

The Crosby Arboretum

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Quarterly News Journal

Summer 2008

SEEING THE NATURAL WORLD

I've been blessed with a love of plants. I see them as individuals and after looking at a new plant a time or two, it's ingrained. I can recite the Latin names and pick unfamiliar plants out of a lineup. I'm not even sure how I do it. My eyes and ears don't work so well when it comes to birds. Several of my birder friends have tried to teach me, but somehow I just don't get it. In spite of my lack of aptitude, my life list has grown over the years. The native plants I have nurtured have attracted a variety of birds and other wildlife to my land. My diverse population of native plants has enticed a diverse population of insects. The berries and bugs serve as a tasty bird buffet. As a result, I've been allowed to see and hear the same birds over and over. This has enabled even someone as slow as I to learn a few new birds each year.



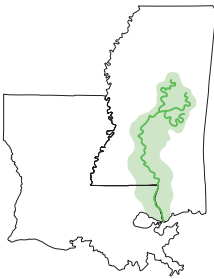
My learning process started one day as I gazed out the window at the possumhaw holly (*Ilex decidua*) in my front yard. Suddenly a throng of cedar waxwings descended. I watched in awe as they stripped every berry from the bare branches. I still remember the beauty of that moment. I learned to know the cedar waxwing and I planted possumhaw hollies at my new residence. Every March the cedar waxwings return for a repeat performance.

Cardinals (or redbirds as I called them) were one of the few birds I could recognize as a child. The habitat I have provided has encouraged them to be fairly common in my garden. After hearing their vocalizations again and again, I realized one day that I could recognize a cardinal by sound. I learned by watching and listening to a pair of cardinals who frequent a stand of native hawthorns (*Crataegus* spp.) in my side yard.

I have learned to know the lovely lilting song of the wood thrush in summer. The songs generally come from the part of my woods near a seeping spring. We discovered the seep and embraced it rather than attempting to drain it. We built an observation deck and mowed a series of trails near the area. We don't use pesticides so the landscape is quite buggy. Wood thrushes sing in their spare time. They spend most of it foraging in the leaf litter for insects and the fallen fruit of huckleberry, elderberry, holly, pokeweed, Virginia creeper and dogwood that is present in my landscape and woods.

(Continued on page two)

Gail Barton is author of *Basic Gardening: A Guide for the Deep South*, and teaches Horticulture at Meridian Community College. She is a licensed landscape gardener and ISA certified arborist. Gail gardens on six acres in Meridian, Mississippi and enjoys exploring the land with her husband Richard Lowery and their happy pack of dogs. She will be presenting the Crosby Arboretum's first plant propagation workshop of the summer season. Please see the program schedule for more details. Gail's new book will be available in the gift shop.



The Crosby Arboretum
Mississippi State University

A regional arboretum representing the native flora of the Pearl River Drainage Basin in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Picayune, Mississippi, USA

SEEING THE NATURAL WORLD (continued)

My garden may seem a little messy to the untrained eye. A few years ago, an elderly black cherry in our back yard passed on. Instead of falling, it leaned gently on one of our large white oaks. We considered having it removed until we realized that the estimate from the tree company was not in our budget. The tree was far enough away from the house and deck that it did not present a threat. We decided to leave it and twelve years later it's still gracefully leaning. It has shifted a bit from time to time, creaking in the wind as it settles into a new position. It has hosted several families of pileated woodpeckers. The woodpeckers carved a nest in the dead cherry and mined it daily for ants, grubs and other insects. During their tenure, we woke to drumming every morning. I think I can safely say that the dead cherry has been more entertaining than the t.v.

I know that I still have not noticed many of the birds and other wild creatures that reside on my land. I keep planting in the hope that they will come closer and I will finally see them.

- Gail Barton

PLANTS AT THE ARBORETUM WITH SUMMER INTEREST

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	CHARACTERISTIC
MILKWEED	<i>Aesclepias lanceolata</i>	Small orange flowers in flat-topped clusters
COLIC ROOT	<i>Aletris lutea</i>	Yellow, bell-shaped flowers in tall clusters
BUTTONBUSH	<i>Cephalanthus occidentalis</i>	Shrub with white sphere-shaped flower heads
TITI	<i>Cyrilla racemiflora</i>	Shrub to small tree with drooping white flowers
WHITE-TOPPED SEDGE	<i>Dichromena colorata</i>	Grass with curious star-shaped white bracts
SUNDEW	<i>Drosera brevifolia</i>	Lone pale flower on tiny rosette of sticky leaves
PINELAND HIBISCUS	<i>Hibiscus aculeatus</i>	White flowers with deep red centers
SWEETBAY MAGNOLIA	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	White fragrant flowers; Silvery backed leaves
YELLOW COW-LILY	<i>Nuphar luteum</i>	Aquatic plants with yellow globular flowers
WHITE WATER-LILY	<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	Aquatic plant with many-petaled flower
ORANGE CANDY ROOT	<i>Polygala lutea</i>	Dense, bright orange flowerheads
MEADOW BEAUTY	<i>Rhexia mariana</i>	Delicate pink flowers on upright green stems
DEWBERRY	<i>Rubus trivialis</i>	Arching woody vine; succulent black fruit
LIZARD'S TAIL	<i>Saururus cernuus</i>	White, nodding flower spike; at water's edge
STOKES ASTER	<i>Stokesia laevis</i>	Perennial with shaggy purple flowerhead

Reservations: Call the Arboretum office at (601) 799-2311, ext. 101 to confirm all events and to make a reservation, seating is limited. Programs subject to change.

