



LOUISIANA Nursery & Landscape NEWS



Gerald Foret Wholesale Nursery, New Iberia
The Little Nursery with the Big Trees

LNLA Quarterly Newsletter
Volume 89 | 4th Quarter 2024



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HAPPY RETIREMENT
FROM LNLA



Pictured are Buck and his wife Bonnie

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Officers and Board Members.....	3
President's Message.....	5
The Little Nursery with the Big Trees	7
Obituaries.....	8-11
LFBF Welcomes Matthew Waguespack.....	12
My Remembrance of the Louisiana Association of Nurseryman in 1956.....	13
Native Landscape Grasses - Winter in Motion	15
Doug Young Student Scholarships.....	17
Why Should I Test My Soil Before Fertilizing It?	19
Educational Events Recap: Notes from North Louisiana.....	21
Operating A Saver Fleet Doesn't Have To Cost More Money	23
Phytophthora Disease Management In Landscapes And Nurseries.....	25-27
Landscape Design Sketchbook.....	29
Using Technology to Create Pond Health Profiles.....	30
Soil Amendments For Centipedegrass Sod Establishment.....	32-35
LNLA Gala 70th Celebration	36-37
Board Meeting Minutes	41



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A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello LNLA Members,

December is a time to reflect and look ahead to the new year with renewed energy. As we approach the end of another year, we should all take a moment to reflect on the accomplishments, challenges, and growth we have experienced as an association and as an industry in Louisiana. Our members have shown incredible resilience and dedication to all issues related to our green industry, and I am proud of what we have been able to achieve together.

Looking ahead to 2025, we have exciting plans in store, including educational programs, advocacy efforts, and opportunities for you to connect with fellow professionals across Louisiana. I encourage you to stay engaged with the association, as your involvement helps shape the future of our industry. Reminder that the 2025 Gulf States Horticultural Expo (GSHE) is January 23-24 with educational sessions beginning on January 22.

I also want to extend my gratitude to our dedicated board members, volunteers, and all who have supported our efforts this year. Your hard work and enthusiasm have been instrumental in everything we do, and I am truly grateful to each of you.

As we look ahead, there are plenty of opportunities for us to continue growing, improving, and making an impact. I'm excited to see what we can achieve together in the coming year. As we celebrate the holiday season, I hope you find time to rest, recharge, and reflect on the impact you've made in your communities and in the green industry.

Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful and prosperous holiday season. Here's to another year of growth, opportunity, and success!

Thank you,
Michael Roe

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Roe".



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After graduating from the University of Southwest Louisiana in 1975 with a degree in Horticulture, Gerald L. Foret, Jr. started his own company, Gerald Foret Landscaping. Like most self-built companies, Gerald started with a pickup truck, shovel, and a wheelbarrow, and with much determination he fought through the oil recession of the 80 s. Always wanting to be a grower, he decided to start a small 20 acre field operation, and the landscaping company helped finance the growing operation for a number of years until the nursery could stand on its own. Years passed and Gerald phased out of the field operation and moved to container production.

Fast forward 50 years and Gerald Foret Wholesale Nursery, Inc. has long outgrown that singular wheelbarrow and shovel. The nursery now boasts nearly 60 acres and requires the combined effort of 5 full-time employees for its day-to-day operations. Add in some well-deserved awards, including the Nurseryman of the Year in 1997 and the James A. Foret Award in 2021, Gerald continues to improve the industry with his expertise.

It has not always been an easy path. Mother Nature has cast her evil spell numerous occasions throughout the years with Hurricanes, Tropical Storms, and freezing temperatures causing Gerald to take a step back, adapt and overcome, establishing his strength and resiliency in the nursery industry.

With over 150 years of combined experience, the main ingredient for the success of Gerald Foret Wholesale Nursery, Inc. is the knowledgeable and hardworking team members.

Owner and founder, Gerald Foret, began his business with a red tin shed, seven acres and a John Deere tractor in 1979. Armed with a sharp shovel, leather gloves, and faith in the nursery business inspired by both his uncle, Dr. James A. Foret, and his cousin Jim Foret, Gerald brought forth his vision of the best trees that he could cultivate and deliver. He has stayed active in professional organizations, trade shows, and leadership positions in his state association.

Shipping manager, Gerard Vincent, has been a dedicated team member since 1980. His commitment has been invaluable in the impeccable service of orders. Gerard tags and carefully grades the trees for shipping. By taking pride in 'five star' products, all shipments are quality controlled.

Albert Durio, Sr., is the nursery production manager and has been an integral part of Gerald's team since 2007. Albert continues his family tradition of nursery business as a horticulturist and graduated from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. One of the ways that Albert stays abreast of changes in horticulture is by remaining active in horticulture associations.

Continuing the Durio family tradition, Albert 'AJ' Durio, Jr., joined the nursery team in 2024. AJ is a Certified Nursery and Landscape Professional with over 15 years of experience in the nursery and landscape industry.

Kathy Langlinais is the office manager and brings to the team business management and computer experience. She is dedicated to assisting each staff member and delivering customer satisfaction with each order.

Visit our website www.geraldforetnursery.com or give us a call to see what we have to offer in the world of ornamental trees.



In Memorandum



Don Odom Shadow

Don Odom Shadow, 84, a distinguished fourth-generation nurseryman, horticulturist, and conservationist from Winchester, Tennessee, passed away on Sunday, November 11, 2024. Born on October 19, 1940, to the late Hoskins A. and Minnie Lee (Odom) Shadow, Don was renowned for his exceptional contributions to horticulture and his unwavering commitment to wildlife conservation.

A graduate of the University of Tennessee with a degree in horticulture, Don later served on the Board of Trustees for the university. He was at the forefront of advancing agricultural and horticultural research and education. As the owner of Shadow Nursery in Winchester, he transformed the family business by introducing rare and unique plants to the U.S. market. His domestic and international travels led to the discovery and cultivation of plants ideally suited for diverse American landscapes. Celebrated for his generosity, Don freely shared his knowledge, plants, and insights with others.

Beyond his horticultural pursuits, Don was dedicated to animal and wildlife conservation, raising and caring for rare and often endangered species. His farm was home to over 600 animals across more than 60 species, including Bactrian camels, zebras, water buffalo, red pandas, rare Nubian wild donkeys, bearded pigs from Borneo, and multiple species of cranes, to name a few. He collaborated with national zoos and breeders, sharing his expertise to preserve these rare species.

Don held influential leadership roles in the horticulture community, serving on the U.S. National Arboretum Advisory Council and the boards of the American Horticultural Society, Southern Nursery Association, Tennessee Nursery and Landscape Association, and the International Plant Propagators' Society. His numerous accolades include the Garden Club of America's Medal of Honor, the American Horticultural Society's Commercial Award, and the Southern Nursery Association's Slater Wight Memorial Award. The Southern Nursery Association also established the Don Shadow Award of Excellence to honor individuals committed to expanding knowledge and use of innovative plants. Through his dedication to plant exploration, breeding, and education, Don left an indelible mark on the horticultural community, inspiring future generations of plant enthusiasts and professionals.

In addition to his professional achievements, Don was a devoted family man. He and Mary Eleanor were married for 56 wonderful years. He cherished time with his Mary, Jennifer, and three grandsons, Elijah, Eathan, and Evan. He loved them so much and enjoyed teaching them farm / life skills such as driving a tractor, shooting, skinning rabbits, and caring for plants and animals. Don would load "his boys" up in the truck and set out on adventures, never knowing where they might end up.

A true Tennessee treasure, Don will be remembered for his energy, generosity, and dedication. His contributions to horticulture, animal conservation, and education have left an indelible mark, inspiring all who knew him.

Don was preceded in death by his parents; beloved wife, Mary Eleanor (Hollomon) Shadow; and brother, Joe Shadow. He is survived by his brother, Fred (Bonnie) Shadow; sister-in-law, Harriet Baggett; daughter, Jennifer Shadow; grandsons Elijah Shadow, Eathan Keller, and Evan Keller, all of Belvidere, Tennessee; and nieces and nephews, Nancy Hale, Melanie Baker, Susan Shadow Ransone, Sharon Shadow, Holly Berke (Allie & Taylor), Jada Baggett (Everly & Truitt), Elizabeth Baker, Hunter Taylor, Terry Baggett, Michael Shadow, and Worth Baker. His spirit and legacy will continue to thrive in the plants, animals, and many lives he touched.



George D Kostilnik

In loving memory of George D. Kostilnik, born September 22, 1953, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who passed away suddenly on May 29, 2024, in St. Petersburg, Florida. George was a remarkable individual known for his generosity and his ability to connect with others through meaningful conversations.

He was a devoted Catholic who attended church every Sunday, a proud alumnus of the University of Pittsburgh ('76), and a loving family man who cherished his beautiful wife, Tami, his sons, George Jr., Chris, Paul, Brian, and Parker (Nina), his late daughter Jennifer (Benjamin), grandchildren Aiden, Izabella, Gabriel, Devon, Briella, Georgia and Parker Jr. and his siblings Robert (Karolyn), Mary Ann (David), Debbie, and Susan (Robert).

George also loved his business, AMPLEX, and its employees, considering them all part of his family. His legacy of kindness, wisdom, and boundless enthusiasm for life will continue to inspire all who knew him. In his honor, raise a glass of scotch and remember the joy and warmth he brought into our lives.

In Memorandum

Gwynn Lynnette Legg Naylor

Gwynn Lynnette Legg Naylor, beloved wife, mother and grandmother, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on Wednesday, November 21, 2024, at the age of 71. She will be deeply missed by all of her family and friends.

Gwynn cherished spending time with her children and grandchildren, affectionately known to all as "GiGi." Thoughtful and patient, she always sought out the best in everyone and in any situation. She was very artistic and creative, expressing this through her love of painting and crafting with her friends and grandkids.

Born on March 31, 1953, Gwynn grew up in Bexley, OH, attended Bexley High School, and later Miami University in Oxford, OH. She met the love of her life, Johnny Naylor, at Rocky Mountain National Park in 1974. They were married on June 21, 1975, and together raised their two loving daughters in Baton Rouge, LA. Gwynn devoted over 20 years working on the staff at The Chapel on the Campus, starting as Co-director in Children's Ministry.

