), Lasseigne says, "I do have many fond

memories. Drs. Fletcher and Wol-lard honed my early horticultural knowledge. I will never forget Dr. Fletcher's great humor as he and a bunch of 18-22 year-olds walked around the campus studying plants while goofing off around the women's dorms. How he handled us is beyond me.

"So many great memories there, and I had so much fun as a student. Our plant sales for the Hort Club and our subsequent trips to Maine, California, Georgia, and Florida were unforgettable."

In addition to managing horticultural gardens, Lasseigne has

held faculty positions at N. C. State and at Oklahoma State.

His topic for the 2022 annual meeting will be "Bringing Bellingrath Gardens to Your Garden." At Bellingrath, Lasseigne supervises a staff of 62, and he manages a budget of \$3.6 million.

Bellingrath itself has been open to the public since 1932. The 65-acre gardens are known for their rose and azalea collections, for an annual cascading chrysanthemum display, and for a showy Christmas lights display.



Lasseigne with a Bellingrath Gardens *Fatsia japonica*

LSHR ADDS 36 NEW MEMBERS

A record number of new members were proposed and accepted into LSHR, as of the November board meeting.

"Thanks to our existing members for nominating so many gardening friends into our group," said LSHR president Rob Barry. "Thanks also to membership chairman Dr. Ellis Fletcher for encouraging growth within LSHR."

New members will be eligible for the 2022 plant release, as well as the March 19 annual meeting.

The new members are:

Alison Schoeffler, Amanda Howard, Becky Aucoin, Bob Hines, Brit Phillips, Cindy Wiley, Denna Bel-lomy, Donna Olivier, Eddie Hebert, Eden Logan, Fabian Patin, Gordon Schoeffler, Gretchen Vanicor, Jane Curtis, Jessica Rodriguez, Jo Hines, Katie Durio Bull, Linda Finley, Lizette Gaudin, Louise Jamail, Margaret Pierce, Mary Beth Gladney, Mary Dahlquist, Mary Jane Walker, May Waggoner, Meg Tapp, Melanie Schoeffler, Nic Rodriguez, Randy Miller, Saxon Sibille, Sonya Fink, Sophie Royster, Tammy Frazier, Tiffany Chiarulli, Toni Young, and Ver-sa Doré.

Gloriosa Lily

story and photos by Dr. Ellis Fletcher

The Gloriosa Lily, *Gloriosa superba* 'Rothschildiana,' was an LSHR plant release in 1982. The popularity of this mainly care-free plant is largely due to the abundance of flowers produced during the warmest months of the year.

Although flowers resemble those in the family Liliaceae, they are not a lily. Instead, the family of which they are a member is Colchicaceae. The lily-like flowers are responsible for numerous common names, among them Climbing Lily, Creeping Lily, Fire Lily, Flame Lily, Gloriosa Climbing Lily, Glory Lily, Glory Vine, Malabar Glory, Rothschild's Glory-Lily, Superb Lily, Superba Lily, Tiger Claws, Cat's Claw, Vine Lily and Vining Gloriosa-Lily.

Flower color is somewhat variable (depending upon stage of maturity) but narrow sepals and petals (collectively referred to as tepals) are mainly flame to dark red with crinkly yellow margins and base.

Margins of floral segments are conspicuously crinkled or undulate. Solitary, conspicuous,



numerous, long-stalked flowers appear in leaf axils upon terminal stem portions. Upon opening, flowers bend strongly upward or backward but gradually become nearly red in color and flattened in nature. It is interesting that one can observe all stages of flower shape and color at the same time on a given flowering stem.

After opening, individual flowers remain attractive and persist for an extended period of time. This feature not only makes them valuable as a landscape plant, but

also of value in floral arrangements. The Gloriosa Lily is a climber and will definitely require some sort of trellis or support as vine-like stems mature to a height of 6-8 feet or more. Plants attach themselves rather securely to supports of small diameter (and to adjacent plants) by means of conspicuous and elongated leaf tips. These tendrils recurve and coil around objects, which allows plants to climb as well as anchor themselves. The somewhat brittle stems not only need support but also placement where they are protected from strong winds.

Full-sun locations are tolerated during early morning or later during the day; however, better flower and leaf color occurs when plants are not in full sun throughout the day.

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Loss of leaf color indicates too much sun (solarization). Attempts to restore leaf color by fertilization may encourage plant growth but will not improve leaf color or result in better flowering. Occasional pruning may be necessary to control plant height and shape, confine growth to a supporting structure, remove wind-damaged branches, or to remove developing seed pods or capsules. Although not observed with regularity, seeds are produced in 2-3 inch-long structures that, upon maturity, split into 3 parts, each bearing numerous, dark or bright red round seed.

