



BEAUTIFUL GARDENS BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, November 11, 2009 - 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Goochland Campus

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am with the following people present: Don Hyatt, Candy Lindenzweig, Roger Harris, Lisa Lipsey, Rick Baker, Fred Duis, Bill McCaleb, Alex Niemiera, Barry Flinn, Butch Gaddy, Karen Kelly and Jeff Miller.

Purpose of Meeting - Doug gave a brief update on Beautiful Gardens and the need to update the Beautiful Gardens Business Plan with the pending departure from Virginia Tech of Dr. Rumen Conev to a new position in Canada (see attached announcement), to support the 2010 budget request to the VNLA for continued funding of \$25,000, to re-evaluate the use of grants from the Virginia Tobacco Commission, and the re-allocation of the balance of the current Tobacco Commission grant. On behalf of the VNLA Board, Candy expressed concerns from the board about the BG program that should be addressed in the Business Plan and that if BG would require more of Jeff's time, the committee needs to advise the VNLA Board.

Review the minutes of August 25, 2009 meeting, it was moved to approve the minutes as distributed, seconded and passed.

Executive Director Report – Dr. Rumen Conev

Grants - A grant proposal titled "Promotion of Native Plants and Sales in VA" has been submitted to the VDACS/USDA Specialty Crop Block Program and approved for funding. The budget of \$25,000 has been approved over 2 year period. The major items are: 25% FTE salary and benefits for Lisa Lipsey, travel - \$830 per year over 2 years, materials and supplies - \$850 per year, \$1450 contractual services (which include BG web site upgrade), and small amount for honorariums for invited speakers for meetings with nurserymen on the importance of promotion (not only production) of native to VA and South Eastern US plants.

The partial coverage of Program Coordinator's salary and benefits for 2 years, as well as the funding for travel with no restrictions to Southside and Southwest VA only, will help the program gain more independence from the Tobacco Commission.

Novel germplasm acquisition for testing

I am bringing to the Urban Horticulture Center in Blacksburg new 141 Magnolia hybrids bred by Richmond Master Gardener Bill Smith. They will be overwintered in hoop house in the Center and planted in the spring of 2010 next to the 143 hybrids already planted at the UHC. Two of these hybrids already bloomed the first year after planting. The germplasm is product of multiple interspecific hybridizations, so it is reasonable to expect that the huge variability in this population could generate valuable genotypes for commercial use.

A visit to the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Station in North Carolina has been planned for Nov 17'09. The goal of this meeting is to introduce Lisa Lipsey to Prof. Tom Ranney who is the most prolific breeder in landscape plants on the East Coast. This will facilitate the further contacts and eventually exchange of germplasm for testing. The station is situated in USDA cold hardiness zone 6b; therefore the plants developed there should perform well in VA too.

Virginia Tech Update - Roger Harris discussed meetings with the new Dean for the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture & Life Sciences (CALs), Dr. Alan Grant, on January 12 with the VNLA board in Richmond and with the VGIC on January 13. Roger has also met with Rick Rudd, Interim Associate Dean and Director of Virginia Cooperative Extension, about Rumen's position and is preparing a proposal for a full-time extension position with at least 2/3 coming from VA Tech for Lisa Lipsey. The position would be responsible to agents about nursery practices and the major part of her responsibilities would be with Beautiful Gardens. Lisa should be able to follow up on existing plant evaluations. The Department of Horticulture fully supports the Beautiful Gardens program.