Gwynn is survived by her husband of 49 years, Johnny Naylor; daughters, Erin North (Harold) and Megan Nealy (Chris); grandchildren, Izzy and Genevieve Nealy, and Kennedy and Harrison North; mother, Lynnette Legg; brothers, Bruce Legg (Karen) and Wes Legg (Gay); and a host of other loving family members and friends. Gwynn is preceded in death by her father, James Bruce Legg.



J. Herbert St. Romain, Jr.

Just two weeks ago J. Herbert St. Romain celebrated his 103rd birthday, sadly he passed away peacefully in his home in Lecompte this past Friday, November 15, 2024. He was blessed to have lived such a full life.

A native of Alexandria, Herbert was the youngest of seven children. He joined the Louisiana National Guard in 1939 where he drove trucks supporting the famous Louisiana Maneuvers.

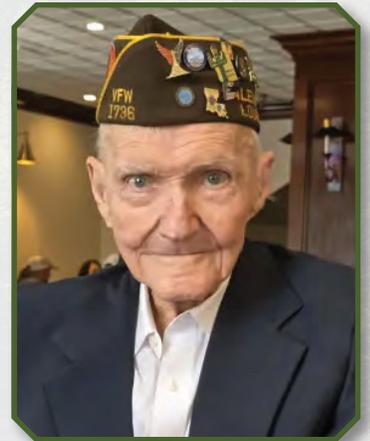
Shortly after marrying Helena Vidrine in New Orleans, his National Guard unit was activated when America entered WW II. He was transferred to a Hospital Group which deployed to England where they received many wounded coming off the beaches of Normandy.

This Medical Group moved to Liege, Belgium where they treated wounded coming from the Battle of the Bulge. With his knowledge of French he was able to connect Concentration Camp survivors with civilian medical units in the City. Years later he was presented with the French Legion of Honor Medal for his service in Europe.

After the War he joined the Alexandria Fire Department where he was nicknamed "Blue John". After serving 30 years he retired as Second Assistant Chief. He continued to serve his community in a variety of roles and was a dedicated member of the Catholic Church. He excelled at combining unlikely resources and have them work, not always pretty, but they worked. An avid gardener, he loved non-traditional plants and methods.

He is preceded in death by his wife, of 68 years, Helena Catherine Vidrine St. Romain; their daughter, Helen Ann St. Romain; his parents, Herbert Joseph and Blanche Saucier St. Romain, Sr. and his six siblings.

Those left to cherish his memory include his children, Paul Thomas St. Romain (Melba), Debbie St. Romain Head (Stephen), and Edmond Joseph St. Romain (Philip Freemer); his grandchildren, Arlette St. Romain (Jeff Goliber) and Michael Head; his bonus daughter and loving caretaker, Elizabeth Sherman; along with numerous nieces and nephews.





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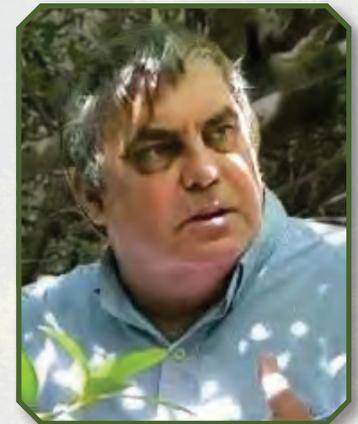


Susie Morse Everage, 70, passed away on October 26, 2024 at 3:18 am. She was born on March 16, 1954, in Houston, Texas. She and her family lived in Pasadena, Texas until her marriage to Robert Everage on September 25, 1975. She spent her life near Lake Charles, LA where she spent her time having coffee with friends and family and spoiling her grandchildren.

Susie Morse Everage started her career in medical records at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital in 1977. Susie was known for her compassion and giving nature to all those she encountered. She enjoyed shopping and buying presents for her children and grandchildren and was especially passionate about her family and those she loved. Susie's love for online shopping was no secret and her front porch was frequently decorated with cardboard boxes. She enjoyed dancing with her husband and visiting Isle of Capri with her family and friends. Her favorite vacations were spent on a cruise ship with her friends, sipping margaritas.

She is survived by her two sons, Chad Everage and Robert W. Everage JR; her beloved grandchildren: Daxton and wife Gabby, Trinady, Matt, Bryce, Kirstin, Randall, Mark, Robbie; 2 great-grandchildren; her brothers, Skip Morse and wife Janice, and Ernest C. Morse Jr and wife Sue; and father-in-law, Ernest Everage and wife Judy.

William Thomas "Tom" Johnson



William T. "Tom" Johnson, a distinguished horticulturist known for his remarkable contributions to historic gardens, passed away on November 19, 2024, near his home in Hamilton, Georgia. He was 63 years old. Tom was renowned for his expertise in cultivating camellias and azaleas, as well as his leadership in various prestigious roles throughout his illustrious career.

Tom was born on January 15, 1961, in Northampton County, Virginia, to Jimmie Neil Johnson and Faye Carolyn Whaley. He graduated from Perry High School in 1979, where he was active in the FFA and also became an Eagle Scout. During his time in high school, he helped to plant many plants and flowers in downtown Perry, sparking his lifelong love of horticulture. His work on the landscape of Perry earned the city a prestigious national award. He attended Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College and majored in horticulture.

In his early career, Tom worked for President Jimmy Carter at the Presidential Library in Atlanta, Georgia, where he helped landscape the grounds. During this time, he apprenticed under the world-renowned Japanese architect Kinsako Nakane, and later his son, Shiro Nakane. This experience was one of only a handful of such opportunities available to Americans. It was at the Presidential Library that he met the love of his life, Mary Ann, who was the center's florist. Tom and Mary Ann were married in 1992.

Tom worked as the National Horticulturist for the American Camellia Society at Masee Lane in Fort Valley, GA. During this time, he oversaw the preservation and development of the garden's camellia collection. One of his significant achievements at Masee Lane was developing a children's garden and summer camp programs for youth in the community. He also traveled across the United States, sharing his knowledge of camellias and horticulture.

In 2007, Tom became the Executive Director of Magnolia Plantation and Gardens in Charleston, SC. During his 14 years there, he revitalized the gardens alongside Mary Ann. Their work included restoring the romantic gardens, enhancing historical interpretations, and ensuring financial sustainability. Tom's heart was in introducing children to gardens and passing on his love of horticulture to the next generation. He was instrumental in raising money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation and organized numerous family-friendly activities, including Easter egg hunts, Christmas events, food drives, and a Chinese Lantern Festival.

After retiring from Magnolia Plantation, Tom and Mary Ann moved to their vacation home by Lake Harding in Georgia. There, Tom continued his passion for horticulture, growing native plants in a borrowed greenhouse and joining the Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail. Tom Johnson was a loving husband, father, stepfather, and a dedicated friend to people all over the world. His mother, father, and brother preceded him in death. He is survived by his beloved wife of 34 years, Mary Ann, who was his steadfast partner in life and work, and his children: Jimmy (Amanda) West, Joey (Lauren) West, Amber (Josh Dixon) Kirby-Johnson, and Logan (Sydney) Johnson. The Johnson's journey together was one of shared passion, dedication, and unwavering love.

LFBF WELCOMES MATTHEW WAGUESPACK



Upon the retirement of Brian Breaux, a longtime staff member and Commodity Director, the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation completed its hiring process to fill the vacancy in the Commodity and Public Policy Department. The organization is pleased to announce that Matthew Waguespack has joined the team as a Commodity and Public Policy Coordinator, effective Monday, August 26, 2024.

Matthew Waguespack joined the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation following a previous role with Vanishing Paradise, a sportsman-centered organization focused on advocating and educating others about the various coastal issues affecting Louisiana. Before that, Matthew held several positions in the sugarcane industry, including managing a sugar plantation on the island of St. Croix. His experience also includes working at the USDA Sugar Research Station, as well as various other roles in the crop consulting sector. Matthew earned his bachelor's degree from Nicholls State

University. He resides in Baton Rouge with his wife, Morgan, and their son, Michael.

"I was thrilled when asked to join the Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation back in August. Our dedicated staff and leadership continue to work tirelessly for our members as the Voice of Louisiana Agriculture. I look forward to working with the Nurserymen of Louisiana by lending my knowledge, expertise, and experience to the LFBF Nurserymen Advisory Committee. Together, we will address the unique challenges they face and ensure their voices are heard."

Matthew's portfolio with Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation includes: Nurserymen, Horticultural, Market Produce, Sugar, Sweet Potatoes, Labor issues, Pecans, Shrimp, Oysters, Coastal Activities and Natural Resources.

Contact information:
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MY REMEMBRANCE OF THE LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF NURSERYMAN IN 1956

By: Walter Imahara



I was a Horticulture student at SLI, in Lafayette under Dr. James A. Foret and Professor Ira Nelson. I needed a scholarship and Dr. Foret and Prof. Nelson got me a Louisiana Garden Society scholarship. My job in the greenhouse was working with a relatively new experiment using pine bark for growing orchids. Dr. Foret also got me weekend work at clients homes in Lafayette to earn money. I remember both Dr. Foret and Prof. Nelson, asking me to come to the newly formed Louisiana Association of Nurserymen organization meetings in 1956. They were held at the Greenhouses where they had student classrooms to attend the meetings.

As a student, I got to meet all the great nurserymen in the state. For example, there was Ed Akin who had a garden center in Shreveport and grower, Earl Vallot from Lafayette. I remember many nurserymen making presentations. For example, Earl Vallot spoke about container plants in 1 gallon cans grown in discarded, 1 gallon food cans from school kitchens. He showed how to clean, punch holes and build a slide to dip the can in a black material. Many spoke about the use of pine bark in planting material but a lot of research had to be done. There was a future in annuals and perennials to be grown in greenhouses and sold in garden centers.

I returned in 1963 from the Army and Dr. Foret contacted me and asked if I had a job when I returned. I said no and he got me a job landscaping apartments in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Within 5 years (1968) the Imahara family opened the Imahara's Garden Center and Landscaping business. I remember the first nurseryman to visit was Ed Akin who came with a lot of encouragement.

Dr. Foret said I must join LAN, and I did in about 1968. Also, Dr. Foret said I should share my story with other nurserymen across America.