Foliage starts to discolor and decline before stems die back to the soil line in the fall or early winter. Mulching or digging of tubers may be necessary prior to freezing temperatures. Thick, tuberous roots or tubers are brittle and break fairly easy, especially in heavier soil types, so care during digging is necessary. Many choose light-textured or organic soils, often in raised beds, to grow their Gloriosa Lilies. Tubers may rot during the winter in warmer areas where soils have insufficient drainage.

When plants become dormant at the end of a growing season,

tubers may remain in place or may be removed from the soil depending upon winter severity. Upon removal from the soil intact tubers may either be stored until spring in slightly moist peat or sphagnum moss or stored in a cool, dry, frost-free location. In the spring, when danger of frost has passed, tubers beginning activity are ready to be planted horizontally a couple of inches deep in their landscape position. Small tubers, or those broken or cut from the plant during removal, left in the soil generally result in small plants the following spring-summer.

Tubers from established plants are the preferred method of propagation. Cuttings or seed also serve as viable propagation options, but chances of success

continues on p. 3



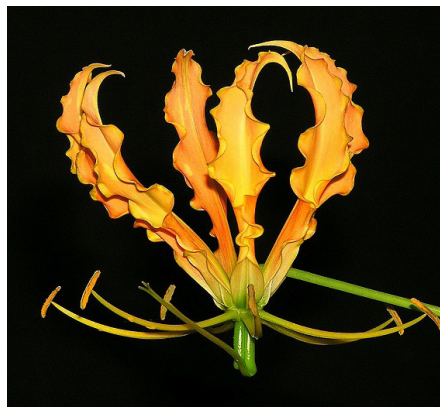
Gloriosa seeds are viable, but propagation is normally vegetative.

Gloriosa Lily—continued from p. 2

are considerably lower and plant growth and establishment is less rapid.

Established plants, just like some irises and gingers, tend to shift positions from their original location, as tubers, often 4-6 inches long, have growing points at the end rather than at their point of plant attachment.

All parts of the *Gloriosa Lily*, especially fleshy tubers and seed, contain a colchicine alkaloid that become toxic or causes serious problems if ingested by warm-blooded animals. Some individuals are reported to develop rashes or skin problems by careless handling of tubers.



Gloriosa superba 'Lutea', with flowers a citron yellow color that changes to a soft orange at maturity, was an LSHR plant release in 2003.

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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.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Year 2022 will soon be here. Wrapping up 2021 and hoping to collect all dues by December 31, 2021. The renewal form below can be printed, cut out, copied, or handwritten with all the information requested in the dues notice below.

Continuing members, please note any changes in your information, so we can update your records. The email address information will be used only for the society's needs and confirm emailing list for

the Compost Pile newsletter.

The board has set the spring 2022 meeting for March 19, 2022. This is easy to remember as two days past St. Patrick's Day. Look for more information in the Spring newsletter on the annual meeting.

May we all look forward to 2022 to enjoy our flowers and gardens.

— JoAnn Pugh

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to our many new LSHR members! We've never added so many new members, so I'm encouraged that our group continues to attract plant people.

New members might want to familiarize themselves with LSHR by viewing past newsletters; these can be found at lshr.org.

We are preparing for our annual spring meeting, which will be held Saturday, March 19. More details will be forthcoming in our spring newsletter.

At our November board meeting, Billy Welsh of the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center said he is preparing seven plants for our spring plant release.

Dr. Allen Owings has been gathering a bevy of interesting plants from nurseries throughout the region. These will be auctioned on March 19; be sure to bring your checkbook, as this popular event has set new sales records for the past two years....despite the Covid pandemic!

I encourage new members to join us for the annual meeting: get your plants, network with people, take notes at Dr. Todd Lasseigne's lunch presentation, and take thoughtful care of your plant releases.

You will receive a written summary of each plant and its cultural requirements. Be sure to make a note of where you plant your plant releases, as you'll need to report how the plants perform in spring 2023 in order to receive that year's plant release.

LSHR needs a Webmaster, someone familiar with WordPress, to post the newsletters and other information on the LSHR Web site. Should anyone want to volunteer for this, please contact me at suncoteau@yahoo.com

All members should pay their dues by Dec. 31, using the form at right.

— Rob Barry

Membership Dues Notice

FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022

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, 2021.

*LEGIBLY WRITING YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS IS VERY IMPORTANT, AS THIS IS LSHR'S CHIEF WAY OF STAYING IN TOUCH WITH YOU. IF YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS CHANGES, PLEASE LET US KNOW.