

HORTICULTURE

Happenings

LSU Department of Horticulture Newsletter

Winter 2002

From the Department Head



David G. Himelrick

First of all, I should probably introduce myself since I have had the opportunity to meet only a few of you. I began my new job as department head on August 15. Before arriving in Baton Rouge, I had spent the last 12 years as a fruit specialist on the faculty in the Horticulture Department at Auburn University. I must admit it has been very difficult to switch my loyalties after all those years as a War Eagle. We did manage to purchase season football tickets, and I promised everyone that I would cheer for the Tigers when Auburn came to town. I certainly picked a good year to change my stripes.

Speaking of football games, we would like to invite each of you to join us for tailgating before every home

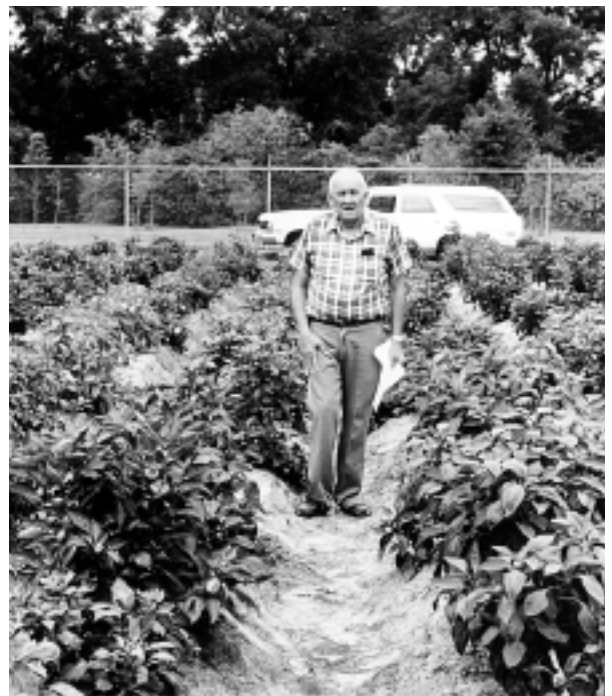
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Dr. James Fontenot Remembered

The proposal to name the classroom building at the Hill Farm after alumni and longtime professor Dr. James F. Fontenot was approved by the LSU Board of Supervisors in January. The classroom at the Hill Farm will now be known as the *James F. Fontenot Horticulture Classroom Building*, a fitting tribute for a man that gave so much to LSU.

James Fontenot began his college career as a student at LSU in 1942. Interrupted by World War II service in the U.S. Navy, he graduated in 1949 with a B.S. in horticulture. He was a student worker during his junior and senior years, and he was Horticulture Club president in 1948. He pursued graduate education at LSU, was a graduate assistant in the Department and lived on the Hill Farm. Following graduation in 1949 with an M.S. in Horticulture, he served as an assistant county agent for the LSU Cooperative Extension Service. In 1949 he began teaching horticulture at LSU. During his tenure in the 1950s, he was one of the infamous "Dust Bowlers," a name given to faculty and staff who lived adjacent to the Hill Farm. Deeply dedicated to the students he educated as a professor, James Fontenot helped revive the Horticulture Club and served as its advisor.

After leaving for the University of Missouri, where he began graduate study for his PhD and served as an assistant in horticulture from 1958-1960, he returned to his teaching position at LSU. He completed his PhD at the University of Missouri in 1965 and became an associate professor of horticulture at LSU. In 1969, he was



James F. Fontenot



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McCloskeys Recognized by LSU College of Agriculture

Dennis and Blanche McCloskey, former owners of Windmill Nurseries in Folsom, La., were recognized at a reception by the LSU College of Agriculture in Baton Rouge on May 3, 2000. Dennis was named alumnus of the year in 2000 by the college.

Windmill Nurseries was founded in 1963 and developed into a 550-acre firm producing more than 7.8 million plants by 1999. He founded the Southeast Louisiana Nurserymen's Association and served as its president. He also served as a board member and president of the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, Southern Nursery Association, and American Nursery and Landscape Association.

In addition to nursery responsibilities, Dennis has served on numerous advisory committees including those of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. He is a member of the LSU Foundation, where he serves on the Capital Campaign Committee. The McCloskeys are long-time members of the LSU Agricultural Development Council. Dennis and Blanche have recently



Blanche E. and Dennis V. McCloskey

created the Blanche E. and Dennis V. McCloskey Endowed Scholarship for students in ornamental horticulture at LSU.

