

The Burden Farm: A Model for Small Farms and Home Gardens



Sketch of home gardener area of the Burden Farm courtesy of Suzanne Turner Associates.

By Dr. Jeff Kuehny

Director, LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens

In rural homesteads and suburban yards, many Americans long to participate in the miracle of agriculture. Gardens, fruit orchards and small farms of all sizes are popping up next to the homes of those who want a personal connection to the food they eat. At the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, we are building the Burden Farm, a small farm that will be a model for these types of operations, with greenhouses, garden plots, fruit trees of all kinds and a compost area to serve as examples for home gardeners and small farm operators.

Because of a need to feed our growing population and support economic growth, agriculture has changed drastically from its beginnings millennia ago, growing to become what many today call industrialized agriculture — huge farm and ranch operations that employ a small percentage of the population. The advancement of agriculture has led to a continued decrease in the inputs

required to produce an edible product. As a result, our rural population has significantly decreased, leading to a growing urban population that relies on agriculture to meet its everyday needs for sustenance, clothing and shelter. For example, in 1790, farmers were 90 percent of the labor force, but by the year 2000, farmers were just 2.4 percent of the labor force. Some question what effect this transformation has had on the health of our society and the ecosystem in which we live.

The land-grant university system, which includes LSU, continues to be an integral part of agriculture's growth and is one of the greatest institutional innovations of the 19th century. Land-grant universities research agriculture, home economics and other important areas and connect the residents of each state with useful and practical information through local agents and informative products, including videos and publications. The land-grant university system has continued to work with farmers to provide food and fiber to a growing urban population, but it must remain relevant

(continued on page 4)

Reflections From the Chair

By Lorice Say
Chair, Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden

Almost daily we hear of Baton Rouge residents who are unaware of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden and what this wonderful space has to offer. In this green, wooded oasis right in the center of our bustling city, there are many activities and events taking place, but I would like to lay out an overview of the many physical attractions of the property. I hope this might spark your curiosity and encourage you to explore, either as a volunteer or a visitor, more of what is just a stone's throw from a very busy interstate highway.

The walking trails are a premiere attraction. Winding through the Burden Woods, the trails are used in an educational venture for school children called Trees & Trails that is based on the nationally recognized Project Learning Tree program. Many use the trails for a leisurely discovery walk and even as a faster-paced exercise venue. Along the way are designated areas that represent Louisiana's terrain, such as the Palmetto Walk, the Mosaic Boardwalk at Black Swamp, which runs through a natural wetland, and a butterfly meadow. A hiker can exit the trail at the Barton Arboretum, which features a large grove of historic camellia varieties that were donated by the Crowders.

On the road headed toward the LSU Rural Life Museum are food and fiber research plots used by the LSU AgCenter to test varieties of plant species, including corn, cotton, soybeans and tomatoes. Then there are the All-America Selections trial sites where LSU AgCenter horticultural research is ongoing. There is the satsuma orchard where fruit is harvested by volunteers in the fall and sold to the public. Then there are beehives in many areas that are kept up by a professional beekeeper. The bees produce honey that is also sold to the public. And don't miss the field of wildflowers that can be a colorful sight in early spring.

The smaller plots along the entrance road are dedicated to a Children's Garden and the recently dedicated Pollinator Garden. Parents enjoy bringing their children here for a playtime that can also be educational. Across from the Children's Garden under the pine trees is another camellia garden, which is part of the Vi and Hank Stone Camellia Collection. Opposite the Orangerie, a memorial to Steele Burden, is the beautiful Rose Garden, and across the parking lot from the Conference Center is the Tropical Garden (formerly the Ginger Garden). The delightful historic Windrush Gardens is a favorite location for special parties and for professional photographers — especially bridal shoots. There is also the Monroe Garden connecting the Rural Life Museum to Windrush Gardens.

