



COMPOST PILE

Members Acquired Plants, Learned A Lot, Had Fun

Always ready to pass a good time, LSHR members enjoyed a day of happy reunions and spring plant madness at the society's Annual Meeting March 17, 2012, at the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center and at the Petroleum Club of Lafayette. Appreciative oohs and aahs greeted the lush and colorful plant release boxes and swelled as members eagerly inspected the tempting displays of auction plants and other items.

Events of the meeting included registration, distribution of plant releases, plant and silent auctions, followed by a hospitality hour, delicious luncheon and general meeting at the Petroleum Club.

Dr. Robert Lyons proved to be an entertaining and informative speaker, tracing for his attentive audience the origins and subsequent development of familiar ornamental gardening plants.

At the business meeting, JoAnn Pugh was elected Treasurer and Dr. Donald Ayo and Harold Huffman were elected Directors.

The following donors to the Plant Auction were thanked: Sunset Herbs, TreeSearch Farms, Live Oak Gardens, Kent's Nursery, Dennis Wollard, Leonard Lasseigne, Dr. Don Ayo, Barry's Nursery, Margo Racca, and Ira Nelson Horticulture Center

Those recognized for their services in making the meeting successful were:

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

Voodoo Lilies Appear More Menacing Than Beautiful

Not detracting from the upbeat mood of LSHR members was a spectacular patch of Voodoo Lilies blooming in front of the Hort Center on the day of the Annual Meeting.

Voodoo lilies aren't many people's favorite flowers, but when they bloom they attract a lot of attention. A few hours after the blooms open, they release a pungent odor that has been compared to the stench of a rotting carcass or a bag of dead mice. The odor hangs around for days; just ask Billy Welsh and the staff at UL's Ira Nelson Horticulture Center. Fortunately, this had faded in time for the meeting day.

Voodoo lilies (*Amorphophallus*) are exotic plants in the Aroid family. The name comes from the Latin *amorpho* (deformed) and *phallus* (a male anatomical member), tricky to explain in polite conversation but effective for novelty sales. The plants have an easily recognizable flower, a long flowering stem cupped by a

spadix much like a Calla Lily.

The *Amorphophallus* at the Horticulture Center are beautiful in a certain way. But their scent of death and decay has an uneasy association with dark Voodoo practices.



Voodoo lilies (*Amorphophallus*) in front of the Hort Center



From the President's Desk



It appears our lovely cool, rainy weather has ended and we are entering our hot summertime. I have flowers blooming in my garden that haven't bloomed due to the last two years of drought. The rains have been a blessing since I never find time to water my flower beds. I have so many plants in containers that I never quite have enough time on weekends to water the containers and the greenhouse and the flower beds. I guess that's why bromeliads do so well for me. They thrive on neglect.

Hope your releases are doing well. So far, I haven't lost any. I immediately up-pot them when I get them home into the potting soil that works best for my conditions and care. Sometimes that works to keep them alive and sometimes not. Anyway, I hope you are having success and enjoying them.

Please notify our membership chairman at LSHR@cox.net if you change addresses, phone numbers or email addresses. We want to stay in touch with you so that we can send your Compost Pile issues and next year's dues notice. We wouldn't want you to miss out on anything. Have a wonderful summer and do your best to enjoy every minute of it.

Margo Racca
President

YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED OF THE ANNUAL MEETING DATE WHEN IT IS SET

Please note on your calendars that the 2013 Annual Meeting in the Ira Nelson Horticulture Center and the Petroleum Club will be held on a Saturday in March

NEW TREASURER ASSUMES POSITION WITH THE BOARD

With fondest thanks and appreciation for a job well done, we wish the best for Ruth LaVaque, former Treasurer of the Board, who will be attending other duties. We welcome JoAnn Pugh, who will fill that position. JoAnn will have our support and sincere appreciation.

NOMINATIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS AND HORTICULTURE MEDALLION AWARD

You are reminded that nominations for these positions must be turned in before November 1. Find detailed directions elsewhere in this newsletter.

EMAIL ADDRESSES NEEDED

If you have not turned in your email address, please do as soon as possible, via LSHR@cox.net. Recently we had a situation where a document had to be mailed to members. This was simple and cost-free to send to those with email addresses. We understand that not everyone has email, but would like to hear from those who do.

OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS OF LSHR

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

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

Harold Huffman (filling the unexpired term of Dr. Oswald Brown) 2012-13
Glenda Balliviero 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14
Dr. Donald Ayo 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15

PAST PRESIDENTS WITH CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

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Belle Durio
Dalton Durio
Leonard Lasseigne
James (Jim) Racca

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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)

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LSHR MAIL AND E-MAIL ADDRESSES:

Louisiana Society for Horticultural Research
127 Acadian Drive
Lafayette, LA 70503-3210
LSHR@cox.net

2011 Plant Release Information

By Glenda Balliviero

This past winter was a delightfully warm one due to the La Nina weather conditions. Of course, it was great for tropical and other semi-hardy plants; however, it did affect the spring blooms on many plants. Blooms on various plants were not within the normal blooming cycle due to the warm winter; however, overall there were perhaps more and earlier blooms this spring. Actually, only a few plant releases were reported to have been lost due to cold temperatures; however, many plants were lost due to the high temperatures and dry conditions of last summer.

TOP FOUR 2011 RELEASES

The First Place plant for the 2011 LSHR Releases is none other than the Siam Silver Mother-in-Law Plant, also known as *Sansevieria hyacinthoides*. It



Sansevieria hyacinthoides
'Siam Silver'

received an average ranking of 7.71 when being ranked on overall performance (1-10 with 10 as highest). It is a vigorous tropical used as a potted plant that loves being in a moderate light area outdoors and being a window house plant in the winter.



Mahonia eurybracteata
'Soft Caress'

Our runner-up, Second Place plant is the unique Soft Caress Mahonia, also known as *Mahonia eurybracteata*. It ran close competition with the First Place plant receiving an average ranking of 7.36. It is a small medium-sized evergreen shrub with slender bamboo-like foliage that adds uniqueness to the landscape.

In Third Place is the Passalong *Verbena*; however, it did receive the greatest number of '10' rankings on the reports. It received an average ranking of 6.82. It was collected at an old church near



Verbena (Passalong selection)

Krotz Springs, LA and is an herbaceous hardy

perennial that can be planted either in the ground or in a pot.

Our Fourth Place plant is the Obedient Plant and was close behind with an average ranking of 6.64. Even though considered invasive by many it is still a loved plant due to its beauty and being a butterfly's delight.



Physostegia
(Obedient Plant)

RATINGS FOR ALL 2011 RELEASES

1. *Adenium somalense x arabicum* APOCYNACEAE (Desert Rose Hybrid)

Avg. 5.4

Most recipients had left in the original pot or repotted in a small pot in order to bring indoors when the temperature drops in order to avoid cold damage. Many had planted in clay pots in order to provide good drainage. The great majority had placed them in full sun and those that did not were not performing well. The plant was liked for its unusual shape and color and one was reported to having 6 limbs and another was being shaped into a bonsai. Only a couple of people reported that they had a few blooms which is normal because the plants were very young; however, blooms will only occur if the plant receives bright light. Pests/Problems: Several people had scale problems.

2. *Antigonon leptopus* 'Baja Red' POLYGONACEAE (Baja Red Rose of Montana) Avg. 4.24

Plants were mostly put along a fence or trellis but many still remained in pots. Most reported that it grew tall, many reaching 8' to 10'. Only a few people reported blooms and indicated that the color was pretty but the flowers was very small; however, this is common for these types of flowers as they usually

grow in clusters. One reported that the plant had been weed wacked but that it did return. Pests/Problems: None

**3. Camellia 'Winter's Charm' THEACEAE
(Winter's Charm Camellia) Avg. 5.64**

Most reported that the plants were bumped up to a larger pot and that the growth was slow; however, this is quite common for camellias. About one third reported that their plant bloomed and that the flowers were pretty but not peony shaped and had few pedals. Pests/Problems. One reported a problem with spider mites.

**4. Hibiscus 'Moy Grande' MALVACEAE
(Texas Giant Hibiscus) Avg. 4.38**

Even though a few people indicated that their plant bloomed having beautiful large red flowers, most did not do well. In fact, about 1/4 of those reporting indicated that they had lost their plant, many almost immediately. Pests/Problems: None

**5. Mahonia eurybracteata 'Soft Caress'
BERBERIDACEAE (Soft Caress Mahonia)
Avg. 7.36**

This plant came in second in the ratings with many wonderful comments. Most loved it. It was classified as having beautiful airy foliage, great texture, and full fluffy foliage, hardy and could take care of itself. Several reported yellow spiky flowers. Most had planted in shade or part shade and were very satisfied with the growth habits. Many indicated that it had branched off and made a full small attractive shrub. Pests/Problems: None

