

The Crosby Arboretum

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Quarterly News Journal

Winter 2009-2010

A PRACTICAL NEW RESOURCE FOR NATIVE PLANT I.D.

Whether you are a student or professional, the Southeasternflora.com website will provide you with a wealth of plant identification information that is both comprehensive and easy to use. Originally created to help fill the void of plant identification books in middle and high school libraries, it is a valuable resource for learning more about native or naturalized plants in the southeastern United States. Started in the summer of 2005, the site covers more than 1,000 trees, shrubs, vines, and herbaceous plants with over 14,000 photographs. And because it is a work in progress, new plants and improved photographs are being added as they are found.

In the past, resources for plant identification were limited mostly to plant keys or field guides. Botanical keys are too technical to be used without some training. A professor once said, "Keys were written by folks that did not need them, for folks who cannot use them." On the other hand, field guides are restricted by paper and ink and are limited in what they can show. Although they usually have good descriptions and photographs, only one view of each plant may be shown. Some plants, like Passion flower (Maypop), need only one photo since nothing else looks like it. However, other plants need more detail and closer inspection to distinguish between species with a similar appearance, for example, the common yard weeds Dead Nettle and Henbit. Both are widely distributed, but one species has leaves that are on petioles or stalks and the other has sessile leaves. These are the kind of details not usually shown in field guides.

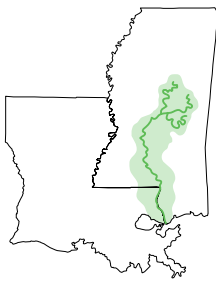
Although there are many informative websites with good descriptions and photographs to help *confirm* the identification of a plant, most do not help *identify* the plant in question – the purpose of the website. By simply identifying the flower color, the user may browse thumbnail photographs of all plants meeting that criteria. One simply clicks the thumbnail resembling the specimen for specific information, including detailed photographs illustrating different plant parts from various views and angles. Some will show the different leaves of



Drought tolerant American Holly (Ilex opaca) grows in shade or sun, and has berries favored by many species of birds. Great for "decking your halls" in the winter months! Photo courtesy of www.southeasternflora.com.

the plant, whereas others may show the stem in some detail, or highlight distinguishing characteristics such as thorns or spines, fruit, hairs, bark, etc. Another valuable feature that will soon appear for some plants on Southeasternflora.com is the addition of plant notes to help further distinguish similar species, for example, information about bloom time, the number of flowers in a particular part of the plant, a distinctive fragrance when the leaf is crushed, or another feature that cannot be photographed or may be missed upon a first inspection. Do keep in mind that it is always a good idea to use several references to accurately identify your specimen. Professionals who have been extremely helpful in identification of plants and in helping the author to find new plants are Heather Sullivan, Heritage Botanist and Herbarium Curator with The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science; Dr. Charles Bryson, Ph.D. Research Botanist with USDA-ARS; and Tate Thriffiley, Ecologist with USDA Forest Service, DeSoto National Forest.

– *John Gwaltney, Southeasternflora.com website creator, and President/CEO of Forestry Suppliers, Inc., Jackson, MS*



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

DIRECTOR'S NOTEBOOK: Fall Frenzy

Fall is an exciting time of the year to get outside and enjoy nature. With the weather finally cooling down, it becomes easier to drag the family out of the house for some fun outdoors! Many visitors have ventured to BugFest, the Fall Plant Sale, and other activities at the Arboretum. Others have come just to spend a lazy afternoon soaking in their surroundings, watching the turtles forage for food in the pond or tracking a raccoon through the woods. Whatever your interest, the Arboretum is a wonderful place to spend a few hours outdoors.

This fall has been no exception to the rule. Approximately 500 visitors ventured out to attend BugFest this past September. One of the highlights of this 2-day event was the arrival of the New Orleans Audubon Insectarium Bugmobile. Curtis Akey's presentation with live insects was outstanding. Many hands went into making BugFest possible: the USDA, Mississippi State University and Extension faculty and staff, Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, 4-H, and Arboretum volunteers all rolled up their sleeves and together contributed 258 hours of service. Special thanks to the Wal-Mart Community Grant (Picayune, MS), which donated \$1,000 to make this event possible.

The Scouts continue to provide hours of service at the Arboretum. This fall, Aaron Hirstius of Boy Scout Troop 5 completed his Eagle Scout project with help from other members of his troop, family, and Arboretum staff. This project was a 2-day endeavor and approximately 176 hours were volunteered to remove the cow lilies, alligator weed, and water lettuce from the pond. Thanks to everyone who took part in this project to keep our pond looking picture perfect! This January, Joshua Baber of Boy Scout Troop 81 will execute his Eagle Scout project with the aid of other troop members and Arboretum staff. Sherwin-Williams will contribute approximately \$600 in supplies so that the troop can stain the North Savanna's outdoor shelter.