I've really just touched the surface of what is here on this property. I invite you to pick up a site map in the lobby of the Conference Center and investigate. In subsequent newsletters I will be sharing some of the big plans in store for the future of Burden and its integration with the city. I promise you will be amazed and delighted, so stay tuned! ■



A spectacular Peggy Martin rose climbs over the entrance to the Herb Garden.

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The newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden, which is part of Burden Museum & Gardens.

Newsletter Submissions:
BotanicGardens@agcenter.lsu.edu

DiscoverBurden.com
4560 Essen Lane
Baton Rouge, LA 70809



Gathering on the Grounds for the Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

It was a rather warm but sunny day when Friends of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens hosted the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on the lawn of the Burden Home in Windrush Gardens. Almost 80 volunteers gathered with staff for a picnic-style lunch of barbecued pork, potato salad, beans, green salad, rolls and iced tea under the shade of the live oaks. During the meal, Dr. Jeff Kuehny spoke to the group about the value of one's time given in service and the deep appreciation felt by the folks at Burden for that gift.

The event was chaired by Simone Kramer, and she was assisted by her husband, Steve, and Leo Broders, Missy Jones, Leigh Harris, Diana Wells and Barbara Quirk. Staff at Burden set up the tables, chairs and serving area and provided flower arrangements that were given away. Pollinator bedding plants were given to all who attended as thank you gifts, and special door prizes were given away. Plants were also donated by the East Baton Rouge Master Gardener Association. The desserts — small bundt cakes provided by the Botanic Gardens — were great.

Special recognition for service above and beyond on tasks both large and small was given to Kerry Hawkins and John Hough, who have been an integral part of the volunteer efforts at the Botanic Gardens. Not only have they both served as leaders by chairing the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens board, they have brought in other volunteers and worked on many committees and programs, including Trees & Trails, Trail Masters and Corn Maze. Thank you to all the volunteers who keep the gardens and visitor experiences greauning! ■



Kerry Hawkins and John Hough receive special recognition from Dr. Jeff Kuehny.