Department Head

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game. We gather on the patio at the north end of J.C. Miller Hall three hours before the start of every game. It is a great place to meet old friends and make some new ones. We want you to feel that you are always welcome to share in some great food and good fellowship before every home game. Plan to join us and help the crowd to get even bigger and better this fall.

You don't have to wait for football season to stop by and visit the faculty, staff and students who call J.C. Miller Hall home. We want you to think of it as your home also whenever you visit the beautiful LSU campus. I invite you to stop by my office the next time you are on campus.

The faculty has been discussing our future and those

areas that we feel are most important. I was pleased to see the unanimous support for placing our primary emphasis on our students and on our alumni and friends of the department. This is our beginning effort to improve our communication with you. We hope to use this newsletter to keep you updated on people, changes and upcoming events of interest. We welcome your comments and ideas about things you want to see included in the newsletter. We plan to have some regular columns as well as timely special features.

Many exciting things are happening at J.C. Miller, the Hill Farm Teaching Facility, Burden Center and at numerous locations around the state. Our faculty members are active in the classroom, in the laboratory, at the research stations, at grower meetings, high schools, master gardener classes, distance

learning and hundreds of other places and events around the state. Horticulture is on the move. Our students continue to be in demand, and the job market is solid. We all see a promising future for horticulture in Louisiana.

In future columns, I will highlight people and happenings that spotlight the dynamic nature of our department. We would like to hear from you and ask for your help in locating former students for whom we have no current address. Drop us a line and let us know what you are doing and ask your friends if they received this newsletter. If we missed someone, please help us add him or her to our mailing list. Make sure you plan to join us for upcoming events like the golf tournament on May 31. Please stop by to visit.

Hill Farm Update and Other Notes

2001 was an eventful year for the Hill Farm Teaching Facility. With the grand opening of the Lod Cook Conference Center Hotel on the Farm's northern boundary on the LSU campus, the threat of losing another section of land for hotel parking seemed imminent. Facility Services proposed not only a parking lot, but also a roadway that would dissect the farm. This threat was met with staunch resistance from students and alumni.

Fontenot Remembered (continued from page 1)

named a full professor of horticulture, a position he retained until his death in 1991.

Dr. James Fontenot was an excellent student, educator, alumni and member of the LSU community. From student to full professor, he gave his life in service to LSU. His research in Irish potatoes, okra and peppers is known, not only at LSU and throughout the South, but internationally, as well. Selections from his breeding program in Irish potato include Red LaSoda, LaBelle, LaChipper, and Fontenot (released posthumously) and are still grown today in the United States.

Dr. Fontenot represented the essence of everything the Hill Farm stands for: teaching, students, research, hard work, extracurricular involvement and school loyalty. Louisiana State University and the Department of Horticulture are honored to name the Hill Farm teaching building after Dr. James Fontenot. The Department hopes a formal dedication can be planned soon, tentatively set during homecoming activities during the Fall 2002.

More than 150 student e-mails and numerous letters from concerned alumni forced campus administration to reconsider the Hill Farm's importance as a teaching resource, valuable greenspace and historical site. On October 31, the LSU Student Senate passed a resolution to affirm the permanent location of the Horticulture Hill Farm Teaching Facility.

The faculty and students of the Department of Horticulture would like to take this opportunity to say "thank you" for the support of alumni and friends during this ordeal. Attention can now focus on developing the University Gardens proposed for the site.

Other notes . . .

In the Fall of 2000, the Agriculture Student Council made the Hill Farm its official home. Making the move from the Ag Admin-

istration Building to the Hill Farm has given the ASC a larger and more accessible facility in which to conduct its bimonthly meetings.

Construction time! With little funding and few supplies, but a crew of eager students, the HORT 3015 Urban Management class will begin construction on the Specialty and Evaluation Garden at the Hill Farm this spring. Dr. Jeff Kuehny will lead the class in the layout, construction and planting of the garden that will bridge the space between the James F. Fontenot Horticulture Classroom Building and the Lod Cook Conference Center. An alumni entrance to the Hill Farm will provide better access from the Alumni Center.

If you are interested in contributing to this project, contact Dr. David Himelrick at 225-578-2158.