Monarch feeding on a Butterfly-Bush.

Amongst the many activities in October at the Arboretum, the Fall Plant Sale, grand opening of the Children's Butterfly Garden, and the memorial tree plantings are fresh in my mind. Along with help from dedicated staff, Arboretum volunteers donated 44 hours to make the Fall Plant Sale a big hit. An opening ceremony was held to celebrate the new Children's Butterfly Garden on October 3, 2009. Arboretum volunteers, staff, and Master Gardeners donated 163 hours of service to this project. The garden was created thanks to \$1,000 in funds donated by the Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne Community Grant (Stennis Space Center, MS). Memorial trees, which included loblolly-bay, swamp chestnut oak, live oak, Ashe magnolia, bigleaf magnolia, common pawpaw, and water hickory, were planted this month throughout the Arboretum. What a great way to honor a loved one.

Each new season provides another chance to celebrate nature in all its beauty. I am forever fascinated with the plants and wildlife located at the Arboretum. It is my sincere hope that you too share my curiosity and find a reason to visit the Arboretum in the coming months.

— *Janine Conklin, Ph.D.*
Director of The Crosby Arboretum and
Assistant Extension Professor of Horticulture
Mississippi State University

Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

December 2009 - January 2010

December 2009

ARBORETUM OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, December 12
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please join us for the Arboretum's annual holiday open house celebration. Come browse the Gift Shop, and the work of our local artisans and craftspersons. Light refreshments will be served. Program is free and open to the public.

PROJECT WILD WORKSHOP

Saturday, December 19
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science is offering a ProjectWILD workshop for K-12 teachers and homeschool educators. ProjectWILD activities are based in wildlife and ecology topics, but many are cross-disciplinary. Teachers of any subject or grade can learn new ways to incorporate these activities into their curriculum. FREE workshop for teachers in Pearl River or Hancock Counties, and no cost for the ProjectWILD manual and 0.6 CEU's. For others cost is \$15, and \$10 for CEU's. Please call the office to pre-register.

January 2010

PRESCRIBED BURN DEMONSTRATION

Every Thursday and Friday
In January and February
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Native plant communities benefit from burning. Learn fire management techniques and observe a prescribed burning demonstration by Crosby Arboretum Burn Manager **Terry Johnson**. Wear old clothes and boots, dress for the weather, and bring a lunch. **Program will be available only if environmental conditions are favorable: please call the arboretum office one hour prior to this event to confirm it will be proceeding as planned.** Admission is free. Persons under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Reservations requested. Call (601) 799-2311 to register.

SMALL SPACE VEGETABLE GARDENING

Friday, January 8 (Adults)
12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

Are you envious of the growers at your local farmer's market? It does not take a large area to have a bountiful garden. It does not even take soil. **Dr. Gary Bachman, Extension Horticulturist** with the MSU Coastal Research and Extension Center will talk about the trials and tribulations of having a small, urban market garden. Free to members; non-members \$5. Please register by January 7.

WINTER VOLUNTEER MEETINGS

Saturday, Jan. 9 & Saturday, Feb. 6
9:00 a.m.

Learn about the many exciting volunteer opportunities and activities that you will enjoy here at the Crosby Arboretum. For information, call Volunteer Coordinator **Robin Veerkamp**, (601)799-2311, Ext. 104.

PLANT EXPLORATION: TAKE A WALK ON THE WILD SIDE WITH BUDDY LEE

Saturday, January 9
10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Put on your hiking shoes and journey to some fabulous destinations where native plant fanatics love to trek without ever having to leave your seat in this fun and informative program with **Robert E. "Buddy" Lee**, creator of the Encore® Azalea and one of the most respected plant breeders and horticulturalists in North America. Buddy will also include a discussion on care and maintenance of landscape plants. Members free; non-members \$5. Register by January 8.

WHAT'S EATING MY PLANTS? (Adults) **SHOULD I GET EXCITED?**

Saturday, January 16
10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

You may get excited, but in a good way! **Darla Pastorek**, with the **USDA Southern Horticultural Laboratory** in Poplarville, will talk about how important it is that you have a yard alive with caterpillars and other insects. Learn what plants will most attract butterflies, birds, and other wildlife. Members free, non-members \$5. Register by January 15.

HOME LANDSCAPE DESIGN (Adults)

Saturday, January 23
10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Prepare for plant shopping at our Arbor Day Plant Sale next month! Senior Curator **Pat Drackett** will discuss how to use basic landscape design principles as a framework to analyze your property and guide in your planting decisions. Tips and tricks for success, and some outstanding plants for Mississippi gardens will also be discussed. Free to members; \$5 for non-members. Register by January 22.

