

THE COMPOST PILE

NEWSLETTER OF THE LOUISIANA SOCIETY FOR HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH
FEBRUARY 2022

LEARN HOW TO BRING BELLINGRATH GARDENS TO YOUR GARDEN AT THE LSHR ANNUAL MEETING

Todd Lasseigne, director of Bellingrath Gardens near Mobile, Ala., will reveal some of his favorite landscape gardening tips at the LSHR annual meeting March 19.

Lasseigne is no newcomer to Lafayette, as he earned his bachelor's degree in horticulture at UL Lafayette. He subsequently earned a master's degree from the University of Georgia, and the doctorate from North Carolina State University.

Now in his second year as director of Bellingrath Gardens, Lasseigne formerly headed the Tulsa Botanic Garden and the Paul J. Ciener Botanical Garden in Kernersville, North Carolina.

Bellingrath is known for its 250,000 azaleas, more than 2,000 roses, and of course live oaks, camellias, a conservatory, and the estate home of Walter Duncan Bellingrath. The 65-acre gardens border the Fowl River.



Bellingrath Rose Gardens and Conservatory

For LSHR members who don't have garden space for a quarter million azaleas, "our horticultural displays are definitely scalable,"

Lasseigne says. "I will show how Bellingrath's combinations of bedding plants, container plants and hardscaping can work in a

home landscape. We take great care in designing our bedding plant schemes each year, for in-

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MARCH 19 LSHR ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULE

Ira Nelson Horticulture Center
2206 Johnston St., Lafayette
8-10 a.m. Plant release. Bring your 2021 plant release evaluation form to the plant pickup area. The evaluation form will be sent to you by email. The evaluation is required to receive this year's plant releases. (New members who did not receive last year's plants need not worry about the evaluation form.)

9 a.m. Plant auction. The auction should be outdoors near the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center, weather permitting.

Petroleum Club of Lafayette, 111 Heymann Blvd.

11 a.m. Bar open.

Noon. Luncheon buffet. The luncheon costs \$25 per person. Send payment and reservations with the name of member and guests. Mail to arrive by March 10: LSHR, P.O. Box 51366, Lafayette, LA 70505.

Guest speaker Todd Lasseigne, "How to Bring Bellingrath Gardens to your Garden." General meeting follows.

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stance. For hardscape materials, I will highlight interesting examples whereby the hardscape materials either have historical significance or show evolution in use of materials over time.

“We are also carefully screening off views to create intimate spaces that are bordered by large and open spaces, through the use of hedging and screening plants,” Lasseigne added. “Our layout with the Fowl River, Mirror Lake, the Rose Garden and the Conservatory, are all enchanting, and the flow in walking through the gardens of seeing one scene after another is unique to Bellingrath.”

The gardens will be 90 years old this year. “We have to deal with plants that are aging and, in some cases, getting very large.” Lasseigne says. “We are dealing with ‘shade management’ issues in areas where we no longer have adequate sunlight that existed decades ago when the understory plants were installed.”

“We are striving to continue the excellence of our bedding plant without significant changes from past years, while also rejuvenating overgrown areas through aggressive pruning and removal of weedy tree species.”



Planting bed near the Walter Duncan Bellingrath home



Mirror Lake

LUNCHEON MENU March 19, 2022

PETROLEUM CLUB OF LAFAYETTE

111 Heymann Blvd.

(corner of East St. Mary Blvd. and Pinhook Road;
use Heymann Blvd. parking lot entrance)

Main Ballroom (Covid-distanced seating, mask recommended)

Salad

Tossed greens with choice of dressing

Entrées

Sliced brisket with gravy

Fried fillet of catfish

Vegetables

Peas and artichokes

Honey glazed carrots

Starches

Cornbread dressing

Rice pilaf

Desserts

Blackbottom pie

Bread pudding

Tea, coffee, water and dinner rolls with butter; cash bar.

Spring 2022 luncheon reservations are due March 10.

The luncheon costs \$25 per person and includes tax and tip. Please send the name of member and guests. Sorry, the luncheon cannot be reserved the day of meeting.

Mail check to arrive by March 10 to: LSHR, P.O. Box 51366,
Lafayette, LA 70505

Any questions, contact LSHR treasurer JoAnn Pugh,

joannpugh@hotmail.com cell 337-247-5526

FESTIVALS ACADIENS ET CRÉOLES WILL COINCIDE WITH THE LSHR ANNUAL MEETING

A weekend of free Cajun and Zydeco music will be going on during the weekend of our LSHR annual meeting.

Festivals Acadiens et Créoles features some of the best area musicians, performing live at several performing stages in Lafayette's Girard Park. The park is four blocks from the LSHR luncheon and about a five-minute drive from the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center.

In addition to the music, you'll find a Bayou Food Fest in the park, as well as a native crafts fair.

