

# The Crosby Arboretum

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Quarterly News Journal

Winter 2014-15

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## NATIVE OR ENDEMIC... AND A PLANT THAT IS BOTH

By John T. Manion, Birmingham Botanical Gardens

The term “native” is frequently used in regard to plants, but what exactly does it actually mean - and how does it differ from an “endemic” plant? When asking most people what a native plant is, they respond with some iteration of “a plant that was here before Europeans arrived.” While correct in a rudimentary sense, at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, being the type of organization we are, we’ve chosen to adopt the American Botanical Society’s definition of a native plant, which is: “a plant that exists in a location without any direct or indirect human intervention. This definition developed out of the awareness that the early people also manipulated plants in the landscape, such as burning and moving plants from one location to another. Because every plant on earth is native to someplace, it’s always important to specify to where a plant is native.

Refining the term native further, we have the word “endemic,” which means native only to a specific area. It doesn’t mean that area is the only place the plant grows, but rather the only place where the plant grows naturally. If I say a plant is endemic to Mississippi, that species may be found growing in many parts of the south, but if it is, it would have been taken there by humans. A very special plant in Alabama which embodies both of these terms, native and endemic, is *Croton alabamensis* var. *alabamensis*, Alabama croton. Of all the plants native to Alabama, this is one whose praises we frequently sing. This plant is so special that at our last Central South Native Plant Conference, we sent every participant home with one.



Found naturally along river banks, Alabama croton grows equally well in sun or shade, and moist or dry soils.



Fragrant spring flowers, leaves with silvery undersides, and autumn color give Alabama croton year-round garden interest.

*Croton alabamensis* var. *alabamensis* (Alabama croton) is one of our state’s 26 endemic plants and is a member of the Euphorbiaceae, the euphorbia family. This species has never been found growing naturally anywhere else. Some of the reasons we are so enamored with this plants are its versatility, its durability and its beauty – which is subtle but distinct. We grow Alabama croton in sun, shade, moist and dry soils and it performs well in all these situations once established. In spring, the foliage has on its upper surface a pleasant Granny Apple green cast, and at all times of the year the underside of the leaves has a silvery sheen, which is visible when there’s a breeze to move the leaves. The fragrant flowers, not showy but distinctive, appear in early spring. In autumn this plant’s foliage looks as if someone took a can of neon orange paint and sprayed it on some of the leaves. Where Alabama croton is happy, it will drop enough seed so that you will always have new plants to share. This special plant needs no pampering, and because of its many virtues, we will always grow it and distribute it.

Here in the south, we have a higher rate of endemism than regions farther north. Learn which plants are not only native to Mississippi, but also endemic; they are something to be proud of!



John Manion is the curator of the Kaul Wildflower Garden, a nationally renowned, seven-acre naturalistic rock garden at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, celebrating the incredible diversity of native Alabama woodland flora. (Info: [www.bbgardens.org](http://www.bbgardens.org))



## 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:

We're pleased to welcome two new staff members, who are formally presented here. Even with having staff vacancies this past year, we have made significant forward progress, both in the development of our exhibits, and in serving our visitors and members. In November, the main trail in our Swamp Forest Exhibit was completed. September's Bugfest event, led by MSU Entomology faculty and students, drew over 1,500 attendees this year, from 600 attendees the previous year. Membership has increased twenty percent over last year. The Pinecote Pavilion restoration project is now underway, with completion scheduled for February. Visitors have been enjoying additional space for programs in a newly acquired temporary modular building adjacent to the Visitor Center. Our Gift Shop has undergone an expansion and features work by local artisans, and we now have a gallery area with quarterly exhibits. If we have been able to make this much headway with a small staff, just imagine what we will accomplish in 2015!

