
Minutes/Notes – Beautiful Gardens

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

10:00 to 4:00

at the J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Goochland Campus

10:00 am. - Call to Order – Doug Hensel, Chairman, with the following people present: Doug Hensel, Duane Shumaker, Rumen Conev, Lisa Lipsey, Barry Flinn, Kadong Da, Rick Baker, Karen Kelly, Neal Beasley, John Wise, David Seward, Butch Gaddy, Fred Duis and Jeff Miller.

Review of Board Meeting Minutes – Doug Hensel read the minutes/notes from the January 7 & 8, 2009 meetings at MANTS. It was moved to accept the minutes as presented, seconded and passed.

Financial Reports - Jeff reviewed the current financial report and draft 2009 budget, and reviewed the balances still available on the current Tobacco Commission grant. Some of the tobacco grant funds need to be re-allocated from the original allocations. (report attached).

Several options for reallocating the funds are:

- Rumen suggested that we may need to ask for an extension to the end of the year, since no Tobacco grants will be available this year
- Funding another plant finding trip (in lieu of the originally planned trip to the IPM in Essen.)
- Extending the IALR contract for Kadong Da to continue working on tissue culture protocols on past the end of the current contract after June 30.

Rumen –Brief update on Beautiful Gardens – Rumen said that reports on IPM Show in Essen were that the show was focused on annuals and perennials and was more retail oriented and might not have been a good fit for BG this year.

He has also talked to David Creech at Mast Arboretum, which has a significant woody ornamental collection and does plant collection trips.

Discussed the planned hybridizing workshops which he needs time to prepare. He will do a presentation at the Master Gardener College in June, but won't have time to start presenting the workshops until this fall or next spring.

Most important part of his job is to bring money to the program. He is applying for a USDA Specialty Crop with Beautiful Gardens as the core along with a research program. He will be looking at the potential of developing peaches for ornamental use with Ralph Scorza at USDA, will be working with Amy Wright in Alabama and Dr. Rutto from VSU on Kalmia breeding and research, and ISRR will continue to be a partner in propagation and breeding research of herbaceous plants. Testing will be a combination of extension and outreach. He will have various collaborators and there will be requests for funding a technician (Lisa Lipsey) and paid summer help for test site evaluation over a 3-year period.

Lisa Lipsey – Update on plant selection, test sites, plant selection & availability, 2010 and 2011 plant selection

Plant Evaluation data collection is not working as well as it should. We need to streamline the evaluation system and simplify the evaluation forms. She suggested that we only rely on several people at each site and have a staff person help with the evaluation. It was also suggested to possibly provide funding at the tests sites (Norfolk, Bedford, Blacksburg) for a staff person. Lisa will be supervising the evaluation process this spring.

The current hardiness zones on the current test sites are:

- 6a Blacksburg
- 6b Glade Spring
- 7a Bedford
- 7a South Boston
- 8a Norfolk

Lisa reviewed plants for 2011 and six were selected:

- *Edgeworthia chrysantha*
- *Myrica cerifera* 'Little Bull'
- *Hesperaloe parviflora*
- *Iris cristata* 'Tennessee White'
- *Rudbeckia* 'Early Bird Gold'
- *Narcissus* 'Golden Echo'

Lisa distributed a report on New Plants in the BG Program, plants in tissue culture production at ISRR and a list of projected promotion year for new plants in the program. (see attached report)

Barry Flinn distributed a report on the status of status of the native azalea propagation, the *in vitro* induction of hexaploid plants from colchicine-treated triploid daylily, the *in vitro* micropropagation for *Helleborus x hybridus*, and the *in vitro* micropropagation for *Helleborus x hybridus* elite lines in different development stages.

Grower Workshops – Rick Baker reported that an introductory workshop is scheduled for the Halifax Ag Center, 7-9 pm, Monday, March 2. The program has been lined up, growers are being contacted and extension agents have also been notified.

- The program will start with Doug Hensel giving opening remarks and background of the Beautiful Gardens program.
- Rumen Conev will provide a summary of the program concept.
- Barry Flinn will cover the basics of tissue culture propagation.
- John Wise will review the traditional methods of propagation.
- Joyce Latimer will cover procedures for growing out liners and basic greenhouse management for liner production.
- Jack Campbell will give an overview of the ornamental market, standards and emerging trends.
- Rick Baker will explain the Tobacco Commission involvement, a pilot greenhouse possibility, and will moderate and coordinate questions.

It will be an educational/overview meeting for the growers attending and it will be kept simple, informative and hopefully encouraging to some to participate.

There was a discussion of possible nurseries and people to work with the BG program in training growers to transition tissue culture plants to the liner stage.

Demonstration Greenhouse – retrofitting a tobacco greenhouse to have a prototype on how to take tissue culture plants to the liner stage was discussed. There are funds available in the VDACS grants for this.

Marketing progress – Rick Baker distributed a “talking points” guideline for anyone to use when they are working with any media, so everyone is providing the same information on Beautiful Gardens and an updated list of participating Virginia garden centers for 2009.

- He will have a display at the Maymont Flower Show this week.
- Rick discussed the marketing kit for retailers which he has been distributing to them as he visits them in January and February. Rick will re-visiting each garden center at least two times during the spring to be sure the program is working for them.
- He will be setting up a display at McDonald's Garden Center in early March.
- Neal is working with Richard Nunnally to develop a video on the BG program and will do some filming at Claytor Nature Study Center, IALR and in Richmond.
- Sylvia Wright and VDACS are sending out news releases to trade and consumer publications and newspapers.
- The 2010 Plants of Distinction brochure to be published by this fall.
- Rumen reported that the hits on the website were way up.
- Jeff Miller discussed the need to establish a better photo library of high resolution photos of BG plants, test sites, and people involved in the program as we get into the marketing and promotion of Beautiful Gardens.

Liner production / guidelines for distribution and selling of plant liners to growers – Butch Gaddy will send a letter to growers and ask for orders for liners for 2009, 2010 and 2011 plants, and BG will coordinate line production/acquisition.

There was a discussion on possible commercial growers in the tobacco region who could be contacted about growing tissue culture plants on to the liner stage. Rick will be making several contacts, as well as at the grower workshop. Fred Duis will be checking with a grower in Bedford County about also doing this.

There was a discussion on the need for a commercial tissue culture lab. The one planned for IALR is still in the planning stage. This lab and a greenhouse were a critical part in the Beautiful Gardens program and are now causing a obstacle in getting tissue culture plants for the program.

Beautiful Gardens expectations of JSRCC for coming year – David Seward offered some of their space for the transition of tissue culture plants to liner stage if there is a delay in getting some commercial growers lined up.

New business: Date of Next Meeting will be determined for sometime in June.

Adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Respectively submitted, Jeff Miller, VnLA Exec Dir