The festivals have been a Lafayette tradition since 1974. The spring schedule is new, however; normally Festivals Acadiens is held in October.

Bring a folding chair, sunscreen and your dancing shoes, but leave the ice chest at home. There's plenty of drinks on sale, and beverage sales keep the festival events free.

Out-of-towners: Area hotels fill up fast for this event; make your reservations soon!

2022 FESTIVALS ACADIENS MUSIC LINEUP

MARCH 18

Steve Riley & the Mamou Playboys	5:30 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
Chris Ardoin & NuStep Zydeco	7:00 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane

MARCH 19

Kevin Naquin & the Ossun Playboys	10:30 am	Scène Ma Louisiane
Seth Spell & Cajun Strang	10:30 am	Salle de Danse
Huval-Fuselier Cajun Band	10:45 am	Scène Mon Héritage
"Boudini et Ses Amis"	11:30 am	Scène Atelier
Kyle Huval and the Dixie Club Ramblers	11:45 am	Salle de Danse
Rusty Metoyer and the Zydeco Krush	11:45 am	Scène Ma Louisiane
The Daiquiri Queens	12:00 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Fiddle workshop hosted by David Greely w/ Blake Miller & Gina Forsyth	12:45 pm	Scène Atelier
A Tribute to Courtney Granger	1:00 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
Sheryl Cormier & Cajun Sound	1:00 pm	Salle de Danse
Wayne Singleton & Same Ol' 2 Step	1:15 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Riley Family Band	2:00 pm	Scène Atelier
Terry & the Zydeco Bad Boys	2:15 pm	Salle de Danse
Feufollet	2:30 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
Geno Delafosse & French Rockin' Boogie	2:30 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Les Amis du Teche	3:15 pm	Scène Atelier
The Revelers	3:30 pm	Salle de Danse
Jourdan Thibodeaux et les Rôdeailleurs	3:45 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Roddie Romero and the Hub City All-Stars	3:45 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
'T-Monde	4:30 pm	Scène Atelier
Corey Ledet Zydeco	4:45 pm	Salle de Danse
Bonsoir, Catin	5:00 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Curley Taylor & Zydeco Trouble	5:30 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
Pine Leaf Boys	6:45 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane

MARCH 20

French Mass	9:00 am	Salle de Danse
The Poi Luck Band	10:30 am	Scène Ma Louisiane
Forest Huval Band	10:45 am	Scène Mon Héritage
Savoy Family Band	10:45 am	Salle de Danse
Guitar Workshop moderated by Josh Caffery w/ Chris Stafford, Meagan Berard & Daniel Coolik	11:30 am	Scène Atelier
Jambalaya Cajun Band with special guest	11:45 am	Scène Ma Louisiane
Chubby Carrier & the Bayou Swamp Band	12:00 pm	Salle de Danse
Joe Hall and the Louisiana Cane Cutters	12:00 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
The Broussard Sisters	12:45 pm	Scène Atelier
Lafayette Rhythm Devils	1:00 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
Balfa Toujours	1:15 pm	Salle de Danse
Jesse Lége	1:15 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Ballad workshop w/Megan Constantini, Kelli Jones & Anna Laura Edmiston	2:00 pm	Scène Atelier
Cedric Watson & Bijou Créole	2:15 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
Gerald Gruenig and Gentilly Zydeco	2:30 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Jo-El Sonnier	2:30 pm	Salle de Danse
Tommy McClain & C. C. Adcock	3:15 pm	Scène Atelier
Donny Broussard & the Louisiana Stars	3:30 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
Cameron Dupuy & the Cajun Troubadours	3:45 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Gregg Martinez with special guest T. K. Hulin & Johnnie Allan	3:45 pm	Salle de Danse
Blake Miller & the Old-Fashioned Aces	4:30 pm	Scène Atelier
Jeffery Broussard & the Creole Cowboys	4:45 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane
Lil' Nathan & the Zydeco Big Timers	5:00 pm	Scène Mon Héritage
Horace Trahan and the Ossun Express	5:15 pm	Salle de Danse/Artist Info
Wayne Toups & ZydeCajun	6:00 pm	Scène Ma Louisiane

For more information: <https://www.festivalsacadiens.com/music-and-events/lineup/>



The foreground plants are some, but certainly not all, of the 2021 auction items.

PLANT AUCTION: COLORFUL FUN

The annual LSHR plant auction has set a new sales record every year for the past three years, culminating in \$6,225 from last year's auction.

There's a good reason for that: Dr. Allen Owings scouts nurseries from all over the South and scrounges some great plant material. Then he conducts a lively auction.

"A lot of fun will be had," Owings says of the coming auction. "A trip to Alabama is going to yield us some good finds that we have not had before. The national convention of the Azalea Society of America will be held in Lafayette in early March. I bet there will be some special plants avail-

able from this meeting, which we are looking forward to having in the plant auction showcase."