- *Patricia Drackett, Director  
The Crosby Arboretum, MSU Extension Service*



### Our new Office Associate: Sherri Lowe

The Arboretum welcomes **Sherri Lowe**, who started in October. Sherri grew up in Southern California, but has lived in Mississippi with her husband for 16 years, and during that time has worked as an office associate. She now lives in Perkinston, but was in Bay St. Louis before Hurricane Katrina. Because she enjoys spending time outdoors, such as camping with her family, the Arboretum is a perfect place for her. Sherri has a husband, two sisters, three dogs, chickens, and geese. She says she likes the variety of day-to-day life at the Arboretum, and enjoys the visitors, volunteers, members, the staff, and the wildlife. She even recently caught a glimpse of our sly fox!



### Meet our new Senior Curator: Jill Mirkovich

**Jill Diamond Mirkovich** holds a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architectural Studies from the Fay Jones School of Architecture, University of Arkansas. Her focus of study included landscape design, horticulture and environmental restoration. While at Arkansas she completed a horticulture internship with the city of Fayetteville's Parks and Recreation Department, assisting with the care and cultivation of plants within the city parks.

Mirkovich is a Lafayette, Louisiana native and recalls a childhood spent outdoors exploring the wonders of the Gulf Coast region beneath tree canopy. As an outdoor enthusiast she is highly motivated to help preserve the natural landscapes of the Gulf South, providing places for future generations to grow, to learn, and to explore.

Jill is a mother of three active young boys. She is married to Jared Mirkovich, who is currently working on his Masters of Landscape Architecture at Mississippi State University. In spring 2013 Jared participated in a landscape management seminar under Professor Bob Brzuszek, which focused on the Crosby Arboretum's exhibits. Jill is coming aboard our team with a keen appreciation of our roots, and mission.

On your next visit, please stop in the office to meet Jill and welcome her to the Arboretum.



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Picayune, Mississippi, USA

### Plant Profile: COMMON WITCHHAZEL

*Hamamelis virginiana* L.



As winter quickly approaches with brisk temperatures setting in, you may come upon the interesting blooms of *Hamamelis virginiana* on a walk through the woods or in your home garden. Early December is a time of festive reds and (ever)greens. It is also a time to discover displays of lovely yellows from the delicate flowers of the American witchhazel. By mid-November much of our native flora has subsided in bloom as plants transition into winter. The witchhazel, however, faithfully stands out every autumn into December with leaves turning from a pale green to a wonderful gold. As temperatures drop, so follow the leaves. What is left behind is a full display of fragrant yellow blooms on structured bare branches. The light yellow color seems to pop against a graying winter sky. The native *Hamamelis virginiana* is considered a tall shrub or small tree and can reach to heights of 30' in the natural landscape, and to heights of 15 to 20' in the home garden. *Hamamelis* has the potential to naturalize, spreading by suckers and would be a great selection to plant along a wooded border. It prefers moist soils and full to partial sun. Have you ever wondered how a plant gets its name? The name witchhazel is derived from the old folklore of using forked branches to find water wells, a practice called dowsing or 'witching' for water. Native Americans along with early settlers were known to use witchhazel by boiling or steaming the bark and leaves for various medicinal purposes.

- Jill D. Mirkovich

### ARBORETUM PLANTS: WINTER INTEREST

**Broomsedge bluestem** (*Andropogon virginicus*)

**American beech** (*Fagus grandifolia*)

**Possumhaw holly, winterberry** (*Ilex decidua*)

**Inkberry, gallberry** (*Ilex glabra*)

**Myrtle leaf holly** (*Ilex myrtifolia*)

**American holly** (*Ilex opaca*)

**Yaupon holly** (*Ilex vomitoria*)

**Needle palm** (*Rhapidophyllum hystrix*)

**Dwarf palmetto** (*Sabal minor*)

**Netted chainfern** (*Woodwardia areolata*)

*Refer to the Native Plant Database on our website for details.*



*If you haven't visited our remodeled Gift Shop, you are in for a treat. Browse new wares by local artisans, and many nature-themed items, just in time for the holidays.*



*In October, Eagle Scout candidate **Luke Onstott** (third from right), Picayune Troop 5, completed 250 feet of trail in the Swamp Forest Educational Exhibit with his crew members.*

## CROSBY ARBORETUM RECEIVES HIGH RANKING IN NATIONAL LIST

In September, we learned that The Crosby Arboretum had been ranked Number Three in a list of fifty "Most Stunning University Arboretums and Gardens". Considering the reputation of the other gardens on this list, we were pleased and honored to be given this recognition. To see the list of university gardens, visit <http://www.bestmastersprograms.org/most-stunning-university-arboretums-and-gardens>.