Walk-ins can usually be accommodated, but if possible, to help with our preparations, please call (601) 799-2311 to sign up prior to classes.

Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

January - February 2010

FORGE DAY: BLACKSMITHING & METALWORKING DEMONSTRATIONS **Saturday, January 30 (Family)** **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Join us for a full day of metalsmithing demonstrations by area craftsmen. A great opportunity for those who wish to learn techniques and tips to get started in metalworking. Come and enjoy the demonstrations, or try your hand at the forge. Those doing forge work must complete a waiver form prior to participating. Safety equipment for participants will be provided. Admission, free for Arboretum members; non-members \$5, and \$2 for non-members' children.

FOR THE BIRDS! (Kids!) **Saturday, February 6** **10:00 to 11:00 a.m.**

Get ready for the annual Great Backyard Bird Count at the Crosby Arboretum next weekend! Children will make a bird feeder using recycled materials, practice "eating like a bird" at the "Bird Beak Buffet," and demonstrate their birdwatching skills with Master Naturalist **Mary Cordray**. All materials are provided. Members' children \$2; non-members' children \$4.

MISSISSIPPI ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION **Friday, February 12** **1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

Area organizations and individuals are invited to celebrate Mississippi Arbor Day by planting a tree at the Arboretum! Free admission, but please call to register.

ARBOR DAY PLANT SALE **Saturday, February 13** **Members' Only Sale – 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.** **General Public – 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

To celebrate Mississippi Arbor Day, you can choose from a variety of trees and shrubs at this plant sale. This is a good time to plant trees and woody shrubs, so come early for the best selection of many hard-to-find native plants. Plant professionals will be on hand to help you select the right plant for the right place! **Free admission.** Arboretum Greenhouse.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT (Family!) **Saturday, February 13** **8:00 to 10:00 a.m.**

Join us for the annual Great Backyard Bird Count at the Crosby Arboretum! Admission is free for all those participating in this community event. For more information, please call Robin Veerkamp at (601) 799-2311 Ext. 104.



PROJECT LEARNING TREE WORKSHOP **Saturday, February 20** **9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Project Learning Tree is one of the oldest and most successful environmental education programs in the world, and Mississippi's program is one of the most successful in the system. PLT activities are unbiased, interdisciplinary, fun, hands-on lesson plans based on sound science. All participants will receive the 96-lesson-plan, 400-page "PLT Pre-K-8 Activity Guide." High School teachers will also receive two of PLT's five Secondary Education Modules. All supplies provided. **Bring a bag lunch.** Offered **FREE** to Mississippi and Louisiana educators, by a DEQ grant. CEU credits available. Call the Arboretum office to preregister.

SNAKES! SNAKES! SNAKES! (Family) **Saturday, February 27** **1:00 to 2:00 p.m.**

I just saw a snake! What is it? Biologist **Bryan Fedrick** from the **Mississippi Museum of Natural Science** will demystify our much-maligned native reptiles. Learn how to tell the differences between Mississippi's six venomous and 48 non-venomous snakes. Fedrick will separate myth from reality and provide accurate information about our native snakes and their valuable place in the ecosystem. Free to Arboretum members; \$5 for adult non-members; children \$2. Please register by February 26.

Reservations: Call the Arboretum office at (601) 799-2311, to confirm all events and to make program reservations, as seating is limited. Programs are subject to change.

Physical Address: 370 Ridge Road, Picayune, MS 39466

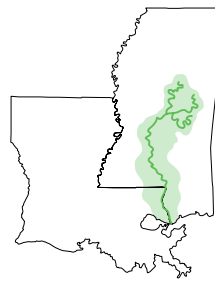
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1639, Picayune, MS 39466

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

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

2010 Admission Fees: Adults, \$5; Seniors (over 55), \$4; 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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Picayune, Mississippi, USA



This beautiful bald cypress is found at the water's edge, south of the bridge at Cypress Cove. The adjacent pond cypress in this area provides an excellent opportunity on tours to discuss the differences between these two species.

PLANT PROFILE: BALD CYPRESS

Folks in northern climates may have a wide range of vibrant fall colors, but it is the rusty orange of the bald cypress that is a familiar herald of autumn for those of us living in the coastal south. Although bald cypress is found in a range of water depths, it is also very tolerant of dryer conditions. Young trees will grow quickly. Bald cypress can attain heights of over 130 feet and will live more than 500 years, developing a flattened and a sometimes quite wide crown. If you have a moist area in your yard where your lawn mower keeps sinking, consider a grouping of bald cypress. Add a bed of Louisiana iris below to complete the picture.