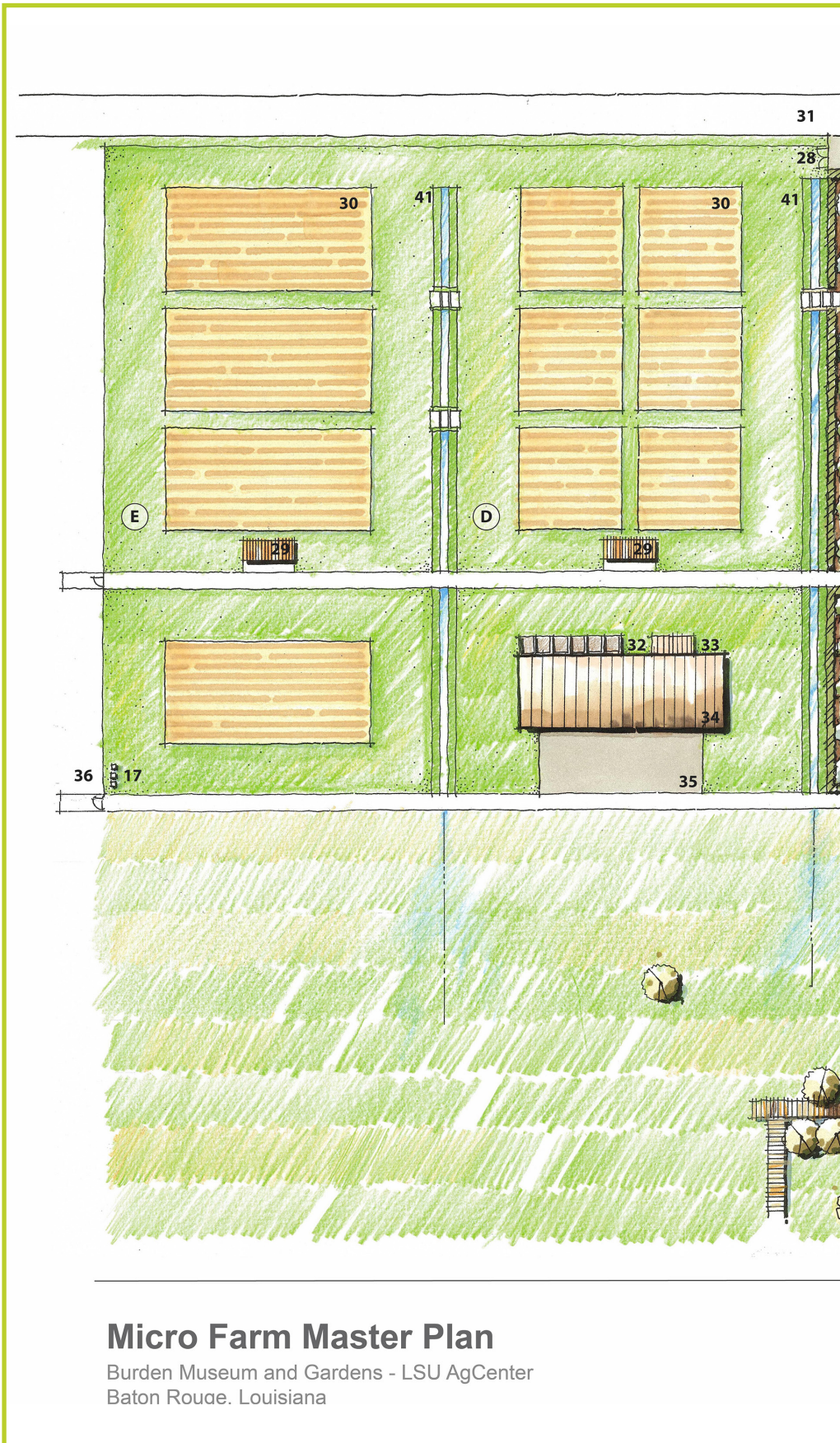
Burden Farm

(continued from page 1)

with the urban population and expand its role in educating urban communities about the evolution of our food system and its effect on our society and our ecosystem.

Part of the mission of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens is to share the importance of plants and the environment with our community. The Botanic Gardens has implemented many different programs and built new facilities over the last eight years to do just that. The Burden Farm will serve to increase public awareness of the production of local, sustainable foods and food systems and environmental stewardship, providing research-based information through demonstrations and applied educational programming. Working together with university faculty, staff, students and practitioners, the Burden Farm will facilitate collaboration to provide programs centered around home and community gardens, small farms, traditional agriculture and community health.

Working with landscape architects Brian Goad and Herpreet Singh of Suzanne Turner Associates, a group of faculty, staff and students helped create a design that we will begin to implement later this year. The Burden Farm will show that it is possible to start small while thinking big. The plans include an urban farm model for the typical suburban yard and one for the typical small farm that will be used for research and demonstration along with an internship program for students and practitioners. The farm is designed to work with the natural drainage on the site, and a second phase that extends the visitor experience from the two farm models into a wetland area will demonstrate good stewardship of the surrounding environment. This agroecosystem model will provide an immersive insight into accessible agricultural practices and will also provide greater perspective and fresh ideas for how what we do in our backyards and small farms should work together with our surrounding ecosystem. ■



Micro Farm Master Plan

Burden Museum and Gardens - LSU AgCenter
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Sketch of farm area courtesy of Suzanne Turner Associates.