Here's a story about Dr. James A. Foret! At his retirement party during the Louisiana / Mississippi trade show in 1986, many students he had helped during his career as professor and Dean of Agriculture at SLI-USL were in attendance. There were so many presents and letters written by those he had mentored during their careers. I was shocked to learn how many students he has helped.

So, I joined the National Landscape Association and later became their President. After that I was invited to join the Board of Southern Nurserymen Association in 1996. It was a great honor and during the years on the board, our family met some of the greatest of nurserymen in the country. In 2000, I became SNA President, and invited a few Louisiana nurserymen to the party afterwards. The friends who helped me at the beginning from 1968 on, were there at SNA. Some of those included: Marshall Mougier, Julian Dondid, Fred Hoogland, Frank Akin, Dennis McCloskey and Severn Doughty.

After 2000, I started my retirement from the Associations, and our landscape and garden center business. After retirement, I moved to St. Francisville to build the Imahara Gardens. Severn Doughty came to give me guidance as I wanted to build a Japanese American garden. Mike Richard said there is no such garden in America. I told him that I would like the plant materials to be from the South and the plants will be trimmed many times a year and will be in topiary. I asked Mike for plants that had crooked trunks, and he said he had many.

I was hoping to be at the 70th birthday party for Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association but will be unable to make it due to health issues. The same is true for Mike Richard as he is healing from some injuries. I wish the best for the 70th birthday party for LNLA. What a great organization and we all have friends for life.



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NATIVE LANDSCAPE GRASSES - WINTER IN MOTION -

Tammany Baumgarten

I can't say that Louisiana gardeners have exactly embraced the winter garden. Whereas legendary plantsmen like Piet Oudalf openly celebrate the beauty, colors and structure of seasonal death and decay, it seems we still struggle with that notion here in the gulf south where a large portion of our state can rely on tropical plants for an evergreen lushness and where all of us can lean on Asian evergreens for their permanent presence no matter the season.



Perhaps an exception to our bias for green gardens, would be the appreciation of ornamental grasses and all that they bring to a late season landscape. During a season that seems humdrum compared to other times of year, grasses finally get their chance to shine adding a whole new color palette to the landscape. Late season grass foliage can present in an array of colors from reds, rusts, blondes, tawny tans and taupes. Flowers and seedheads can appear in fine colored clouds like the Muhly, Pink and Elliott's love grasses, dangle in the wind like the shade-tolerant inland sea oats, be punctuated by bright orange stamens like eastern gamagrass or like the switchgrasses, spray out in a finely branched panicle like a fourth of July sparkler.

The fluidity and motion of grasses in the garden hearkens us back to endless meadows and fields of grain, creating a naturalistic, soothing vibe that contrasts well and offsets more rigid plant forms, but underlying this gracefulness is the grit of true survivors. Native grasses are superior at erosion control and drought tolerance because of their robust and deep root systems, incredibly resilient in our intense heat and humidity, and of course, perfectly cold hardy. All of this to please the human palate, while grass seedheads and density provide generously for wildlife, and a number of them serve as larval hosts for butterfly and moth species.

The industry has long embraced pink muhly grass and its dramatic white cousin, cultivar 'White Cloud'. A smaller variety within this genus, Muhlenbergia reverchonii, rose muhly or seep muhly, has found some recent attention with cultivars in the trade as 'Undaunted' or 'Ruby', but the muhly grasses are but a small sample of the native grass possibilities for ornamental landscaping.

One of my new favorites for its upright habit and great floral structure is switchgrass. Never floppy, switchgrass makes a great native substitute for large ornamental grasses like Miscanthus. While the straight species can grow up to 7' tall, many cultivars of Panicum virgatum have been in the trade for decades and more keep coming. I like 'Heavy Metal' at 4-5 feet tall with metallic blue foliage fading to

bright blonde in winter. 'Dallas Blues' is another blue tinged cultivar. 'Cape Breeze' is one known for salt tolerance which might serve well in coastal areas. Looking for a smaller grass for more urban landscapes, I am now trying 'Rotstrahlbush', a cultivar with burgundy tipped leaves, turning deep red then to tan and growing 3-4 feet tall.

Little bluestem, Schizachyrium scoparium, is another species I am working with more. This grass can be 4ish feet tall and has a strict upright habit early in the season, fountaining over later in the year. Stems are conspicuously striated with shades of red and blue turning and retaining a warm copper color through winter. Shorter cultivars I am working with include 'Blue Heaven' with a slate blue color, 'Carousel' a multicolor between 2-3 feet tall, and 'Little Red Fox' turning red in mid-summer and the shortest at 24-30".

For tough as nails, diverse and uniquely beautiful landscapes that have ecological value and function, try growing some of the many native grasses in your nurseries and landscapes.



Elliott's lovegrass creates a creamy low cloud of flowers



'Heavy Metal' Switchgrass is about 5' tall in bloom



Seep muhly is smaller than popular pink muhly



Switchgrass panicles in bloom

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DOUG YOUNG STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

The LSUA Foundation is honored to announce a \$35,000 contribution from the family and friends of Doug Young, raised through the annual Doug Young Memorial Golf Tournament. These funds will directly support the Doug Young Memorial Scholarship, an endowed scholarship established in 2015 through a generous \$25,000 donation from Marcia Young, honoring her late husband, Doug Young, and his commitment to education and community service.

The Doug Young Memorial Scholarship, dedicated to students pursuing a degree in Science at LSUA, reflects Young's legacy as a devoted family man, respected businessman, and community leader. Born in Lecompte, Louisiana, in 1942, Young began his college journey at LSUA before transferring to LSU Baton Rouge, where he earned a degree in Economics. Over his 30-year career as a social worker and probation officer for the state of Louisiana, Young made a profound impact on his community. In 1976, he co-founded Doug Young Nursery with Marcia, fulfilling a lifelong dream and establishing a thriving local business.

The Doug Young Memorial Scholarship provides financial assistance to students in the science field, with priority given to those from the Forest Hill area. Marcia Young and her family have continued Doug's legacy by hosting the annual golf tournament since 2010, which has become a cherished



event celebrating his life and dedication to supporting future generations. This year's contribution reinforces the ongoing impact of the scholarship, enabling LSUA students to achieve their academic goals while honoring Doug's memory.

The LSUA Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to Marcia Young, her family, and the community members who support this scholarship. Their generosity will create lasting educational opportunities and empower students to succeed.

For more information about the Doug Young Memorial Scholarship, please contact the LSUA Office of Financial Aid.

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WHY SHOULD I TEST MY SOIL BEFORE FERTILIZING IT?

Dr. Leo Vieira, Assistant Professor & Soil Fertility Specialist, LSU AgCenter

As soon as the weather starts warming up again, we will be thinking about applying some kind of fertilizer to our plants. But why should we test our soil beforehand? Think of a soil test as a routine medical exam for your field. The soil test can prevent a series of problems, such as a decline in plant growth, worsening aesthetics and even plant death.



But first of all, what is soil test? A soil test involves a series of analyses to measure soil acidity (pH) and nutrient availability. At the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center (LSU AgCenter) Soil Testing Lab, the basic test provides readings for pH and plant availability concentrations of phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium, sulfur, copper, and zinc. Nitrogen recommendations are based on plant type and management. While sodium is not a nutrient for plants, high levels can challenge plant growth.

The most important value in a soil test report is pH. A pH below 7.0 indicates acidity, while a pH above 7.0 indicates alkalinity. Most plants grow best in slightly acidic soils with a pH between 5.5 and 6.5. However, it is always important to consider the plant of interest before deciding if the pH should be adjusted or not. Some plants may require pH ranges outside the 5.5-6.5 to properly grow. Soil pH is crucial because it will dictate the plant availability of elements in the soil (Figure 1). Among those elements are the nutrients, elements that the plants cannot properly function without it, and toxic elements that can impair plant growth, such as aluminum.

Soils with a pH below the recommended range will strongly hold plant macronutrients, reducing its availability. Macronutrients are nutrients that are needed in large quantities by plants: nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium and sulfur. Conversely, low pH increases the availability of micronutrients, which can lead to toxicity. Micronutrients are nutrients that are needed in lower amounts by plants: zinc, boron, copper, manganese, iron, molybdenum, nickel and chloride. Since they are needed in small amounts by plants, there is a fine line between sufficiency and toxicity.

On the other hand, soils with a pH above the recommended for the plant of interest will hold plant micronutrients and reduce its availability. This can potentially cause micronutrient deficiency. However, a high pH will not necessarily result in higher availability of macronutrients.

Some macronutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen, will also have their availability reduced on high pH soils. Long story short, an ideal pH for the plant of interest will result in a maximized macro and micronutrient availability. This will directly impact in the growth, development and persistence of the desired plants. Additionally, it will reduce the amount of nutrients that need to be applied resulting in lower expenses for fertilizers.

After adjusting soil pH, the next step is to address specific nutrient levels. Soil test reports classify nutrient levels as very low, low, medium, high, or very high. High levels typically mean no additional fertilizer is needed, while low levels indicate a need for supplementation.

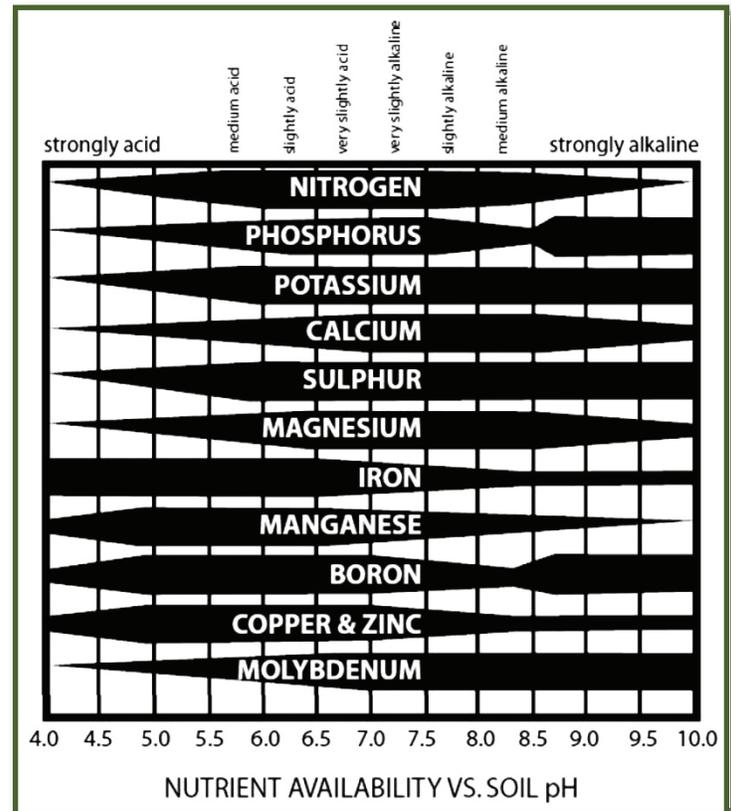


Figure 1. Nutrient availability as affected by soil pH.