**6. Morus alba 'Nuclear Blast' MORACEAE
(Nuclear Blast Mulberry)
Avg. 5.02**

The reports contained the greatest variety of responses from really liking to greatly disliking. Some comments included: Too weird, awesome leaves, weird shape, loved foliage, cool plant plus crazy and fun addiction to madness. The neatest comment was that one couldn't wait for it to grow into a tree so that she could sing "Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush" with my girls. Most had good success with its growth in full sun and one's plant had grown to 3'. Pests/Problems: None

**7. Muhlenbergia capillaries 'White Cloud'
POACEAE (White Muhly Grass) Avg. 4.53**

About one quarter of the reporting members indicated that they had lost this plant. Most were not impressed with it; in fact, it was only a favorite of a couple of people. Only one indicated that they had a small plume to form. One said 'What can I say, it is Grass.' Pests/Problems: None

**8. Paulownia tomentosa SCROPHULARIACEAE
(Royal Empress Tree) Avg. 5.13**

Many of the members actually gave their plant away since they did not have a yard large enough to accommodate it. Others didn't plant because they felt the roots would be too invasive. Most who kept their plant indicated that it was nothing more than a stick plant but this is because it goes dormant in the winter. Only one reported a small bloom spike. By next spring those who made their plantings will probably be seeing large beautiful violet blooms because once it becomes established it will grow very quickly. Pests/Problems: Invasive

**9. Physostegia (received as P. correllii)
LABIATAE (Obedient Plant) Avg. 6.64**

This plant was either really loved or disliked. Those disliking didn't plant because they had before and felt too invasive; however, they still indicated that the flowers were beautiful. Some indicated that they grew fast and multiplied which gave them more of the beautiful flowers. One even indicated that she realized it could be invasive so simply planted in an area where it had room to spread. Others considered the flowers great, made great cut flowers, and loved their lavender color. Blooming all summer was a great plus as well as being loved by a variety of butterflies and bees. This plant's common name is 'Obedient Plant' because its flower can be bent in any position when used in flower arranging and it will maintain that shape. I, as a garden teacher with children, indicate that it can also be disobedient because it does not stay within its borders and produces too many seeds or runners. Pests/Problems: Invasive

**10. Sansevieria hyacinthoides 'Siam Silver'
AGAVACEAE (Siam Silver Mother-in-Law's
Plant) Avg. 7.71**

This plant received the 'overall top ranking'; however, it did not get the most ratings of '10'. It

was reported to have a beautiful leaf color, had beautiful silver vertical interest, seemed to be eager to please its owners, a perfect plant and multiplied rather quickly. Most did repot in clay or ceramic pots and kept in moderate light. Most were put into a greenhouse or brought indoors and placed in a warm and sunny room during the winter. A couple of people reported having taken a broken leaf and put in soil to propagate. This type of plant will propagate easily; however, the variegation will not maintain its color from leaf propagation. In order to get another variegated plant, one must divide the root system. Pests/Problems: None

11. *Spigelia marilandica* LOGANIACEAE (Indian Pink) Avg. 5.29

Many lost their plants almost immediately or they didn't return after winter. Those planted in morning sun or filtered sun grew well and bloomed. Those planted in full sun or poor soil usually did not return. Those having blooms loved the beautiful bright crimson flowers with yellow throats so much that they would have liked to have more to plant along with them. Pests/Problems: None

Nominations Due Before November 1

LSHR members may make nominations for TWO positions:

- 1) New members, that is, 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.

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 postmarked prior to November 1.

Nomination of an individual for membership is acceptable by email 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.

12. *Verbena* (Passalong selection)

VERBENACEAE Avg. 6.82

This plant received the most ratings of '10' despite the fact that it only placed 3rd in the overall rankings. It got many wonderful comments including great flower color, hardy, vigorous, screaming pink beauty, bloomed until heavy frost, and spread quickly. Only a couple didn't have blooms and that was due to the fact they had not planted in a sunny location. Many planted in a large pot as well as in the ground. One indicated that she over fertilized and killed the plant. Several indicated it was lost to overly wet conditions. Pests/Problems: One was lost to a type of fungus.

COMMENTS ON MAINTENANCE

FERTILIZING

In regard to fertilizer, it seems that more people are now fertilizing, plus doing so more often with a greater variety of fertilizers. Rabbit manure, worm castings, Super Thrive and Nursery Special were some added to the list this year. Osmocote and 8-8-8 are still the top fertilizers used, and more people are using compost as an additive to their soil.