A Orientation Area

- 1 Pavilion
- 2 Seating Area
- 3 Rain Garden
- 4 Arbor & Seating
- 5 Loquat Tree

B Home Gardener Area

- 6 Raised Beds
- 7 Greenhouse
- 8 Arbor & Seating
- 9 Compost
- 10 Row Garden
- 11 Chickens/Goats House & Run
- 12 Shade Tree
- 13 Citrus
- 14 Blueberry
- 15 Raspberry
- 16 Blackberry
- 17 Bee Box

C Fruit Demonstrations

- 18 Arbor w/ Muscadine
- 19 Raised Beds - Strawberry, Herb, Flowers
- 20 Apple
- 21 Persimmon
- 22 Dining Area w/ Lights and Removable Shade
- 23 Pear
- 24 Event Lawn
- 25 Fig
- 26 Drop-Off & Caterer Parking
- 27 Hedge
- 28 Gate

D Micro Farm

- 29 Arbor & Seating
- 30 Planting Rows
- 31 Burden Center Road
- 32 Compost Area
- 33 Storage Shed
- 34 High Tunnel
- 35 Fenced Storage

E All America Selections

- 36 Fence

F Wetland Remediation

- 37 Parking (16)
- 38 Boardwalk
- 39 Cypress
- 40 Pecan
- 41 Drainage Swale

G Maintenance

- 42 Existing Oak
- 43 Existing Gravel Road
- 44 Existing Maintenance Buildings
- 45 Existing Vegetation





New board member Leigh Harris



New board members Mary Tharp, Elena Fennel, Margaret Hawkins, Charlie Johnson and Alethea O'Quinn

Welcome New Board Members

Photographs were taken following the May board meeting of the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden to add faces to the names of the newly elected members. While each of these talented and generous volunteers may be new to the board, they are all long-standing supporters of the gardens and the horticulture community of Baton Rouge.

We are very grateful that in addition to all they do already, they have agreed to add their own unique knowledge and experience to further the mission of the Friends to enhance and promote the gardens and its serene environment for the benefit of the public through educational programs, volunteerism and fundraising. ■

Missy Jones: Docent, Volunteer and Chairperson

By Dr. Jeff Kuehny



Missy has been a steadfast volunteer and board member of the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden for many years. As a retired schoolteacher, she began volunteering for our youth education program as a docent for Trees & Trails and Project Learning Tree. We also see her every Thursday as a volunteer at the receptionist desk welcoming visitors to the property and directing them to our many destinations.

It is hard to believe that Missy has served as the Friends president for one year already. Missy's calm demeanor, which is reflected in her leadership style, was vital to the process of the organization's name change. This was a long journey that spanned the tenure of two chairs, and the board appreciates her help navigating the waters to complete this process. Another important accomplishment for the Friends during Missy's tenure was expanding the membership benefits and the levels that go with them. Because the Botanic Gardens does not charge admission, membership through the Friends is an important part of being connected to the Botanic Gardens. Thank you, Missy, for giving your precious time to the Botanic Gardens and providing leadership for the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens. ■



Save the Date
October 17 . 6 p.m.

Enjoy an evening of wine and roses




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Literacy in the Gardens

By Rebecca "Becky" White, Ph.D.

Just as many of you, I love the gardens! Ever since Dr. Jeff Kuehny listened to my idea for a storyteller's garden and took me on a tour of this wonderful and beautiful oasis within Baton Rouge, I have been hooked! My small idea, along with the visions of Dr. Kuehny and others, has blossomed into a dream project focused on child literacy enhancement.

I have a personal passion for reading and promoting early childhood literacy. After that fateful day when I toured the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens, I knew I wanted to be a part of bringing more children and their families to explore and experience this great treasure. Five years ago, with help from the Junior League of Baton Rouge, we partnered to begin StoryTime in the Garden. On Saturday, May 5, 2018, we celebrated our 42nd StoryTime in the Garden.

At StoryTime in the Garden, children get to hear great storybooks read in a garden setting and can complete related craft activities. Many of the storybooks featured are nature themed in keeping with our beautiful gardens. We typically have 60 to 100 people attend these three-hour events one Saturday each month from September to April.