UPCOMING TEACHER'S WORKSHOP

The Arboretum is looking forward to a brand new teacher's workshop opportunity this spring, facilitated by the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. Growing Up Wild is an early childhood education program (ages 3-7) that builds on children's sense of wonder about nature and invites them to explore wildlife and the world around them. To read more about this award winning program, visit www.projectwild.org/GrowingUpWILD.htm.



Mac Alford and his son Stefan examine a specimen during Mac's October's Arboretum field walk that revealed the world of "Grasses, Sedges and Rushes."

PLANTS AT THE ARBORETUM WITH WINTER INTEREST

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	CHARACTERISTIC
RED MAPLE	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red and orange flower clusters; reddish twigs.
LITTLE BLUE STEM	<i>Andropogon spp.</i>	Tan, leafy stems with white, fluffy seeds.
PLUME GRASS	<i>Erianthus giganteus</i>	Tall grass with feathery seeds rising from top.
AMERICAN BEECH	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	Tan, drooping leaves persisting on stems.
YELLOW JESSAMINE	<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Vine with fragrant yellow tubular flowers.
DECIDUOUS HOLLY	<i>Ilex decidua</i>	Bright red fruit clinging to dormant stems.
INKBERRY	<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Black fruit borne on small, leafy stems.
AMERICAN HOLLY	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	Female trees bear bright red drupes.
YAUPON HOLLY	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Bright red fruit; clustered on short stems.
GOLDEN CLUB	<i>Orontium aquaticum</i>	Yellow flower cluster; growing in water.
WHITE OAK	<i>Quercus alba</i>	Foliage turning deep orange.
WINGED SUMAC	<i>Rhus copallina</i>	Vibrant orange-red foliage.
CYPRESS	<i>Taxodium spp.</i>	Foliage turning deep rusty orange.
ELLIOT'S BLUEBERRY	<i>Vaccinium elliotii</i>	Small pink/white flowers; pale green stems.

UPCOMING EVENTS 2010

Saturday, January 23 – Hilltop Arboretum 2010 Symposium, Baton Rouge, featuring keynote speakers **Scott and Lauren Ogden**, on “Plant Driven Design: Creating Gardens that Honor Plants, Place and Spirit,” inspired by their latest book with the same title. For details, call (225) 767-6916 or hilltop@tigers.lsu.edu.

Saturday, March 13 – **Arboretum Field Walk with Alan Branham, Director of Horticulture at Powell Gardens**, Kansas City, Missouri (www.powellgardens.org) and plant designer of their new Heartland Harvest Garden, America’s largest edible landscape. In the design, working with Nature was critical and understanding all plants role in the web of life is essential to creating a sustainable landscape. Learn how the native plants displayed at Crosby Arboretum play a role in the web of life and can be important players in gardening and landscape design.

Saturday, March 13 – **Fifth Jean Chisholm Lindsey Lecture in Landscape Design**, Jackson, Mississippi. Details for this event will be provided in the Spring *News Journal*.

Thursday, March 25 – **Wildlife Day**, for area school groups.

Friday, April 9 – **Gail Barton**, plant propagation program.

Saturday, April 10 – Planning is underway with members of the Mississippi Native Plant Society for a full day of Arboretum field walks and native plant programs.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

New membership fees go into effect on December 1, and will be \$15 for students, \$30 for individuals, and \$40 for families. Please join us for another event-full year!

MONARCHS EMERGE AT BUGFEST

A highlight of September’s BugFest was the milkweed bouquet (*Asclepias tuberosa*), complete with monarch chrysalids and caterpillars, brought in by Arboretum members Matt and Tricia Olive. Here, their son Michael watches a new monarch emerge. At the end of the event, the quite-full caterpillars were released into the Children’s Butterfly Garden.



The News Journal is a quarterly publication of The Crosby Arboretum, Mississippi State University Extension Service. Journal subscriptions may be obtained with membership at the Arboretum. Printed on recycled paper.

Please address correspondence to:

Pat Drackett, Editor
The Crosby Arboretum
P.O. Box 1639
Picayune, MS 39466

Membership Application

All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed. For more information call: (601) 799-2311

_____	Student (send student i.d.)	\$ 15.00
_____	Individual	30.00
_____	Family	40.00
_____	Donor	100.00
_____	Patron	250.00*
_____	Benefactor	1,000.00
_____	Business	
_____	Sweetgum	100.00
_____	Sassafras	250.00
_____	Live Oak	500.00
_____	Bigleaf Magnolia	1,000.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Renewing? Memberships are for one year.

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