In summary, the soil test is the best way to access possible nutrient deficiencies and excessive acidity or alkalinity. In addition, resources can be spent elsewhere in case no fertilizer is needed. The LSU AgCenter Soil Testing Lab, located at 125 M.B. Sturgis Hall on the main campus in Baton Rouge, provides soil analyses and interpretation for a small fee. Take advantage of soil testing to ensure your plants thrive.



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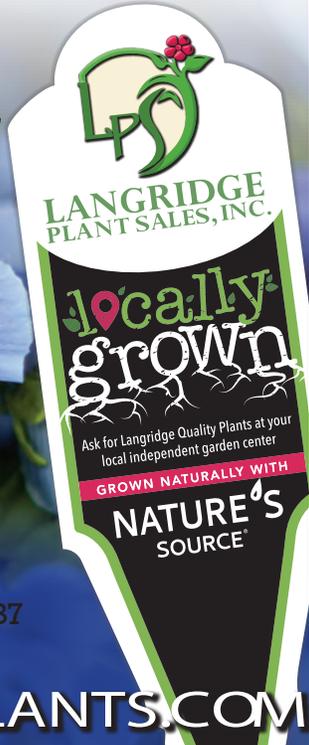
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EDUCATIONAL EVENTS RECAP: NOTES FROM NORTH LOUISIANA

By Damon E. Abdi, PhD, Assistant Professor & Extension Specialist, LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station

Efforts to ensure that educational resources reach the entire state is a primary focus of the LNLA. Throughout the Fall of 2024, several successful events were focused on supporting our green industry members in north Louisiana. The third year of the "Landscape Professional Education" series saw a return to north Louisiana (Shreveport/Bossier City), reprising the success of the event held in Ruston during the Fall of 2022. Similarly, working to certify our northern green industry professionals was a major focus this fall - highlighted by hosting a CNLP training in Shreveport.



The Landscape Professional Education series serves to support existing members of our industry by providing day-long education events throughout the state. Hosted at the LSU AgCenter Red River Research Station in Bossier City on October 10th, attendees had the opportunity to learn about a variety of topics, tools, and tips to help support their businesses. Our speakers included LSU AgCenter faculty (such as me, Dr. Eric DeBoer, and RRRS Director and LSU AgCenter NW Regional Director Dr. Ron Strahan), providing insights towards developing sustainable landscapes, taking care of turf, and managing weeds in landscape beds. Our attendees were also treated to talks from industry members, including an illuminating discussion on Christmas lighting via

Ewing Irrigation, equipment options via Louisiana CAT, and pesticide application considerations via PBI Gordon. Insights from the LDAF and Louisiana 811 helped our audience understand rules, regulations, and safety procedures to support our businesses. Michael Roe, LNLA President, provided perspectives to consider when propagating and maintaining plants - offering a unique outlook on managing a nursery production operation. A big thank you to Dr. Strahan for allowing us to host this event, and to Cari Jane Murray for all her support in continuing the success with our sixth installment of this program.

A mere two weeks later, we returned north to review the Certified Nursery Landscape Professional manual with current and prospective green industry professionals. The opportunity to reconnect with returnees from the previous Education Day and to meet new industry individuals was a fantastic follow-up to answer questions and ensure understanding of the material prior to taking horticultural exams and certification tests. A big thank you to Ewing Irrigation for allowing us access to their facilities to host the two-day manual review and exam, and to Annie Coco for helping with the exam.

As we look forward to the new year, we are excited to maintain the momentum we have developed through these events in our quest to answer questions and support all of our green industry stakeholders and supporters throughout the state. On behalf of the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Looking forward to 2025!

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OPERATING A SAVER FLEET DOESN'T HAVE TO COST MORE MONEY

In today's competitive business landscape, efficient fleet management is essential for companies that have fleet vehicles. Outsourcing fleet management, utilizing dash cams, and optimizing insurance savings can significantly enhance operational efficiency and reduce costs. This article explores the benefits of these strategies and how they can contribute to a more streamlined and cost-effective fleet operation.

1. Outsourced Fleet Management

Enhanced Focus on Core Business

Outsourcing fleet management allows companies to concentrate on their business and not vehicle management. By delegating the complexities of managing a fleet to specialized providers, businesses can allocate more resources and attention to their primary operations, leading to improved productivity and profitability.

Access to Expertise and Technology

Outsourced fleet management companies bring a wealth of expertise and cutting-edge technology. These providers are equipped with the latest tools for tracking, maintenance scheduling, and compliance management. Their knowledge of industry best practices can help optimize fleet performance and minimize downtime.

Cost Efficiency

By outsourcing, companies can reduce overhead costs associated with managing a fleet in-house. This includes savings on staffing, training, and technology investments. Additionally, fleet management service providers often have established relationships with suppliers, which can lead to better pricing on vehicles, parts, and services.

2. Dash Cams

Improved Safety and Accountability

Dash cams are invaluable tools for enhancing safety on the road. They provide real-time video footage that can be used to assess incidents, reducing liability and fostering accountability among drivers. This can lead to safer driving behaviors and a decrease in accidents.

Streamlined Claims Process

In the event of an accident, dash cam footage can simplify the claims process by providing clear evidence of what transpired. This can help expedite insurance claims and reduce disputes, ultimately leading to faster resolutions and lower costs for the company.

Fewer Claims and Losses

Dash Cams give you the ability to monitor risky driver behavior such as: texting while driving, distracted driving, following too close, speeding and other risky behavior. With better driver behavior and enhanced safety measures, companies can expect a decrease in the frequency and severity of claims. This not only lowers insurance costs but also contributes to a more stable financial outlook for the business.

Driver Training and Performance Monitoring

Dash cams can also serve as an effective training tool. By reviewing footage, fleet managers can identify areas for improvement in driver behavior and provide targeted training to enhance skills. This not only improves safety but can also contribute to lower insurance premiums over time.

3. Insurance Savings

Lower Premiums

Implementing effective fleet management practices, including the use of dash cams, can lead to reduced insurance premiums. Insurers often offer discounts to companies that demonstrate a commitment to safety and risk management. By showcasing a proactive approach to reducing accidents and claims, businesses can negotiate better rates.

Fewer Claims and Losses

Dash Cams give you the ability to monitor risky driver behavior such as: texting while driving, distracted driving, following too close, speeding and other risky behavior. With better driver behavior and enhanced safety measures, companies can expect a decrease in the frequency and severity of claims. This not only lowers insurance costs but also contributes to a more stable financial outlook for the business.

Comprehensive Coverage Options

Outsourcing fleet management often includes the ability to access comprehensive insurance solutions tailored to the specific needs of the fleet. This means businesses can find coverage that is both effective and cost-efficient, ensuring that they are protected without overpaying.

Conclusion

Incorporating outsourced fleet management, dash cams, and strategic insurance practices can transform the way a company operates its fleet. These strategies not only improve safety and accountability but also lead to significant cost savings. By leveraging the expertise of specialized providers and the technology available today, businesses can enhance operational efficiency, reduce risks, and ultimately drive greater success in their transportation endeavors. Adopting these practices is not just a trend; it's a smart investment in the future of fleet management.

Mike Edwards

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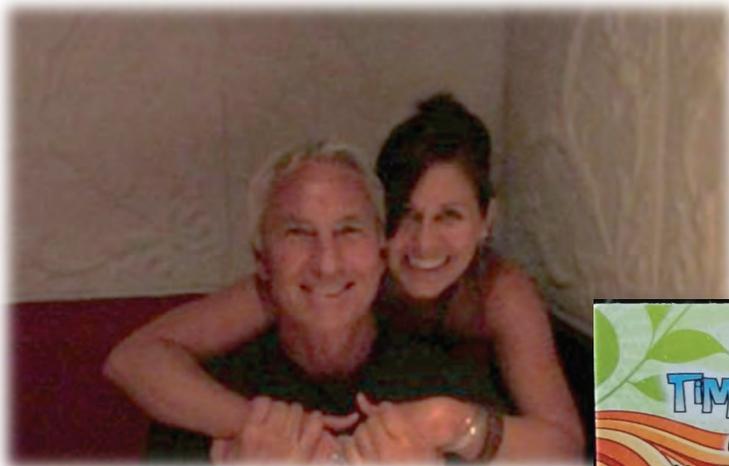




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PHYTOPHTHORA DISEASE MANAGEMENT IN LANDSCAPES AND NURSERIES

*Dr. Raj Singh, Professor & Horticulture Pathology Extension Specialist,
Director of Plant Diagnostic Center, Department of Plant Pathology, LSU AgCenter, Baton Rouge.*

Root and crown rot caused by *Phytophthora* species is the number one ornamental plant disease in landscapes and nursery operations. In addition to root and crown rot, *Phytophthora* is also known to cause aerial blight, fruit rot, stem canker and stem rot. *Phytophthora* is a soil-borne fungus-like microorganism commonly known as water mold. There are several species of *Phytophthora* prevalent in landscapes and most of them have a wide host range.



swim in irrigation water. The pathogen can also spread via movement of contaminated soils. In landscapes, the disease is favored by poor landscape practices that create conditions conducive for disease development such as deep planting, over-crowding of plants, excessive mulching, over-fertilization, over-irrigation, planting in clay rich soils, soil compaction and poor drainage.