We are seeking interested volunteers to assist with hosting StoryTime in the Garden. If you enjoy young children, reading storybooks and helping with children's craft activities, this volunteer experience is for you. Interested volunteers can contact Becky White at rwhite@lsu.edu to learn more. Our 2018-19 schedule has been set:

- September 15
- October 6
- November 10
- December 1
- January 19
- February 16
- March 9
- April 13

Becky White reads to a group of children during StoryTime in the Garden.





Don't Miss It!
October 6, 13, 20 and 27
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Night Maze . October 27 . 6-9 p.m.



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Trees & Trails

By Sarah Rayner
Education Coordinator

It has been an exciting spring for the Trees & Trails program! I want to thank the docents for sharing their passion for nature and their time with the students. The docents have made the field trips such an exciting and memorable experience for the students. They are truly the heartbeat of the Trees & Trails program. We had 26 docents who volunteered this spring!

I would like to recognize the docents who volunteered as instructors and navigators for the field trips: Kitty Bull, Missy Jones, Kathleen Meares, Renee Major, Liz Roberts, Margo Spielman, Kerry Hawkins, Kathy Conerly, Alisa Mercier, Brenda Baumgardner, Jenny Sutcliffe, Nancy Jurasinski, Mary Tharp, Diana Wells, Vicki LaPlace, Sally Evans, Helen Causey, Regina Yarbrough, Monica Bryan, Richard Stanek, Leo Broders, Isobil Pribil, Jamie Braud, Becky White, Ken Bosso and John Hough.

We had 624 students participate in our field trips. The majority of the field trips were for the Dragonflies group, which includes pre-K through second grade. The recent addition of the Pollinator Garden playground has sparked lots of excitement for children. It is a wonderful interactive

educational addition to the grounds at Burden and is now included in the Dragonflies program. We had two Foresters field trips, with one group of third-grade students and the second group composed of fifth-through-eighth-grade students. A goal is to increase participation of students from the upper elementary and middle schools.

The Educator's Corner is a new addition to the Trees & Trails website that is available to teachers. It has the learning objectives for each of the field trips we offer, the National Education Standards that the program targets and pre-trip and post-trip activities. The teachers can download and use the information in their classrooms. In the early spring, emails were sent out to teachers in East Baton Rouge Parish and the surrounding parishes promoting our program. Recently, teachers were sent information about our fall schedule for Trees & Trails. However, I plan to reach out to educators by going out to the schools this August to promote the Trees & Trails programs.

Looking ahead, there will be a fall orientation for Trees & Trails on Wednesday, September 19, 2018, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. If you love nature and want to share that joy with children, this is a wonderful opportunity for you to volunteer. Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a docent at srayner@agcenter.lsu.edu or 225-763-3990 ext. 3. Wishing you all a wonderful summer! ■



Trees & Trails docents with Sarah Rayner, education coordinator (second from left)

Announcing the Winners of Brush With Burden

Please join us in congratulating the winners of the 2018 Brush With Burden juried show! In the art category, first place was awarded to “Camille,” by Cheri Fry; second place to “Louisiana Pinks,” by Jane Flowers; third place to “Tropical Holiday,” by Judi Betts; and honorable mention was awarded to “Bananas,” by Betty Efferson. In the photography category, first place was awarded to “Unfolding,” by Peter Milder; second place was “Egret in Fog 2,” by Mary Ann Caffery; third place was “Bread Pudding,” by Donna Stelly; and honorable mention was “The Gift,” by Leslie Elliot-Smith. Merit awards were given to Ernie Fournet for “Dance With Butterflies” and to Cindy Hunt for “Docked in Fog.”