Owings seeks to find something unique, special or different for everyone. And he has help. "Our friend Buddy Lee at Transcend Nursery in Loranger will be bringing some plants, and I am sure we will have a few collections of salvia, coleus and Porterweed from Jason Stagg at the LSU AgCenter in Hammond," Owings says. "LSHR members' support has helped us raise funds for scholarships, research and funds for the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center."

The auction starts at 9 a.m. Bring your checkbook and friends.

NEW LSHR BOARD MEMBER DEE PIAZZA: A LIFELONG PLANT LOVER

by Catherine Schoeffler Comeaux

Dolores “Dee” Piazza grew up on a dairy farm in Lawtell, Louisiana. She remembers a childhood of early morning dairy work, helping with the expansive garden that provided food for the family, and watching over younger siblings.

Today, she continues to watch over children in her role as guidance counselor at John Paul the Great Academy, and her childhood chores have turned into a lifelong love of gardening. She looks forward to sharing her knowledge and love of plants as an LSHR board member.

Dee and her late husband Peter have been LSHR members for 36 of their 44 years of marriage, during which they grew a family and created a home landscape filled with amaryllis, camellias, and rose bushes they exchanged on anniversaries and birthdays.

Peter’s ability to grow plants was part of what drew Dee to him. His mother, Roxie Broussard Moss, was a talented grower of bromeliads and an LSHR member who, upon her passing, left behind a collection of potted “release plants” that continue to thrive in the Piazza gardens.



Dee Piazza

Dee recalls her own mother’s green thumb and how she would start new rose plants by making a small cut just below where two branches would form a “Y” on an existing rose bush, then she’d bend the cane to the ground, dig it in just below soil level and put a brick on it. She’d keep it moist, and, in a few weeks, roots would form on the cane under the brick and there would be a new plant to share. Dee credits these mothers in her life for inspiring a love of horticulture that she and Peter cultivated together.

Dee has a nurturing approach to gardening, speaking to her plants with kindness, encouraging strugglers and late bloomers with these words: “Look, I really like you, but if you’re not going to bloom for me, you’re going to have to move.” She’s not afraid to move plants around; redesigning beds is one of her favorite tasks in the garden, which allows her to make room for more.

As a self-diagnosed plant addict and rescuer of neglected big-box store plants, she is often needing to find space for more. Her

friends sometimes suggest that she consider downsizing, but where others see too much, Dee’s all-embracing approach sees room for hydrangeas and a new rose garden.

“Plants are love for me,” she explains. This love resonates in Dee’s gentle voice as she talks about how she enjoys sharing her knowledge and her plants at John Paul the Great Academy. Located on the outskirts of Lafayette, the school has an expansive green campus replete with established live oaks and magnolias, as well as a series of raised garden beds that students tend.

In addition to her 40 years in education both as teacher and counselor, Dee brings to work her love of all things green, regularly sharing her rooted cuttings with grateful coworkers and giving advice to the academy’s horticulture professor, a transplant from the Midwest who is learning firsthand about what grows well in south Louisiana with gentle nudges from Dee about what plants play well together and which plants need their own space.

“Planting a green world makes a difference for everybody, it’s an encouragement for life,” Dee said

as she recalled how her garden saved her during the pandemic and has been there for her through her cancer treatments and while caring for Peter when he fell ill. “I feel such grace from God when I’m in the garden,” she said. She brings this grace to everyone she meets, and we too are encouraged to thrive.

IN MEMORIAM

Peter Piazza Jr., husband to Dee and a 36-year member of LSHR, passed away January 20 at age 71. A gifted gardener, Peter was best known in the area for his photography.

He photographed Acadiana events and people for decades for the *Abbeville Meridional* and the *Lafayette Daily Advertiser* newspapers, and he also shot news footage for KLFY-TV in Lafayette.

He photographed presidents, governors, Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa, as well as the everyday people of Acadiana.

Peter was an avid outdoorsman and family man. He was generous with his gardening knowledge. Writer Catherine Schoeffler Comeaux remembers that Peter taught her how to propagate camellias by air-layering, and those plants are now in flower.

Callicarpa dichotoma, Dwarf Beautyberry

story and photos by Dr. Ellis Fletcher

Callicarpa dichotoma, the dwarf beautyberry, was an LSHR plant release in 2006. Popularity of this plant is largely due its dwarf nature, pleasing growth habit, and abundance of showy fruit produced during the fall.

Unlike most other plants, the botanical name and common name are in complete agreement. Whereas “calli” means *beautiful* and “carpa” means *fruit*, “dichotoma” means forked in pairs. The brightly colored fruit are surely beautiful and the berry-like fruit are definitely arranged in pairs along much of the stem.