*Figure 2. A row of boxwoods shows symptoms of tan colored foliage resulting from root and crown rot caused by *Phytophthora* species.*

Aboveground symptoms of this disease include wilting of foliage in the beginning. As the disease progresses, wilted foliage turns light green and then tan. Leaves dry out and finally drop. Belowground symptoms include root and crown rot. The outer layer of infected roots easily sloughs off, resulting in a rat-tail like appearance and roots lose the ability to absorb water and nutrients. The crown of the plant rots and turns dull brown. Bark of infected plants slough off at the soil line. Infected plants die eventually.



*Figure 1. Azalea infected with *Phytophthora* root rot.*

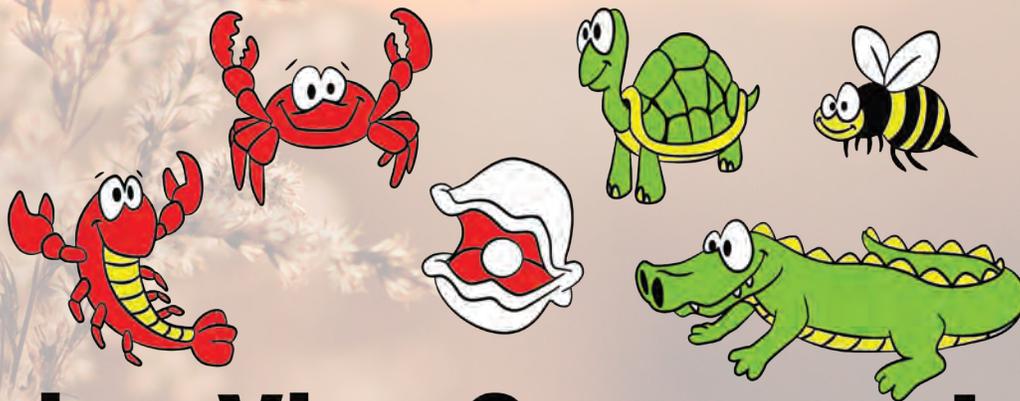
Phytophthora is a soil-borne microorganism and may survive in soils for several years in the absence of host due to resting (survival) structures called Oospores. Poor soil drainage and compaction predispose roots to *Phytophthora* infections. The pathogen produces motile zoospores (infection propagules), which can

Disease management in landscape starts with avoiding diseased plants because once *Phytophthora* is introduced, this plant pathogen can persist in soil for a long time. Avoid replanting in the same areas where previous plant infections have occurred. Well drained soils with good organic matter content are recommended for new plantings. Good cultural practices including raised beds, proper planting depth and spacing, proper fertilization and irrigation may help reduce infection. Roots injured during planting become highly susceptible to *Phytophthora* infection. In landscapes where disease is prevalent, prophylactic treatment with fungicides containing active ingredient such as aluminum tris, fosetyl-Al, mefenoxam or phosphite may help avoid infection. These fungicides do not eliminate the pathogen, and repeated applications may be required to suppress the disease (Follow fungicide labels for rates and frequency of applications).

Management of root and crown rot in container grown boxwoods in nurseries plays a crucial role in avoiding this disease. Growers must practice good sanitation practices to avoid disease spread in their production areas. Boxwood liners or potted plants imported by nurseries

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PHYTOPHTHORA DISEASE MANAGEMENT IN LANDSCAPES AND NURSERIES

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Figure 3. An azalea exhibiting foliar blight symptoms caused by *Phytophthora* species.



Figure 4. Crown rot of a symptomatic boxwood caused by *Phytophthora* species.

must be inspected, isolated and monitored for several weeks for symptoms to develop. Scout plants regularly for early disease symptoms and isolate suspected plants at once. Remove and discard symptomatic plants by burning, if feasible. Do not discard symptomatic or dead plants in cull piles. Growers must use ground covers or gravel as a barrier to reduce contact between containers and native soils. This practice will also prevent soil particles splashing into containers resulting from overhead irrigation. Potting mix must be stored on paved concrete surfaces. Do not re-use potting mixes and containers that contained previously infected plants. Nurseries that use pond water for irrigation must treat it regularly to avoid the spread

of the pathogen. Well drained production areas and re-routing of running irrigation water away from production blocks are essential in managing this disease.

Preventative use of fungicide containing active ingredients (listed above) effective in managing *Phytophthora* root and crown rot may be used at recommended rates to mitigate infections and manage this disease. Because *Phytophthora* root and crown rot produce similar symptoms to those produced by boxwood dieback, accurate identification is required before implementing management strategies. For more information, please visit our website at www.lsuagcenter.com/plantdiagnostics.



Figure 5. Reddish brown lesions on infected roots caused by *Phytophthora* species.



Figure 6. Sloughing off (naked roots) roots is a common diagnostic feature associated with root rot caused by *Phytophthora* species.

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Buck Abbey, ASLA, LSU School of Landscape Architecture Ret.

LNLA Swan Song

Did you know that I began writing this column for the Louisiana Association of Nurserymen (LAN) the predecessor of the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association (LNLA) we know today. This was back in the late 1970's. That was the time just before micro computers like the Apple I had been created. Every thing I wrote freehand was typed up by the Secretary at the LSU School of Landscape Architecture. I would then edit it, size it print it out to be 'pasted up' for final printing.

Articles were sporadic. At that time, the LAN newsletter was an 8 1/2" x 11" multiple page fold over that were mailed out with a postage stamp. I was just getting used to writing for LNA when the Apple Macintosh was marketed. I was quick to be one the first LSU faculty members to buy a Macintosh Computer and use them on the campus.

A series of articles were crafted in the early 80's that were published in Louisiana's Nurserymen Magazine under the banner Green Law Notebook. At the time I had been working on funded research afforded to me at LSU by the LNLA.

A story written and published in Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 1992 titled 'Nationwide Study of Landscape Ordinances.'

This story discussed the nature of landscape codes then found scattered across the country from Florida to California into the Midwest, northwest and along the east coast. At the time I had been working on funded research with Dr. Warren Meadows and Mr. Walter Imahara, both officers of LAN. This funded research led to a career long study of municipal landscape regulations and many articles as well as seminal book on the subject. Many other articles followed that were published by LAN/LNLA.

The old fold over typed newsletter eventually gave way to the slick publication you are reading form now. My first article in the 'new' LNLA Newsletter' in my column Landscape Design Sketchbook was about tree preservation in the City of Mandeville. It was followed by an article about restoring the urban forest following hurricane Katrina damage. This was published in October 2007 in response to Hurricane Katrina.



Since then I have crafted with much joy seventy columns covering many different aspects of gardens and design. I estimate conservatively that some 100,000 words have been written for this column over the years spanning back to the 1970s.

I have covered people, gardens, landscape design, bioswales, garden plants, poisonous plants, historic plants and even my hero, Frederick Law Olmsted, the Father of American Landscape Architecture. Other well know designers have been mentioned.

In all this time I rarely write in the first person singular because this article is for the reader, not about me. Teacher prefer the third person point of view. I apologize that this article does take a first person view point.

The Bible says, there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven. A time to plant a time to uproot, a time to weep a time to laugh, a time to be silent a time to speak. I think it is time for me to retire some of my life's work. I think it is time for me to devote time to other interests such as grand children, my private landscape architecture practice and my continuing study of English ancestry, Civil War history and morning walks with nature. And of course my life with Bonnie.

Sadly, my regular writing career for LNLA is the first to be given up. For this restructuring. This finally is to let the reader know it has truly been an honor to pour forth in this column words that help support the relationship between state landscape architects and all of you allied green industry professionals.

Over the years I have written to teach. I have written in support of others. I have written to unit growers, contractors, horticulturists, gardeners, garden lovers, the lawn care industry, material suppliers, equipment manufactures and of course landscape architects. I also have wanted to supply knowledge to other related members of our green industry including those that teach and those who work for industry, government and private businesses who affect nature in many ways in Louisiana. But more importantly I have written to support the work and staff of LNLA. This organization which I am very proud to have severed represents us all and work hard to keep us all working together. It has be the honor of my live too have served us all.

One last note. I have spoken with several of my former students who I know to be good writers as well experienced designers. I have selected one who will pick up where I will leave off. It is my hope this creative person will maintain the Sketchbook 'masthead' and carry the column to a greater height than I have been able to do over the last 40 years. Look for its premier in the next issue of Louisiana Nursery & Landscape News.

God bless you all. Prof. Buck Abbey

USING TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE POND HEALTH PROFILES

M.P. Hayes, PhD, Assistant Professor of Agricultural & Industrial Water Quality



The Water Quality Extension Lab has set out to unlock the mysteries around pond health and dissolved oxygen dispersion across the state. The team has a new research toy equipped with a YSI EXO2 Sonde for real-time water quality data collection and handheld GPS to plot the data on pond maps to determine accurate profiles for parameters.

The software allows the team to preselect sampling locations on the map, time intervals for stops, and speed between distances for the vessel to run its mission with ease. Much like a drone, our team will utilize the technology to help stakeholders understand unique pond dynamics for nutrient cycling and optimizing dissolved oxygen input from fountains and aerators.

When looking at a pond system, it is important to know the concentrations and sources of available nutrients, temperature profile and dissolved oxygen production for microbial stability. The water quality sensors the team will use on surveys include nitrate, ammonium, pH, temperature, algae, and dissolved oxygen. One of the first issues the team will tackle is the production of dissolved oxygen. The vessel and sensor will be deployed in ponds with various sources of oxygenation including fountains, submersed aerators, and well water discharge pipes to understand the range of each input. Does the dissolved oxygen increase 20ft from the foundation? 50ft? How much aeration will you need to maintain microbial processing of nutrients? All topics that will be explored and disseminated through LSU AgCenter extension publications once the data is compiled. The range of dispersion from each method of aeration will be plotted based on GPS coordinates and concentration measures of dissolved oxygen to formulate a best practice for dissolved oxygen dispersion in ponds. The ultimate goal is to showcase a balance of dissolved oxygen generation to available nutrients for pond stability. The nitrate sensors will provide a concentration gradient for nutrients as the dissolved oxygen declines away from the aeration source. Typically, when algae emerge in ponds it's due to an

abundance of sunlight and nutrients, which further depletes dissolved oxygen in the water. If the aeration system cannot keep up with the demand, the pond will be overtaken by thick sheets of algae. The algae sensors will give an accurate estimate for chlorophyll and blue-green algae to link hot spots to the dissolved oxygen and nutrient profiles. This model can be useful when determining if your pond systems need additional sources of aeration like a solar fountain or riparian barrier to reduce nutrient input. These pond assessments can be utilized in well-water-fed nursery irrigation ponds all the way to surface input crawfish ponds. This provides an opportunity for valuable data collection to promote best management practices for pond health and stability by understanding critical water quality parameters.