Physical Address: 370 Ridge Road, Picayune, MS 39466

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1639, Picayune, MS 39466

E-mail Contact: drackett@ext.msstate.edu

Hours of Operation: Wednesday-Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

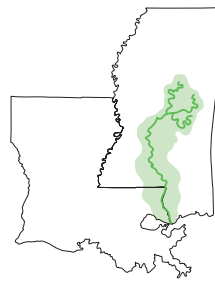
Admission Fees: Adults, \$4; Seniors (over 55), \$3; Children under 12, \$2; Members free admission to grounds and programs.

Webpage: www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu. Lists programs and events, volunteer opportunities, arboretum and natural area information, and news updates.

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Please address correspondence to:

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Picayune, Mississippi, USA



The yoga class taught by Jim Sones on Pinecote Pavilion was well-attended. The weather was beautiful, and participants offered rave reviews. We plan to offer this opportunity again in the fall!

BUY ONE MEMBERSHIP, GET ONE FREE

The arboretum is currently offering a free gift membership along with the purchase of any individual or family membership after June 1. Memberships will be in effect for the remainder of the year. Call Kim Johnson, at (601) 799-2311 to sign up for this great offer.

GIFT SHOP NEWS

The arboretum gift shop will be periodically marking down books over the summer to make room for our new Fall books. Please visit often to take advantage of continuing sale prices. Just in – a wonderful collection of children's items to aid in many hours of summer fun exploring in the great outdoors!

TOUR GUIDE TRAINING NOW IN HIGH GEAR

A special docent training day was conducted on May 17 for volunteers interested in becoming tour guides at the arboretum. The workshop included an overview on the history of the arboretum, its volunteer program, and the native plants found in our exhibits. Participants earned their Level 1 Docent Certification, and received their own Docent Training Manual with information pertinent to the arboretum, an informative *Mississippi Trees* book, courtesy of the Mississippi Forestry Commission, and other MSU Extension Service publications on native plants. If you are interested in joining a future docent training session, please call Robin Veerkamp for more information, or make plans to attend the next volunteer meeting, to be held the first Saturday in September.

UPCOMING RIDGE ROAD WIDENING PROJECT

A road improvement project is in the planning stages for Ridge Road, which borders the arboretum's east property line. Although construction will not begin for several years, the project engineers are including MSU and the Crosby Foundation Board in the design phase, to minimize any potential impact to the arboretum site. Some portions of Ridge Road will expand to 3-lane, however, the road is planned to remain 2-lane as it passes the arboretum. Recent meetings have been positive, and the road improvements should result in increased exposure of the arboretum to travelers, and better access to the site, especially from the south. The arboretum will remain involved throughout the project.



Melanie Walrod and her son give a beekeeping presentation during Pass Christian Elementary School's second grade tour in May.

Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

June 2008 - August 2008

June 2008

PLANT PROPAGATION WORKSHOP

Saturday, June 7
10 to 12 a.m.

Explore the processes of collecting seed and taking cuttings of your favorite native plants in this hands-on presentation, with **Gail Barton**, Meridian Community College Horticulture Instructor. Barton is President of the Mississippi Native Plant Society and author of *Basic Gardening: A Guide for the Deep South*. Gail will draw on her professional experience as owner of Flowerplace Plant Farm and her personal experiences as a backyard propagator, addressing the topics of propagation facilities, timing, material and methods. Participants should feel free to ask questions and be prepared to get their hands dirty. Course will be held in the arboretum greenhouse. Free for members; \$4 for non-members. Please register by June 5.

AQUATIC PLANT SALE

Saturday, June 21
9 a.m. to Noon

Come early for the best selection of non-invasive aquatic plants, including hardy water lilies, Texas star hibiscus, Louisiana iris, spider lilies, lizard tail and golden club. Free admission! Sale will be held in the drive area adjacent to the visitor's center.