Summary of Business Plan Updates:

- **JSRCC** – David Seward
 - Will continue to propagate 1,000 plus *Ilex Virginia* in the spring (they have about 750 rooting now)
 - Are acclimating some of the lilies in a cool greenhouse.
 - Will work on a propagation/tissue culture/breeding training programs if some of the VDACS Demo Greenhouse funding can be used for this.
 - Don Hyatt has PowerPoint presentations on these programs that can be used
- **IALR** – Barry Flinn
 - Will get dates for VNLA representatives to meet with IALR staff to discuss cooperative agreements with the new commercial tissue culture lab and he will send draft agreements to review before the meeting in December. (Tissue culture – one person can process about 2,000 plants per month at the commercial lab).
 - Don Hyatt will provide Azalea germplasm for tissue culture at IALR (**Evergreen Azaleas**: ‘Koromo Shikibu’, ‘Fairfax’, ‘Walter’s Pinwheel’, and ‘Cardinal’s Crest’) and **Rhododendrons**: *R. carolinianum* x ‘Crater Lake’, ‘Martin Keister White’, *R. metternichii* ‘Hyatt Form’, *R. makinoi*, ‘Hyatt Form’)
- Maymont Flower Show – BG will not exhibit at the 2010 show, but will provide brochures at the Colesville Nursery display and the Master Gardener’s booth.
- Alex Niemiera will chair the Advisory Committee for Beautiful Gardens and will establish more communications with the current and new advisors.
- Plants of Distinction plants will be announced 2 years out at each MANTS meeting.
- Executive Committee will meet by conference call once a month and will handle day-to-day decisions on Beautiful Garden’s direction and activities.
- Plant patenting – Jeff will check with Brent Heath about a group that works with plant patenting.
- BG Plant tags – it was the consensus to use 4” labels on pots, instead of stick stakes at the grower level, and they would be applied mostly at the retail level
- Newsletter Column – Lisa Lipsey will provide a Beautiful Gardens Column in each issue of the VNLA Newsletter.
- Plant Database – the committee will research database applications that can provide better database management and reporting of plant material, locations, production/testing status, source, availability, etc.
- New plant germplasm sources – Alex will work with Lisa in establishing more contacts with potential sources of plants for testing and possible introduction. More exposure will be given to plant nominations in the VNLA Newsletter and the E-News.
- The current business plan was reviewed and updates were made as needed. (see attached revised plan)
- Redefined job responsibilities – The responsibilities of the Beautiful Gardens Executive Director were re-evaluated and assigned to the Executive Committee, Program Coordinator and sub-committees.
- Develop timelines for major activities and goals: the committee will work on specific timelines for plant introduction, propagation and production time, distribution to growers and availability for marketing.
- Bringing some new people onto the committees for new ideas and new energy is a priority. A new chair of the Plant Selection Committee is being solicited to fill the vacant position.
- Continuing search and applications for grant/support funds – Rick Baker, Roger Harris and Alex Niemiera will work on identifying potential sources and filing appropriate applications.

Next meeting: MANTS on Wednesday, January 6, 2010, 3-5 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

Respectively submitted, Jeff Miller

Dr. Rumen Conev has accepted a position as a Principle Investigator, Horticulture Crop Breeding at Vineland Research and Innovation Centre, Ontario, Canada

Among Conev's responsibilities will be to establish a task force group which will include university, government, and private sector partners. Rumen will manage an independent breeding research program, supervising a team of postdoctoral researchers, technicians, and graduate students, and will actively interact with the molecular biologists on campus and with international collaborators as well. His team will be developing novel germplasm and assisting in commercialization of competitive to the world markets cultivars working in partnership with various horticulture sectors in Ontario. He will collaborate primarily with grape and wine, landscape, greenhouse vegetables, and greenhouse floriculture industries in the province. Rumen will hold an Adjunct Professor status at the Department of Plant Agriculture at the University of Guelph.

Vineland is an independent, not-for-profit organization targeting a status of a world-class research institution and international hub for horticulture research, innovation and commercial activity:

<http://www.vinelandresearch.com/Default.asp?id=1&l=1>

The research is industry driven and project based, designed to solve specific problems of horticulture industry in Ontario and Canada. The Centre is supported by the federal and provincial governments, and by industry check-off system.

- Roger Harris, Interim Horticulture Department Head