The *Pinecote Pavilion*, currently without its shingles, is an awesome sight, with its skeletal structure so clearly revealed.

### Crosby Arboretum Memberships Make GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS!



*Show someone you care!*

Crosby Arboretum memberships include special admission privileges and discounts at nearly 300 other public gardens through the **American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program**. Gift memberships, and all renewals, will also include a free subscription to *Better Homes & Gardens* through the **American Public Gardens Association**. Call Kimberly Johnson at 601-799-2311 for more information, or to order a membership by credit card. Gift memberships will be attractively packaged for holiday giving.

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 with  $\geq 30\%$  postconsumer waste recycled fiber. Journal may be received electronically if desired.

Please address correspondence to: **Pat Drackett**, Editor  
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The Crosby Arboretum  
P.O. Box 1639  
Picayune, MS 39466

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### Membership Application

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

_____	Student (send copy of 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 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Renewing?  Memberships are for one year.



The Crosby Arboretum  
**Mississippi State University**  
P.O. Box 1639  
Picayune, MS 39466-1639  
(601)-799-2311  
[www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu](http://www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu)

# Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

December 2014 – January 2015

## December 2014

### **CROSBY ARBORETUM GALLERY OPENING: NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN ANDERSON**

**Saturday, December 6  
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

**Brian Anderson** is a self-described amateur photographer who was discovered one day capturing some fabulous images of Crosby Arboretum wildflowers. His work will be on display through the end of February 2015. Brian enjoys spending time in the great outdoors looking for his subjects. He says, "Memories fade but beauty captured in a photo remains, and is easy to share with others." Light refreshments. Free to members and non-members.



### **ARBORETUM OPEN HOUSE**

**Saturday, December 13  
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.**

Please join us for the Arboretum's annual holiday open house celebration. Come browse the gift shop, and the work of local artisans and craftspersons. Refreshments will be served. Admission free to all.

## January 2015

### **PRESCRIBED BURN DEMONSTRATION**

**Thursdays and Fridays in January  
and February, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Assist with, or observe fire management techniques during prescribed burning of the Crosby Arboretum's savanna areas with Certified Burn Manager **Terry Johnson**. Wear old clothes/boots, and bring a lunch. Program proceeds only if weather conditions are favorable. Call the office at 9:00 a.m. to confirm, and to register. Admission is free for arboretum members and \$5 for non-members. Persons under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

### **PINE NEEDLE BASKETRY WORKSHOP**

**Saturday, January 10 (Adults)  
9:30 a.m. to Noon**

Join **Judy Breland**, Stone County Extension Agent, for a workshop in the art of pine needle basket-making. Participants can complete a small basket by the end of this workshop, and will learn methods for continuing with future projects. Wear old clothes. Materials provided. \$5 for members and \$7 for non-members. Register by Jan. 9.

### **FORGE DAY: BLACKSMITHING & METALWORKING DEMONSTRATIONS**



**Saturday,  
January 31**

**10 AM TO 2 PM**

Join us for a day of metalsmithing demonstrations by area craftsmen. Learn techniques and tips to get started in metalworking and 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. Items available for purchase. Knife sharpening. Members free; non-members \$5, and \$2 for non-members' children.

### **HOME LANDSCAPE DESIGN JAMBALAYA**

**Saturday, January 24 (Adults)  
10:00 to 11:00 a.m.**

Prepare for your spring gardening projects with Crosby Arboretum's Senior Curator **Jill Mirkovich** and Director **Pat Drackett**, who will present a rapid-fire smorgasbord of garden design ideas and sustainable gardening practices to enlighten and inspire you to action. Members free. Non-members \$5. Register by Jan. 23.