Other common names for *Callicarpa dichotoma* are: Chinese Beautyberry, Chinese Callicarpa, Dwarf Callicarpa, Dwarf Chinese Beauty Berry, Dwarf Japanese Beauty Berry, Dwarf Oriental Callicarpa, Japanese Beauty Berry, Korean Beauty Berry, Korean Callicarpa and Oriental Beauty Berry.

Common names indicate country of origin and a widely recognized native plant, *Callicarpa americana*. Compared to the native *Callicarpa* with large leaves, large fruit and much larger



AN LSHR FAVORITE RELEASE

size, the Dwarf Beautyberry has materially smaller leaves and fruit. It normally develops into a small- to medium-sized shrub (commonly 4-5 feet in height and width of 5-6 feet). If one admires the American Beautyberry, also widely known as the French Mulberry, they will surely love the Dwarf Beautyberry!

These multi-branching shrubs

respond favorably to heavy pruning, within a few inches of the soil line, prior to spring growth. Flowers develop upon new growth. Pruning greatly increases the number of flowering and fruiting branches and serves as height control. Elongated, heavily fruiting branches arch downward with the lowermost touching the soil to give plants a rounded, pleasing

shape. Small pinkish-lilac flowers develop during early summer and are followed by lilac-violet, small, numerous round fruits initiating color in late summer or early fall. With the progression of the season, foliage changes from a dark green to a chartreuse green or yellow, providing good contrast with the conspicuous fruit that often persist until plants defoliate.

Birds, especially mockingbirds, and some of their small animal friends, are frequent visitors to these plants.

Plants are drought-tolerant and are easily grown in full sun to partial shade in any soil type offering adequate drainage. Best growth and heaviest fruiting occur in locations with high light intensity and good air circulation. Established plants may have dieback of branches with severe cold or late frost or freezes. Even so, there is usually growth from the very base, or major roots, of affected plants.

There are reports that heavy seed production, and seed spread by birds and animals may result in plants becoming invasive. At this time, my opinion is that these reports may perhaps be due to individuals confusing native plants with the non-native or exotic types.

Callicarpa dichotoma ‘Duet’, was an LSHR plant release in 2009. Plants apparently are less vigorous than the type and fruits are white. Foliage is not as dark green as the type, and leaves have margins with nearly white variegation.

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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.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our coming annual meeting promises to be fun and educational, and this year we have the added bonus of Festivals Acadiens et Créoles in Girard Park, just four blocks from our luncheon site.

Out-of-town members, this might be a good time to bring the whole family. They can enjoy a wide range of Cajun and Zydeco music; see page 3 for more details. In addition to simultaneously performing music stages, Festivals Acadiens includes a crafts fair and food trucks that will serve local delicacies.

Festivals Acadiens is very popular, and hotels will fill up fast, so make your reservations as soon as possible. And of course, don't forget to send your luncheon fees to LSHR treasurer JoAnn

Pugh, as detailed below.

LSHR has always been a research organization, and our most basic research is our annual evaluation of last year's plant releases.

LSHR released plants are typically not widely commercially available. They are often new cultivars or plants that simply aren't grown commercially, but might have broader appeal.

This year you will receive an emailed PDF of your evaluation form for the 2021 plant releases. Simply print the form and fill it out, and bring it with you to the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center on March 19. An LSHR member will take your form and give you your membership card. Then

you'll pick up your 2022 plant releases. We will begin the plant release around 8 a.m. at the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center.

The plant release is a huge bargain for our modest \$15 membership dues, and there will be even more bargains at our annual plant auction, which begins at 9 a.m.

Then migrate over to the Petroleum Club of Lafayette, where our old friend Todd Lasseigne will share some landscape tips from Mobile's wonderful Bellingrath Gardens.

The weather is warming and our Covid nemesis seems to be waning. Y'all come!

—Rob Barry, LSHR president

TREASURER'S REPORT

As spring fast approaches and we say goodbye to winter, we are checking our plants and eagerly waiting for our new releases on March 19.

This year, all paid members will be issued a membership card as you pick up your plant releases.

Weather permitting, the live plant auction will be outside under the majestic trees. Last year was wonderful with so many plants, and we were able to move

around in an outdoor setting.

The Lafayette Petroleum Club will accommodate us in its spacious ballroom with a great menu for luncheon. Masks are recommended and Petroleum Club, which will be following all mandates set by Governor John Bel Edwards.

Members can invite guests to the \$25 luncheon. Please send me names for yourself and all your guests, so we can prepare name-

The deadline to pay for the luncheon is March 10. Sorry, luncheon tickets will not be available on the annual meeting day.

The board is looking forward to seeing all you plant-loving folks on March 19.

Let us all keep gardening and stay safe!

—JoAnn Pugh, LSHR treasurer