PESTS

Overall there were only a few common pests and other problems this year which again shows the choice of releases are of high quality plants. New on the scene are problems with squirrels and birds destroying the plants. We've all heard of the dog who destroyed the homework scenario, well this year we had two incidents of a dog destroying the plants and another of a husband who unfortunately doesn't notice the plants too keenly when weed-eating.

The great majority of our members actually followed the planting information on their release forms last year; therefore, greater overall success was met. It would be even greater if we could encourage ALL of the Recipients of the LSHR Releases for 2012 to turn in their information on their plants next year so that we would have a better data base of information on each of the plants. After all this is a Research Project and it is necessary to get everyone's input in order to make the information gathered more comprehensive.

Happy Gardening!

FYI: How The New Hardiness Zone Map Affected Louisiana

The following article was written by LSU Horticulturists Dan Gill, Kyle Huffstickler and Allen Owens and published through the LSU AgCenter News. We appreciate being able to provide this information to LSHR members.

When the U.S. Department of Agriculture released its updated Plant Hardiness Zone Map in January, it prompted quite a bit of conversation in the horticultural world. The new map had been long-awaited and was the first update since 1990. It indicates the average minimum winter temperatures for all areas of the United States. As you may know, one way plants are categorized is by the hardiness zones for which they are best adapted.

The new version of the U.S. map includes 13 zones, with the addition for the first time of zones 12 (50-60 degrees) and 13 (60-70 degrees). Each zone is a 10-degree temperature band, further divided into 5-degree zones – a and b.

The new map also offers a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based interactive format and is specifically designed to be Internet-friendly. The map website also incorporates a “find your zone by ZIP code” function. Static images of national, regional and state maps also have been included to ensure the map is usable by those who lack broadband Internet access. The new hardiness zone information from USDA is located at planthardiness.ars.usda.gov.

In developing the new map, USDA requested that horticultural and climatic experts review the zones in their geographic area, and trial versions of the new map were revised, based on their expert input.

So, what does the map show compared to the 1990 version? Hardiness zone boundaries have shifted in many areas. The new map is generally one 5-degree Fahrenheit half-zone warmer than the previous map throughout much of the United States. This is mostly a result of using temperature data from a longer and more recent time period; the new map uses data measured at weather stations during the 30-year period 1976-2005. In contrast, the 1990 map was only based on temperature data from 1974-1986.

The previous map had Louisiana located in USDA hardiness zones 8 and 9. Average minimum temperatures are: zone 8a – 10 to 15 degrees, zone 8b – 15 to 20 degrees, zone 9a – 20 to 25 degrees and zone 9b – 25 to 30 degrees. We are still located in these hardiness zones, but with several noticeable changes.

In the prior map, all of northern Louisiana along I-20 was located in hardiness zone 8a. Now, a significant portion of northeast Louisiana is comfortably in hardiness zone 8b. Portions of Caddo and Bossier parishes are also now located in zone 8b.

Hardiness zone 9a extends more northerly up I-49 from the Lafayette area, and all of the metropolitan areas of Baton Rouge, Lafayette and Lake Charles are in hardiness zone 9a. The previous map had these areas on the border between zones 8b and 9a. The new map also shows a warmer New Orleans area, which is now in zone 9b and surrounded by zone 9a, while in the previous map it had been in zone 8b. Zone 9b is the warmest zone in the state and includes the coastal regions of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes.

When the 1990 USDA hardiness zone map was released, the decade of the 1980s had been brutally cold in Louisiana, culminating in the devastating freeze of December 1989. So it was not surprising that the new 1990 hardiness zone map tended to move zones south from where they had been. In Louisiana, for instance, zone 9 dropped from just south of Alexandria to only a few locations along the coast (and an odd blob to the west of Lake Pontchartrain).

So, what does all this mean? Many weather observers have been saying that the climate is warming. On the other hand, although the new map is quite different from the 1990 map, it is strikingly similar to the USDA map used prior to 1990.

Based on this new map, we have to revise our approach for horticulture, gardening purposes. Citrus are growing more reliably in areas of Louisiana where many home gardeners did not grow citrus before due to the possibility of cold damage. Recommendations for fruit tree variety growing regions may need to be adjusted because trees such as figs, peach, pears, plums, apples and others have chilling hour requirements. Tropical plants are also overwintering in more northern areas in the state.