First place winner in the art category, “Camille,” by Cheri Fry

These amazing artists and photographers were not the only winners. Every artist and photographer selected for the show gets a feather in their caps! The participants for Don Taylor’s seminar, “Luminous Underpainting and Watercolor/Ink Journaling,” called themselves winners as well, saying it was the best \$25 they had ever spent. They left his presentation inspired and informed. Other winners were the proud and pleased owners of original art purchased from the show. More than 100 art lovers who visited the Orangerie and the Conference Center galleries during the show are winners, too. The biggest winner of all is the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden, who received the grand prize for the pleasure of hosting such a lovely event. ■



Kathy Miller Stone with art category juror Don Taylor and Mrs. Taylor

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Blackberries an Easy Addition to Landscape

by Lee Rouse
Extension Agent

Blackberries are by far one of the easiest fruit crops to grow in south Louisiana, but a lack of understanding keeps some gardeners from incorporating this wonderful fruit into their landscape. Some gardeners avoid planting these easily controllable crops because they tend to have a reputation for getting out of control, creating a bramble jungle.



Understanding the growth cycle and proper pruning of blackberries is critical to increasing the yield of your crop. Blackberries have crowns that produce biennial shoots. These shoots live for two years and then die. The shoots that emerge the first year are called the primocanes. In the second year of growth, the shoots are called floricanes. These floricanes will produce flowers that mature into fruit.

Understanding that blackberries produce their crop on the last year's growth and that canes only live for two years will help to explain the pruning procedure. After harvesting the fruit in early summer from the floricanes, you should prune out these old woody floricanes at ground level. At the same time, primocanes are beginning to emerge, often growing above the existing floricanes. Prune off the tips of the primocanes at the same time you are removing the old floricanes. This will promote branching and will encourage additional new growth.

If you do not have blackberries in the landscape yet and you are considering planting them, hold off until the cool of fall arrives. Planting blackberries in the heat of summer will only cause stress to yourself and the plant. This crop ought to be planted in fall to early spring.

In the meantime, you can begin to find the perfect spot in the yard for blackberries and prepare the soil for a fall planting. Blackberries prefer full sun and a well-drained soil. A great soil for blackberries is one that is high in organic matter and has a pH of 6.0 to 6.5. As a general rule of thumb, blackberry roots cannot tolerate wet soils, so consider plating uphill or creating a "pitcher's mound" to plant on.

In a good blackberry soil, nitrogen will typically be the only limiting nutrient. Required rates of phosphorus, potassium and other elements will vary from soil to soil and should be based on a soil analysis. Submitting a soil sample

to the LSU AgCenter will indicate the precise supplemental fertilizers to be used. An early spring and midsummer application of a complete garden fertilizer, such as 10-10-10, is recommended in most situations.

Many great varieties are available to choose from at your local independent garden centers. They include Brazos, Arapaho, Apache and Natchez. Feel free to plant as many varieties as you desire, but only one variety is required to produce fruit. Unlike blueberries, which require two different varieties to cross-pollinate in order to bear fruit, the blackberry is a self-fertile fruit — just another characteristic that makes blackberries an easy addition to your landscape. ■

Volunteers Welcome

Want to support the gardens and enjoy the great outdoors? Stop by and see what we have to offer. Or visit our website at lsuagcenter.com/botanicgardens. Click on the Support tab, then Volunteer. You can also call us at 225-763-3990 or send us an email at BotanicGardens@agcenter.lsu.edu. We'd love to hear from you!

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Thursdays in the Garden
- Receptionist to greet visitors
- Children's field trip docent
- Trail Masters
- And much more with our many associated

organizations, including the Baton Rouge Camellia Society, Herb Society, East Baton Rouge Master Gardener Association and the Friends of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden

Did you know that the National Institutes of Health recommends 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day to help prevent and control high blood pressure? Gardening and raking leaves count! So does walking 2 miles in 30 minutes. There's no better place than the Botanic Gardens at Burden to up your vitamin D intake with a little sunshine, get in your daily recommended dose of exercise and enjoy a bit of talk therapy alongside other nature enthusiasts!