The team has been conducting pilot testing at LSU Lake during the Fall semester but anticipates the vessel will be ready for demonstration projects and pond surveys in mid-spring 2025. Stay tuned on the Water Quality Extension Lab Website for videos of the pilot missions! For more information or questions regarding water quality, contact M.P. Hayes at mhayes@agcenter.lsu.edu.





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SOIL AMENDMENTS FOR CENTIPEDEGRASS SOD ESTABLISHMENT

Eric DeBoer, PhD - Louisiana State University AgCenter



Centipedegrass [(*Eremochloa ophiuroides*) CG] is a commonly used warm-season turfgrass species well adapted for use on lawns and low maintenance turf sites throughout the state of Louisiana. The popularity of CG stems primarily from its low maintenance requirements and the low cost associated with establishing CG from sod (usually the cheapest sod to purchase). Sodding is the most common method used for establishing CG. However, soil compaction often hinders successful CG establishment, hindering root proliferation and long-term turf quality.

Soil compaction is a common problem throughout the state of Louisiana, commonly attributed to natural (plant roots, precipitation, seasonal cycles, etc.) and anthropogenic causes (mechanical operations, trampling effects, etc) (1, 3). Compacted soils are characterized by reduced pore space and increased physical resistance to root growth, leading to a poorly drained and poorly aerated rooting medium upon which to install sod (2). Poor drainage and aeration can hinder root development of newly laid sod, which can increase establishment time and reduce overall turfgrass quality.

Soil amendments are substrates often used to improve the properties of cultivated soils by increasing water-holding capacity and soil nutrient availability and maintaining high microbiological activity in the soil (5, 6). Prior to turfgrass establishment, it is commonly recommended to till and amend the soil with various media to improve root establishment of newly planted grass. Common soil amendments include sand, topsoil, and compost. Due to the popularity of centipedegrass sod and the increasing occurrence of soil compaction, this research aimed to quantify the effects of various soil amendments on the subsequent root morphology, soil volumetric water content, and turf visual quality of sodded centipedegrass in two locations in southern Louisiana.

Materials and Methods

A field study was conducted from May through September 2024 at the Louisiana State University AgCenter Ben Hur Central Research Station (CRS) and the Hammond Research Station (HRS). Experimental plots were established with common centipedegrass sod on native soils at both locations. The existing ground

cover was sprayed with glyphosate and removed using a sod cutter one month prior to establishment. Each plot was 4.0 × 6.0 feet, and the four treatments consisted of three soil amendments: sand, compost, and topsoil, and an unamended control (Table 1, Photo 1). The amendments were tilled to a depth of 6.0 inches before sod establishment. Untreated plots were also tilled to a depth of 6 inches. Plots were mowed weekly at a 2.5-inch bench setting height of cut and irrigated to prohibit drought stress for the first 2 weeks, after which irrigation was withheld. Weeds were controlled prior to establishment with two applications of glyphosate to bare soil, two and four weeks before planting. No pre-plant fertilizer was applied to simulate a worse-case fertility scenario for sod establishment. Data collected included soil volumetric water content (SWVC), dark green color index (DGCI), visual quality (VQ), and root morphology.



Photo 1. The purpose of this research was to determine the effect of soil amendments on root morphology, soil volumetric water content, and turf visual quality after establishment of centipedegrass sod. In this photo, soil amendments were applied across all plots.

Site	Soil Amendment
LSU AgCenter Ben Hur Central Research Station, Baton Rouge, LA	Sand (The QUIKRETE Company)
	Compost (Hapi-Gro Products Inc.)
LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station, Hammond, LA	Topsoil (The Scotts Company LLC)
	Control

Table 1. Research locations and soil amendment details.

[continued >](#)

SOIL AMENDMENTS FOR CENTIPEDEGRASS SOD ESTABLISHMENT

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Results and Discussion

After the establishment of centipede grass sod, soil volumetric water content (VWC) was monitored using a FieldScout TDR 300 (Spectrum Technologies, Aurora, IL) equipped with 3.0-inch (7.5 centimeters) rods. At HRS, the sand treatment significantly reduced VWC compared to the topsoil and control treatments (Fig. 1A). At CRS, the sand treatment had a significantly lower volumetric water content compared with all other treatments on multiple dates (Fig. 1B). As expected, incorporating sand into the soil profile prior to establishment resulted in reduced water holding capacity. Amending soils with sand prior to CG sod establishment on sites prone to waterlogging may help increase soil drainage, resulting in better CG sod establishment.

Green turfgrass coverage and DGCI of experimental plots were measured by light box through digital image analysis (4). No treatment effect was observed for green turfgrass coverage at either site (data not shown). At both locations, the compost treatment significantly reduced DGCI compared with untreated control on multiple dates (Fig. 2, Photo 2). The combination of no treatment effect on green turf coverage and a reduced DGCI means that even though compost-treated plots were less green than others, they still were green enough to have what is considered "green turf coverage." The reduced green color was attributed to nitrogen immobilization due to the breakdown of organic matter in the compost-treated plots. Future studies should investigate pre-plant fertilizer requirements to reduce this negative effect.

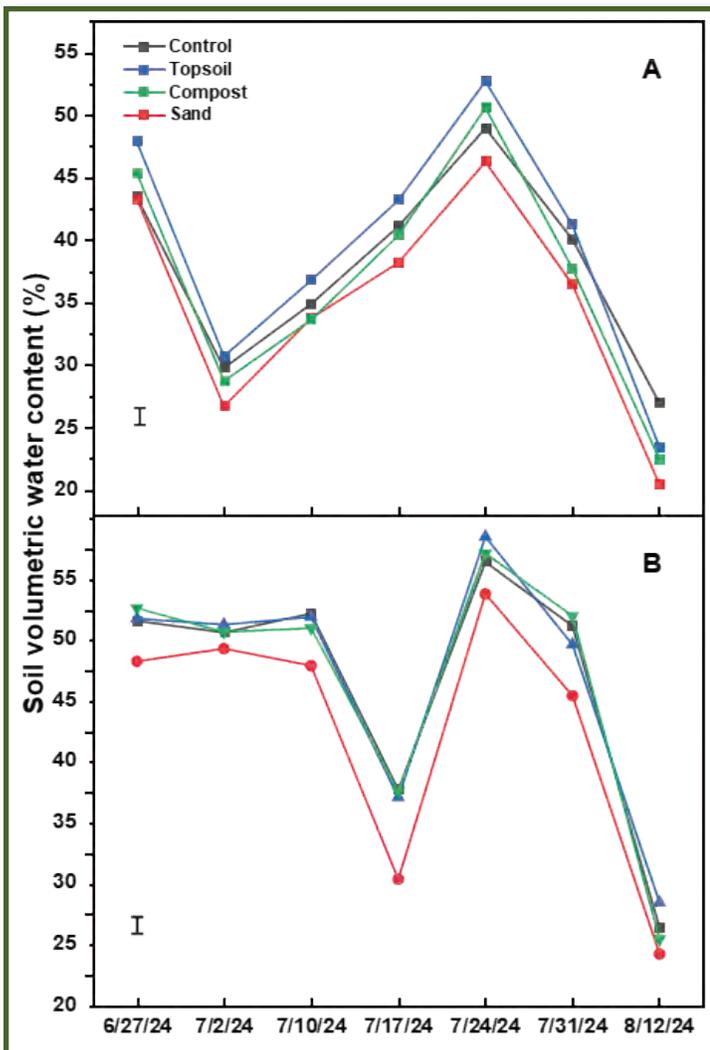


Figure 1. Effect of soil amendments on soil volumetric water content at Hammond Research Station (A) and Ben Hur Research Station (B) during the summer of 2024. Error bar represents the least significant difference for comparing means ($\alpha = 0.05$).

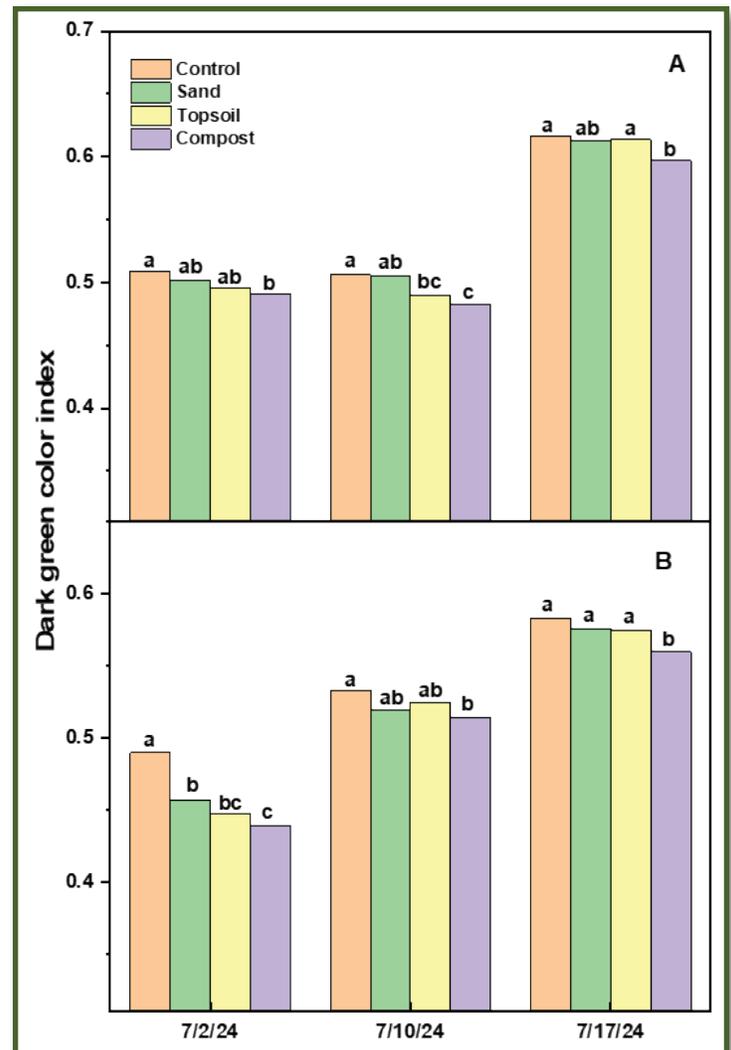


Figure 2. Effect of soil amendments on dark green color index at Hammond Research Station (A) and Ben Hur Research Station (B). Within dates, bars marked with different letters are significantly different according to Fisher's protected least significant difference ($\alpha = 0.05$).