### **ARBORETUM FIELD WALK (Family)**

**Saturday, January 24  
1:00 to 2:00 p.m.**

On this walk through the grounds, we will experience the subtle natural winter beauty around us. Learn about the many native plants with winter interest and how to incorporate them into your home landscape. Members free. Non-members \$5. Register by Jan. 23.

# Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

January - February 2015

## **JUNIOR GIRL SCOUTS: FOR THE BIRDS**

**Saturday, January 31 (Scout program)**  
**10:00 a.m. to Noon**

A program designed to meet requirements for the Junior Scout's Habitat Badge. Learn about bird identification, bird habitats, and attracting birds to your community with Master Naturalist **Mary Cordray**. Program fee is \$10 per participant; no charge for Scout leaders and parent chaperones. Maximum group number 20 participants. All materials provided. Call Girl Scouts of Greater MS to register at 228-864-7215 or register online at [gsgms.org](http://gsgms.org).

## **CHILDREN'S PROGRAM: FOR THE BIRDS**

**Saturday, January 31 (Children)**  
**1:00 to 2:00 p.m.**

In this program with Master Naturalist **Mary Cordray**, children will learn about bird identification, bird habitats, and ways to attract birds. Program fee is \$2 per child. No charge for adults. Free to members' children, \$2 for non-members' children. Register by Jan. 30.

## **February 2015**

### **ARBOR DAY NATIVE PLANT SALE**

**Saturday February 7, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**  
**Members Admitted at 9:00 a.m.**

Winter is the perfect time to plant trees and woody shrubs to allow for a long establishment period. Choose from a wide variety of trees and shrubs at this plant sale, and come early for the best selection of hard-to-find native plants. We'll help you select the right plant for the right place! Free admission. Arboretum Visitor Center.

## **CHILDREN'S VALENTINE'S DAY WORKSHOP**

**Saturday, February 14**  
**10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**

Children will enjoy crafting "plantable" Valentine's Day ornaments for their special valentine in this holiday workshop. Members' children, \$4, non-members' children, \$6. Register by Feb.13.

## **CROSBY ARBORETUM SPRING LECTURE**

**Timber Press Author RICK DARKE**

**Saturday, March 28, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.**  
Margaret Reed Crosby Memorial Library

## **INTRODUCTION TO FLY TYING FOR YOUTH**

**Saturday, February 21 (Youth)**  
**1:00 to 2:30 p.m.**

In a workshop designed for youth, fly fisherman **Will Sullivan** will teach how to use simple, inexpensive materials to create flies to catch fish. All materials and equipment will be provided. **Class is limited to 5 participants.** Best suited to ages 9 to 14. Parent or guardian is required. Materials fee for members, \$2 and for non-members, \$4. Call to register by Feb. 18.

## **SUSTAINABLE HOME GARDENING**

**Saturday, February 28 (Adults)**  
**10:00 to 11:00 a.m.**

Wondering about how to incorporate sustainable gardening practices into your own landscape? This program led by Hancock County Extension Agent **Christian Stephenson** will focus on the concept of sustainability and its application to the home garden, including a discussion of wise water use, plant selection, composting, and incorporating wildlife into your garden. Members free, non-members \$5. Register by Feb. 27.

**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](mailto:drackett@ext.msstate.edu)

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

**2013 Admission Fees:** Adults, \$5; Seniors (over 55), \$4; Children under 12, \$2; Members, free admission to grounds and programs.

**Webpage:** [www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu](http://www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu). Lists programs and events, volunteer opportunities, Arboretum and Natural Area information, and news updates.

**For more information**, or to register, please call the Arboretum at (601) 799-2311. Membership is \$40 for families, \$30 individual; \$15 students. The Crosby Arboretum is located in Picayune, Mississippi, off I-59 Exit 4, on Ridge Road (between Wal-Mart and I-59). Follow signs to the Arboretum. Please park in our Visitors Parking lot and enter the site at the ticket booth. Follow the Arrival Journey (woodland path) to the Visitor Center.

Stay connected with the Crosby Arboretum!



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