APPRECIATING OUR NATIVE PLANTS: THEIR LANDSCAPE AND CULTURAL USES

Saturday, June 28
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wondering about all those plants that have volunteered in your yard since the recent hurricane? That should provide a clue – they have chosen to live there because it suits them. But, what are their names, what to keep, what needs to be removed or relocated? Become acquainted with our native plants during this field workshop, walking the grounds with **Russell Williams** of **Greenwood Landscape Company**, and **Darrell Martin** of **Blue Boy Cottage Herbs**. Darrell will reveal the cultural and historical uses of native plants by early settlers, who learned through trial and error to use them for food, medicine, and shelter, and which native plants still have medicinal value today. Russell will tell how to choose natives to fit your particular site conditions, as well as the merits of volunteerism in plants, and how this quality can be used to great advantage in designing a low-care, sustainable home landscape. Reservations are required. A boxed lunch will be provided on the Pinecote Pavilion, at \$10 per person. Program is free to members, and \$5 for non-members.

KIDS' SUMMER NATURE CAMP

Wednesday through Saturday
June 11, 12, 13 & 14
9 to 11 a.m.

Children ages 6 through 12 will enjoy learning about nature in this four-day nature camp, with fun hands-on lessons, games and activities, and including a special presentation by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. Your child will leave camp with an increased appreciation and excitement for nature. Reservations required; please register by June 8. \$20 for members' children; \$25 for children of non-members. Limited to the first 15 registrants.

July 2008

LEARNING TO SKETCH FROM NATURE

Saturdays, July 5, 12, 19 & 26
9:00 a.m. to Noon

Sketching in nature is a valuable tool to master. It is the only way to become a more competent field naturalist and artist. Learn the basic techniques of sketching from nature, and how to set up your own field journal and sketch landscapes, woodlands, savannas, and life around a pond from

instructor **Robin Veerkamp**. Techniques will be taught for quickly sketching birds and mammals from life. Program fee is \$15 for arboretum members and \$35 for non-members. All supplies will be furnished – all you have to do is be prepared to go outside, draw, and have fun. Please register by July 3. Course will be limited to the first 10 registrants.



BUILD A BIRD HOUSE Kids!

Thursday, July 10
9 to 10:30 a.m.

Join this fun workshop and build your own birdhouse! We'll teach you what birds need for shelter, and we'll have the pre-cut materials on hand. You supply the creativity. Suggested ages 8 – 14 years. A parent/guardian must be present with each child or group of children. Admission is \$8 for arboretum members and \$10 for non-members. Program fee includes the cost of materials. Please register by July 9.

Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

June 2008 - August 2008

August 2008

PAINT & PLANT A POT

Kids!

Saturday, August 2

10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Children will enjoy learning about plants while painting terracotta pots, then they will pot up and take home their very own plant. Please dress children in old clothes, as we will be using acrylic paints. A parent or guardian must be present with each child or group of children. Admission is \$5 for arboretum members and \$7 for non-members. Please register by July 31.

HARVESTING, PRESERVING AND USING YOUR HERBS: "A FUN THYME IN THE GARDEN"

Saturday, August 9

10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Herbs are pretty and fragrant, but how do we use them in our homes and gardens? **Dr. Lelia Scott Kelly**, Consumer Horticulture Specialist with the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center will present a fact-filled workshop revealing the many different ways to grow and use herbs, and in particular, how to cook with them! Handouts will include a wealth of recipes and instructions on harvesting for future use. Free for members; \$4 for non-members. Please register by August 7.

INTRODUCTION TO METHODS OF PLANT PROPAGATION: FROM SEED TO TISSUE CULTURE

Saturday, August 16

10:15 to 11:15 a.m.

Join **Dr. Gene Blythe**, Assistant Research Professor with the South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville for an overview of the various methods of plant propagation that are used for both small- and large-scale production. Dr. Blythe was a commercial propagator with Monrovia Growers in California for over 20 years. He will cover such topics as: What do seeds require for germination? What is the difference between a seed and a spore? When would grafting be a useful method of propagation? What are some tips on propagating from cuttings that aren't found in the books? Feel free to bring your questions for discussion after the presentation. Free admission for arboretum members and \$4 for non-members. Please register by August 14.

OUR PROPAGATION PROGRAM IS "GROWING": GREENHOUSE WORK SESSIONS PLANNED FOR SUMMER

June 7, July 12 & August 16

From 8 to 10 a.m.

The arboretum is excited to report that our propagation program is getting underway. Our goal is to increase the selection of plants offered at our sales, and to propagate more plants from arboretum sources. We greatly appreciate a commitment by **Gary Bachman**, Extension Horticulturist with the MSU Coastal Research and Extension Center, to coordinate a series of summer volunteer work sessions in the greenhouse and growing areas. If you are interested, please plan to attend one of these days! Several work sessions will be immediately followed by outstanding programs on propagation methods. Recent and planned upgrades to the greenhouse include getting the main fan in working order, replacing the lightening-damaged irrigation controller, and making other renovations to the irrigation system to bring it into full operation. We are also fortunate to have received a donation from Ruth Cook of approximately 250 tree seedlings such as mayhaw, red maple, cypress, tulip poplar, redbud, and river birch, which are happily growing, and will be included in the fall plant sale. And thank you, Gordon and Laura Ousset, for your generous donation to provide materials for a future misting area!