The bottom line is, we need to keep in mind that the temperatures posted in the new map are average minimum temperature; however, colder weather can still occur. So we need to be sure to continue to consider growing conditions like hardiness zones when selecting our ornamentals, fruit trees, vegetables and other plants.



From the Treasurer's Desk



Dear Members,

As treasurer, I now watch the plant auction in total fascination knowing I will have to account for the money\$\$\$. Know as a bean counter, I was amazed that in such a short time the great auctioneers, Heidi and Albert, and sales clerks Margo and Rob, floor monitors Jim, Leonard, and Dennis, handled 185 plants bought by 47 members to total \$4,289, and it all balanced!

The silent auction handled by Rebecca and Jean, of 22 items, brought in \$503. The banquet had 106 attendees to hear Dr. Robert Lyons from University of Delaware. The plant registration went smoothly and in record time conducted by Ruth, Aline, Edna, Glenda, Roxanna and Linda. Hospitality handled by Ann and Ellis was appreciated.

What a great day that was enjoyed by all these "plant lovers" and we learned so much! Now, back to the garden to find some real beans!

JoAnn Pugh
Treasurer



In memory of . . .

The Members of the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Society for Horticultural Research express their sympathy to Aline Arceneaux and Edna Wheeler for the loss of their brother,

Robert Arceneaux.



The Members of the Board of Directors of the Louisiana Society for Horticultural Research pray for the safe return of the daughter of Nancy Ann Rowe,

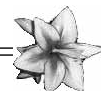
Michaela Shunick.

Afton Awarded Graduate Student Scholarship

To Margo Racca,

I am writing to thank you for selecting me as a recipient of the Louisiana Society for Horticulture Research's Graduate Student Scholarship. I feel honored to represent the group. I will use the scholarship monies to help purchase textbooks, school fees and other items pertaining to my studies at the LSU Graduate School. I truly love this industry and it is amazing to see the society distinguish me from others. I will make y'all proud!

Thank you again,
William Afton, Graduate Assistant
*Louisiana State University, School of
Plant Environmental and Soil Sciences*



FYI: Neat Trick for Germinating Seeds

By Margo Racca

I have had excellent results getting seed to germinate by recycling the salad bowls from McDonald's. After washing the salad dressing out, I fill the bottom (black part) with Miracle Gro potting soil. I dampen it, sprinkle the seed on top, then put the lid on. I don't poke holes in the bottom for drainage because with the lid on there is no need to water further. I place it in a shady spot outside.

As the seed sprout and their heads hit the top of the clear plastic lid, I know it is time to put them into individual 2" or 3" pots. If left together too long in the shallow bottom their roots become intertwined and it is difficult to separate the plants without injuring the root system. I use a pencil to poke a hole in the potting soil of the individual pots then place the seeds carefully into the soil and pat down and water well.

I place the potted seedlings in a flat in a cool shady spot until they grow enough to place in a larger pot. Using clean salad bowls and pots I have not had any problems with disease causing the plants to damp off. I have used this method with several different types of seed whether annuals or perennials and it works every time.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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A favorite plant release

A Favorite LSHR Release – Texas Mountain Laurel

by Leonard Lasseigne, Past President of LSHR

My favorite release is *Sophora secundiflora* (*Calia secundiflora*), commonly called Texas Mountain Laurel. It was released by LSHR in 1974, 1993, and 2006. My plant was of the 1993 release, which was, by the way, seedlings grown by me from seeds collected on the Nicholls State University grounds. My plant has grown very slowly over the years, but now has attained a height of about 12 to 14 feet with several trunks.

Because of its growth habit, my plant is growing about four feet away from my back porch on a southwesterly exposure. Thus it helps shade a portion of the porch from the hot summer sun.

The plant is strikingly beautiful year round with the lush green compound leaves, but the greatest reward is the bluish-lavender clusters of flowers in late February to March. The grape or sweet-sour scent of the blooms engulfs my whole courtyard garden. The seed pods borne after pollination resemble over-sized peanuts with a fuzzy greyish-green color throughout the months of July and August. As the pods dry to a dark brown color, large orange-red seeds are revealed.

The visitors to our garden enjoy the color of the



Sophora secundiflora
(Texas Mountain
Laurel)

blooms, then again the colorful seed pods and seeds. The seeds can be harvested in late June and July and planted without scarification. My grandson collects them in the fall, pots them in a good potting mix and the following spring we get a few new plants.