continued >



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SOIL AMENDMENTS FOR CENTIPEDEGRASS SOD ESTABLISHMENT

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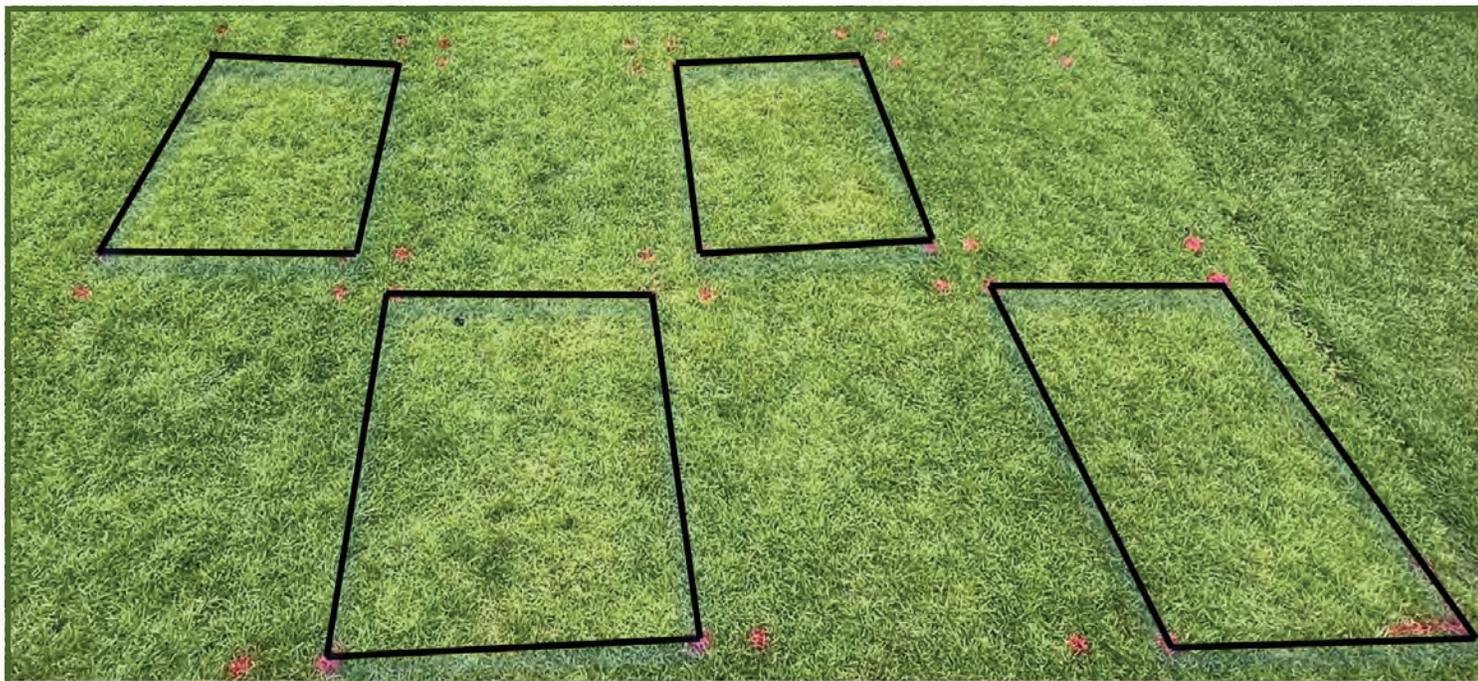


Photo 2. Dark green color index was the lowest in compost-treated plots (highlighted).

Soil cores were harvested to a depth of 6.0 inches after two months of establishment time. Root length, surface area, average diameter, and volume were determined through image scanning analysis (WinRhizo, Regent Instruments, Quebec City, Canada). Total root weights were recorded after oven-drying roots for at least 72 hr at 80° C. At HRS, the compost treatment had significantly lower root length, surface area, volume, and weight than the control and sand treatment (data not shown), likely due to decreased available N. Again, the breakdown of organic matter in compost-amended plots may explain a reduction in nutrient availability and subsequent reduction in root mass.

Conclusions

This research evaluated the effect of various soil amendments on root morphology, soil volumetric water content, and turf quality in the first two months after the establishment of centipedegrass sod. Since sand, topsoil, and compost are the most common soil amendments on the market, understanding their efficacy is crucial for helping landscapers and turf managers make informed decisions that lead to the long-term success of CG sod. Incorporating sand in soils before sod establishment decreased soil volumetric water content, suggesting the improvement of soil drainage. The benefits of sand amendments on soils will be most pronounced when establishing sod on poorly drained soils commonly found in southern Louisiana.

Although applying compost on soils did not affect green turfgrass coverage in this trial, the compost treatment did reduce the dark green color index at both sites. In addition, the compost treatment reduced the length, surface area, volume, and weight of CG roots. This suggests that, without incorporating pre-plant fertilizer, nitrogen immobilization

from organic soil amendments may inhibit centipedegrass sod root proliferation and reduce its green color. The exact mechanism of microbial activity-induced N immobilization while applying compost prior to sod establishment is still in question.

Future research should include untilled, untreated control. Even just the act of tilling the soil without amending resulted in high-quality CG sod establishment. Additionally, longer-term studies are necessary to investigate the long-term success of CG sod established using different amendments.

Funding

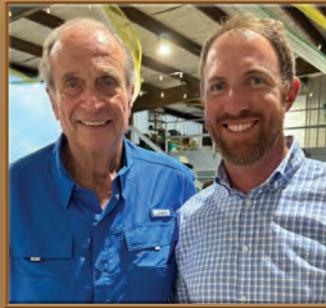
The authors gratefully acknowledge financial assistance for this research from the Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Foundation for Scholarship & Research (LNLFSR).

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LNLA'S FUNDRAISER TO SUPPORT HORTICULTURE RESEARCH EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Tickets may be purchased from a LNLA board member or on the LNLA.org website.
\$20 each or 6 for \$100.

Drawing will be held January 24th at GSHE in Mobile.
Winner does not have to be present to win.



Grand Prize

Benelli's M4 Tactical Shotgun
Model #11707

Second Prize

Saint Laurent College Medium
Quilted Leather Purse



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Dr. Damon Abdi, LSU AgCenter's Assist. Professor of Landscape Horticulture, will be the instructor for the manual review/training sessions.

2025 CLASS DATES

****February 18-19****

LSU AgCenter
HRS
21549 Old Covington Hwy, Hammond

****July 8-9, 2025****

Ira Nelson
Horticulture Center
University of LA
2206 Johnson St.
Lafayette, LA 70503

****Fall 2025 CNLP* (TBD)***

Go to www.lnla.org to register under Events Tab

The CNLP was established to provide a professional educational opportunity for 'Green Industry' professionals. Primarily, persons in the retail garden center and landscape contracting/maintenance areas of the 'Green Industry' participate. The manual review is also excellent preparation for the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry's landscape horticulturist license exam. An LDAF license is required to be in various landscape & nursery related businesses in Louisiana; the CNLP is not required.

This certification is not a license. Call LDAF Horticulture Commission at 225-952-8100 to schedule the license exam.

1

MANUAL REVIEW & CERTIFICATION EXAM

\$175

2

MANUAL REVIEW ONLY

\$100

3

ENVIRONMENTAL HORTICULTURE MANUAL

\$65



LNLA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, October 9, 2024 – 10:00 am
Poole Brother's Nursery, Forest Hill

LNLA president Michael Roe opened the LNLA quarterly board of directors meeting at 10:25 on Wednesday, October 9, 2024. Michael welcomed everyone and thanked Debbie Head for opening her home to us. All stood for the pledge and prayer.

Michael asked all to introduce themselves and give a positive personal and business experience for the week.

Those in attendance were Tony Carter, Brian Bridges, Brandon Adams, Chad Everage, Debbie Head, Jennifer McGimsey, Cari Jane Murray, Damon Abdi, Craig Roussel, Tina Peltier, Marsha Dugas, Matthew Waguespack and Michael Roe. And Jeb Fields, Lisa Loup and Jeff Reid on Teams.

Absent were Kellie Alford, Matthew Knick, Matthew Fennell and Reuben Mitchell.

The minutes from the previous board meeting in July were motioned by Tony Carter to accept as written, Chad Everage second and all were in favor.

Cari Jane gave a LNLFSA update. Grants for the year have been awarded. Scholarship applicant submission process is open till December 1. The next gala is set for June 27, 2025 at Pavilion of the two sisters in City Park, NOLA.

Marsha Dugas and Tina Peltier updated us on LDAF and the Horticulture Commission. Last meeting for this year will be in November with 10 cases to hear.

Staffing Update: We are in the final stages of hiring a new employee to handle our licensing and insurance updates.

Brett Laird, Richard Miller and I attended the meeting of the Southern Plant Board in Lexington, KY in May 2024. There were updates from the National Plant Board, USDA, and Custom and Border Protection.

Louisiana will be hosting the meeting in 2026.

In September 2024, LDAF hosted the Horticulture Inspection Society-Southern Chapter meeting in Baton Rouge. There were approximately 50 attendees from 13 states in attendance. Presentations were made by LSU Ag Center staff on Boxwood Dieback and Apple Snails, along with a presentation on the Yellow Legged Hornet, by David Williams with the Georgia Department of Agriculture. A tour of the Burden Museum and Gardens was hosted by Jason Stagg and Keith Lewis.