Alumni - Where Are You Now?

Tell us what is going on with your life and career. Classmates like to know what other classmates are doing! Here's your chance to share your news with the LSU Department of Horticulture alumni and friends. This information will appear in an upcoming *Horticulture Happenings*.

NAME: _____

STREET: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

HOME TEL: () _____ WORK TEL: () _____

E-MAIL : _____ CLASS OF: _____

FAMILY MEMBERS: _____

NEWS: _____

Send to: LSU Department of Horticulture
Baton Rouge, LA 70803

or Tel: (225) 578-2158
Fax: (225) 578-1068
E-mail: ebush@agctr.lsu.edu

Lawn and Garden Web Site Debuts

The LSU AgCenter recently announced the debut of a lawn and garden Web site. Louisiana Lawn and Garden, located at www.louisianalawnandgarden.org, includes practical horticultural information for consumer and commercial audiences.

Site content includes a home horticulture section divided into subject areas such as fruits and nuts,

home gardens and vegetables, lawn care, home grounds and landscaping, and urban tree

care. The commercial horticulture section features floriculture, landscaping, nursery crops, turfgrass and fruits and vegetables. Information also is provided on the Louisiana Master Gardener program. Links are available to LSU AgCenter "News You Can Use" and "Get It Growing" and the Department of Horticulture. Recent and current editions of Horticulture Hints, the popular extension horticulture newsletter, are accessible.

Upcoming events are posted, and links to related Web site and governmental agencies have been added to the Louisiana Lawn and Garden Web site. This new method of communicating horticulture news has been a goal of the LSU AgCenter and will enable home gardeners and green industry professionals to have an instant source of reliable information.



Recent Departmental Events

The Department of Horticulture hosted its first Nursery/Landscape Golf Shootout at the LSU Golf Course in Baton Rouge on September 14, 2001. Six teams participated in the inaugural event.

First place prize were \$50 pro shop gift certificates. Very special thanks to Jon Ducote of BWI Companies and Bobby Scott of the Dodson Group for sponsoring this year's event. Also, thanks are extended to the LSU College of Agriculture and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry for their support. Boo LeBlanc won the closest to the hole on #3, and Fred Trappey won closest to the hole on #10. Long drive on #13 was Boo LeBlanc. Thanks to artist Henry Lastrapes of Baton Rouge for his donation of a water coloring for a closest to the hole prize. Plan to join us for the second golf shootout on May 31, 2002, at the LSU Golf Course in Baton Rouge. Contact Allen Owings at 225-578-2222 for information .

The 7th annual Louisiana Plant Materials Conference, co-hosted by the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, was held October 24 at the City Park Botanical Gardens in New Orleans.

Jeff Kuehny and Pat Branch of the Department of Horticulture hosted the annual Poinsettia Open House at Nelson Memorial on the LSU campus in Baton Rouge December 11-12. More than 100 poinsettia varieties are grown annually.

Department Personnel Changes

Dr. Jimmy Boudreaux recently transferred into the Department of Horticulture as an Extension Specialist of Olericulture (Commercial Vegetables).

Dr. Mike Cannon recently transferred into the Department of Horticulture as an Extension Specialist and Research Coordinator of the Sweet Potato Station in Chase.

Mr. Stephen Crnko recently transferred into the Department of Horticulture as an Extension Research Associate.

Mr. Dan Gill recently transferred into the Department of Horticulture as an Associate Specialist after spending 20 years in Metro New Orleans Area as a County Agent/Area Horticulture Agent.

Dr. David Himelrick accepted the Horticulture Department Head position in August of 2001. He was formerly a Pomology (Fruit and Nut Crops) Extension Specialist in the Horticulture Department at Auburn University.

Dr. Tom Koske recently transferred into the Horticulture Department as an

Extension Specialist of Turfgrass.

Mrs. Shannon Millet joined the Horticulture Department as the Word Processor Specialist.

Dr. Allen Owings recently transferred into the Horticulture Department as the Ornamental Horticulture Extension Specialist.

Dr. John Pyzner recently transferred into the Horticulture Department as an Associate Extension Specialist of Pomology. Dr. Pyzner is located at the LSU Agcenter's Extension office in Calhoun.

Mr. Rob Trawick transferred into the Horticulture Department as an Extension Associate working with commercial ornamental crops.