Volunteer orientations will be announced periodically and are a great occasion to come out and learn more about all the activities available at the Botanic Gardens. ■



Master Gardeners at work



Corn Maze concessionaire



Camellia planting underway



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Upcoming Events at LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden

July 2018

July 2	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden	Reflections in the Garden — "Mules and Tobacco: Hybrid Vigor and Genetic Strategies," Cindy Moran.
July 14-15	9 a.m.-5 p.m. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society Show July 14 Baton Rouge Orchid Society Show July 15	Annual show and sale. Orchid exhibition, growing advice and vendors. Free admission.
July 18	7:00 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.
July 26	6:30 p.m.	Baton Rouge Unit of the Herb Society of America	Monthly meeting — "Water Features in the Garden," Charbel and Ruth Harb.
July 30 - Aug. 3	9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.	Byzantine Icon Workshop	Create an icon using gold leaf and paint. 5-day retreat with lunch included. \$350. Limited enrollment of 20.

August 2018

Aug. 6	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden	Reflections in the Garden — "Ornamental Edibles for Fall," Johnny Naylor.
Aug. 7	6 p.m.	East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners	Monthly meeting.
Aug. 15	7:00 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.
Aug. 23	6:30 p.m.	Baton Rouge Unit of the Herb Society of America	Monthly meeting. "Learn New Herb Crafts."

September 2018

Sept. 4	6 p.m.	East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners	Monthly meeting.
Sept. 8	9 a.m.-11 a.m.	Children's Gardening Series	"Plants Need Friends, Too — Companion Planting." With snack and take-home craft. Ages 6-12. Register at angwall@cox.net . \$15.
Sept. 10	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden	Reflections in the Garden — "Stunning, Show-Stopping Tropicals," Tyler Carr.
Sept. 15	9 a.m.-noon, every 30 mins.	StoryTime in the Garden	Storybook reading and imagination-themed activities in the garden. Ages 3 - 8.
Sept. 19	7:00 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.
Sept. 27	6:30 p.m.	Baton Rouge Unit of the Herb Society of America	Monthly meeting. "Blending Your Own Herbal Teas," Carol Roshto and Julie Walsh.

October 2018

Oct. 1	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden	Reflections in the Garden — "The Courtyards and Gardens of A. Hays Town," Leslie Gladney and Blanche Town Gladney.
Oct. 2	6 p.m.	East Baton Rouge Master Gardeners	Monthly meeting.
Oct. 6	10 a.m.-5 p.m.	Corn Maze Festival	Farm animals, pumpkin and face painting, corn box, zip line, hay maze, giant sling shots, plus hay mountain and hay rides. \$10.
Oct. 6	9 a.m.-11 a.m.	Children's Gardening Series	"Berry-rific Plants." With snack and take-home craft. Ages 6-12. Register at angwall@cox.net . \$15.
Oct. 6	9 a.m.-noon, every 30 mins.	StoryTime in the Garden	Storybook reading and imagination-themed activities in the garden. Ages 3 - 8.
Oct. 6-7	8 a.m.-5 p.m.	Harvest Days	Living history demonstrations and activities of harvest times in the 1800's. Regular museum admission charged.
Oct. 17	6 p.m.	Wine and Roses	Friends of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden's annual formal dinner with cocktails in the Burden Rose Garden. \$115 members/\$125 non-members
Oct. 13, 20 and 27	10 a.m.-5 p.m.	Corn Maze Saturdays	Farm animals, hay and corn mazes, corn box, pumpkin decorating, zip line, hayride, hay mountain, giant sling shots, and concessions. \$10.
Oct. 17	7:00 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.
Oct. 25	6:30 p.m.	Baton Rouge Unit of the Herb Society of America	Monthly meeting. "Beekeeping in South Louisiana: Yes, You Can," Capital Area Beekeepers Association.
Oct. 27	6-9 p.m.	Night Maze & Bonfire	Farm animals, hay and corn mazes, corn box and hay mountain and evening bonfire with s'mores and music. \$10.
Oct. 28	3:30-6:30 p.m.	Haints, Haunts and Halloween: A Rural Life Fall Fair	Old-fashioned country fair activities and treats for ages 2-9. \$5.