LDAF staff are currently working on updating the Horticulture Regulations to reflect the recent law changes from the 2023 legislative session.

Beekeeping Grant: The first Beekeeping Apprenticeship Program was a huge success. One of the participating schools, Zachary High, came to the Horticulture Inspection Society meeting that we hosted in September to give a presentation to the attendees about their experience. The new grant will be announced soon and will focus on honey production and marketing as well as beekeeping education.

P. ramorum Update: The spring compliance inspection resulted in all negative samples. The fall inspection is set for October 18th.

Citrus Update: In August 2024, citrus greening was detected in East Baton Rouge parish, which is a new parish find. The tree was removed shortly after the final determination. A delimiting survey of the area is almost complete, and no additional positives have been detected so far.

Apple Snail: LDAF was involved in joint meetings with the LSU Ag Center, Wildlife and Fisheries, and the Department of Health and Hospitals about apple snails found in a shipment of crawfish shipped to Arkansas from a Louisiana crawfisherman. The snails were killed and no violations were issued by Wildlife and Fisheries.

CAPS Update: In 2024, over \$113,000 in funding was received to complete the Citrus Commodity, Solanaceous, P. ramorum, Forest Pest and IFA surveys. The budgets were cut for most of them and another cut is expected for 2025.

Matthew Waguespack is our new Brian Breaux with LA Farm Bureau Federation. Matthew let us know about his plans for this position and our partnership with him. Voter voice campaign will be revamped and help spread the news quickly when needed. Matthew discussed Farm bill with us. There will be a roundtable meeting about the tax bill. Members make our decision on where we get involved and our stance on issues. Proposed rule from OSHA about heat illness standard is a big issue coming down the pipeline for Louisiana. LNLA needs to form a comment and submit our stance to OSHA.

Lisa Loup gave us a update on things related to legislation in Louisiana. LNLA needs to be on a proactive stance rather than on the defense. Getting letters out to legislators on our position on these tax bills coming up. Lisa let us know the Ag coalition she has been working on will be meeting and joining forces to try our best to protect Louisiana agriculture.

Jeff Reid reported H2B first half cap was met a week or so ago. There are no more visas that have a start date of November. Until the President releases more visas, we are at a standstill.

Brian Bridges gave a financial report. Total assets \$209,036. We are up about \$6000 from last year at this time. Dues are flat. Brian gave us an update on categories up and down within our budget. Total income for the year \$157K. Total expenses for the \$167K.

Motion to accept by Tony Carter, second by Debbie Head and all were in favor.

Brian also let us know funding had a few requests for donations this quarter to the Foundation in memory of Jerry Plauche and another for the DYN memorial golf tournament. LNLA reimbursed Tony Carter for a Facebook Ad. Budget meeting coming up in November.

Tony Carter gave us a raffle update - the gun and handbag have been purchased. Tony purchased a \$50 ad on Facebook to promote the LNLA Landscape Education day in Bossier City on October. 10 .. It ran for 5 days. Reached 9000, 131 post engagements. 75 clicked on the link to register. CNLP coming up will be and we need to advertise for that.

Plants are growing well for the Capitol plant day to be towards the end of April. LNLA board members decided to brand a half pallet of 4" pots with LNLA logo. Sales are all up for the year except for CNLP.

Education report was given by Brandon Adams reminding us about the Education Day tomorrow in Bossier City. CNLP coming up later this month in Shreveport at Ewing classroom. Manual rewrite is still on track to be done December this year. Dr. Jeb Fields has been promoted to Hammond Research Station Director. More grad students coming in to the station. A few who have been there will be finishing their degrees and moving on. Looking forward to spring education session. We need to reach out to Farm Bureau to see if we can have the landscape education day there in the spring

Caroline Blanchard will be the new staff member at HRS starting Jan. 2nd as garden manager

Issues to Discuss and Solve

- Tax plan
- Membership renewal timing
- Monthly payment option for membership renewal - we would want it to be automated and charge their card monthly, fees would be slightly higher for this option. Research and bring to the next meeting ... roll out dues renewals as we always.
- Association Management Companies - Ewald and ASG - CJ will get case studies, more info and set up zoom with ASG. Will vote on this at the next board meeting in Dec.
- Master Gardener Membership to LNLA - positive is more income and revenue, negative would be everything else. The board in the room decided this would water down the association and we should keep it professional.
- Signing up for wrong member type online - apply and send them a bill or only offer the \$250 option online and then let people know if they need a lesser category they will have to call in.
- Manual
- Quickbooks - talk to CPA
- Raffle Sponsors - send solicitation letters out asap
- Nominations for 2025 - There are 4 positions opening on the LNLA board of directors. Prospects are John Hoogland, Tori Hebert, Mike Called, Tammany Baumgarten, Jacob Morgan, Rick Becnel, Madeline Perino, Henry Hunter, Dexter and Davis Steele, Matthew Bracy - Michael and CJ will make a letter for all saying there are openings and your name was brought up

Next Meetings & Events –

- LNLA & LSU AgCenter's Education Day at Red River Station in Bossier City October 10th
- CNLP (location to be determined) October 22 & 23
- LNLA Board Meeting December 4 at Mike Anderson's in Baton Rouge

Meeting adjourned at 2:30.



INCREASED CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOUISIANA IRRIGATORS



The Louisiana Irrigation Association (LIA) is pleased to announce that there are more opportunities than ever for licensed irrigators to meet the state's continuing education requirements. As mandated by law, irrigators must complete recertification training every three years, and this year, LIA has made it easier to stay compliant with a variety of formats and dates.

In 2024, LIA hosted two in-person recertification classes, four virtual recertification classes, and one Irrigation Basics class. Our upcoming classes for the remainder of the year include the last virtual recertification session on December 18, 2024. For 2025, we've already scheduled eight recertification classes, including both in-person and virtual options, spread throughout the year.

In addition to our recertification offerings, we're excited to announce the launch of our OnDemand Irrigation Basics Class at the start of the new year. This new online class will allow those interested in studying for the irrigation licensing exam to study at their own pace. It includes all the same content covered in our in-person Irrigation Basics class, making it a great option for those who prefer a flexible learning experience. Currently, we have five individuals testing the program and providing us with critical feedback to ensure we're meeting the needs of our future students. Access to the OnDemand class will be available on our website after the first of the new year.

For a full list of available recertification classes and to register, please visit our website at geauxLIA.org. The 2025 recertification class dates are:

January 15 • February 19 • March 19 • April 16
May 14 • June 18 • October 16 • December 17

We encourage all licensed irrigators to take advantage of these offerings to stay up-to-date with the latest industry practices and maintain their certification.

SUPPORT LOUISIANA'S GREEN INDUSTRY BY JOINING YOUR REGIONAL ASSOCIATION

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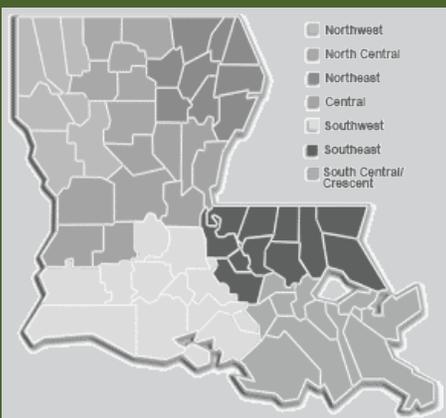
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318-321-6046 • myramaloney41@gmail.com

LIA: Dan Johnson, Executive Director • geauxlia@gmail.com

NOHS: Shaun Hebert • nohs1885@gmail.com

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The LSU AgCenter has announced the release of four Louisiana Super Plants for 2025.

Earlier this year, the Louisiana Super Plants committee convened to review evaluation data and make their selections for next year's Louisiana Super Plants.

2
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The Spring 2025 herbaceous perennial highlight is **Gaura** (*Oenothera lindheimeri*). Gaura was selected for its tolerance of both high temperatures and drought, something we've become all too familiar with in Louisiana over the past couple of years. Native to the south-central United States, this clump-forming herbaceous perennial reaches 2.5 – 4' in height and the delicate wispy flowers lend a unique texture to the garden.

In the shrub category, a collection of **Southern indica azaleas** (*Rhododendron indicum*) 'George L. Taber,' 'Formosa,' and 'G.G. Gerbing' have been named for Spring 2025. Native to Japan, these shrubs are proven performers in the landscape. These multi-stemmed evergreen azaleas will vary in size depending on the variety and planting location, growing between 6 – 8' tall and 4 – 7' wide. Flower colors also vary between varieties. The flowers featured on 'George L. Taber' are a light pink with darker pink blotches in the throat, whereas

'Formosa' flowers are typically available in shades ranging from lavender to purple to deep magenta, with darker blotches in the throat of each individual flower. On the other hand, 'G.G. Gerbing' possesses pure white blooms with splotches of light yellow to green in the throat.

For Summer 2025, Cuphea Firecracker Plant '**Vermillionaire**' (*Cuphea hybrid*) has been named. Vermillionaire Cuphea can be grown as a perennial in USDA zones 8 and higher but should be treated as an annual in colder climates. The plants reach 18 – 28" in height, with a spread between 12 - 24" wide. A heat and drought tolerant plant, the bloom period will stretch out over several months once the weather turns warm, attracting hummingbirds with the abundant yellow-orange flowers.

Centaurea cineraria rounds out the selections for Fall 2025, commonly known as Dusty Miller. Another heat and drought tolerant selection, this smaller sized herbaceous perennial is hardy to

USDA zone 8. Though considered an herbaceous perennial, Dusty Miller is generally used in Louisiana landscapes as an annual. The plants are valued for their leaves that are covered with fine grey/white hairs on both sides, giving the leaves a velvety appearance. When wet, the grey/white color fades and the green of the leaf is visible. Additionally, plants grown in the shade tend to look greener than those grown in full sun. The flowers are usually removed so as not to detract from the foliage. At a mature size of about 12" tall and 12" wide, Dusty Miller is ideally suited for mass plantings, border edging, container plantings, as well being used in hanging baskets. Best suited for placement in full sun (can tolerate light shade), the plants prefer well-drained soil, as they will often die in standing water.

More information will be forthcoming on the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Super Plants websites in early 2025.

For more information, visit LSUAgCenter.com/SuperPlants

1

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