Dr. Pat Hegwood, formerly, Department Head of Horticulture, transferred to the Burden Center Director position this past summer.

Mr. Burt Reynolds recently retired with 25 years service as an Instructor. Mr. Reynolds assisted with research, teaching and tissue culture propagation techniques. We all wish he and his family a happy retirement.

Graduate Students Profiles

Congratulations, 2001 Horticulture Graduates

Spring

Wanda Ellis

Heather Kirk Pecot

Clark Robertson

Olinto Perez Rosabal

Claude Watkins

Fall

Scott Guidry

Keith Lewis

Karen Milton

Wade Soileau

Kris Leader

Graduated with an M.S. in 1999. He has worked at Dupont's Nursery as a greenhouse manager for about three years. His responsibilities include: producing flowering pot plants and bedding plants, scheduling production of these crops, managing a crew of 42 workers, maintaining an integrated pest management program, pesticide application and plant growth regulator application.



Graduate students Kris Leader and Scott Lively

Scott Lively

Graduated with a minor in Horticulture in 2000. He has worked with Dupont's Nursery as a greenhouse manager for about a year and a half. His responsibilities include producing flowering pot plants and bedding

plants, propagation, scheduling production of these crops, managing a crew of 42 workers, maintaining an integrated pest management program, pesticide application and plant growth regulator application.



Former and current Hort Club vice-presidents Jessica LaBorde and Candace Aiken. The vice-president is designated as the head grower for club plant sales.



Alumni Billy Spillers, Allen Owings and Ed Bush attend the Hort Club's annual Fall Plant Sale.



Members of the General Horticulture course gather for a class portrait around their gardens at the Hill Farm during Spring 2001 semester.



Graduate student Maria "Pili" Paz assists customers during the Hort Club's Fall Plant Sale.

In Memoriam: Earl Puls

Dr. Earl Puls, retired project leader and Extension horticulturist, died September 22, 2001, at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Earl was 61 and had served from 1976 until his retirement in 1999. A native of Hammond, he was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran. He received a bachelor of science degree from Southeastern Louisiana University, a master of science degree in horticulture from LSU and a doctorate in horticulture from the University of Missouri.



Earl Puls

Earl was longtime secretary-treasurer for the Louisiana Pecan Growers Association and executive secretary of the Federated Pecan Growers Association of North America. He was a member of Louisiana Pecan Growers Hall of Fame. Earl is survived by his wife, Jo Ann McEachern Puls; two sons, Jonathan Earl Puls of Baton Rouge and Brian Mac Puls of Houston, and two sisters, Grace Santa Cruz of Bay St. Louis, Miss., and Patty Guidry of Covington. He was preceded in death by his parents, Elmer E. Puls Sr. and Grace Mitchell Puls.

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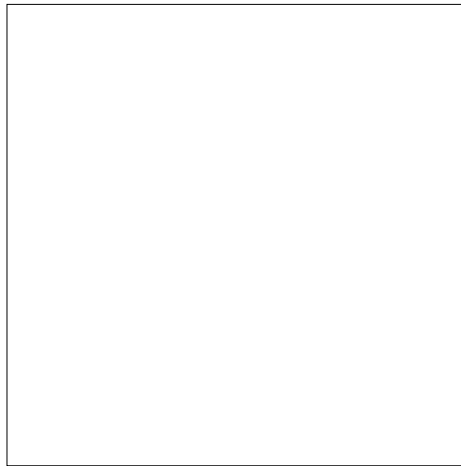
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Gardening in the Humid South - New Book from O'Rourke and Standifer

Our two self-proclaimed “crotchety old horticulture professors,” Ed O'Rourke and Leon Standifer, share an immense love of gardening, a vast knowledge of all things horticultural and a hearty sense of humor. In *Garden-*



ing in the Humid South, they combine these traits to provide a practical and entertaining guide to gardening in the region they know best, the humid subtropics of the lower South.

In chapters with titles like “Bulbs and Things That Act Like Bulbs” and “Weeds: Telling Good Guys from Bad Guys,” they offer friendly how-to advice on a broad array of issues, including choosing and preparing a cultivation site, raising fruit, growing in containers, using fertilizer and preparing for cold weather.

In *Gardening in the Humid South*, two of our emeritus faculty share their contagious enthusiasm for their avocation and show that despite the hard work, gardening is, above all, fun.