



BEAUTIFUL GARDENS® MINUTES

2009 Summer Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 25, 2009, 10:00 to 4:00
J. Sargeant Reynolds C. C., Goochland Campus

10:17 am – The meeting was called to order by Doug Hensel, with the following people present: Fred Duis, Duane Shumaker, Barry Flinn, Dick and Judith Tyler, Don Hyatt, Rumen Conev, Rick Baker, Lisa Lipsey, Bill McCaleb, Neal Beasley, Butch Gaddy, and Jeff Miller.

Review of Board Meeting Minutes on May 27, 2009, a motion was made to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, seconded and passed.

Open Forum discussion on Beautiful Gardens:

Financial update: Jeff Miller presented current financial reports noting that there was currently \$14,473 in the checking/savings accounts. He presented a revised 2009 Draft Budget listing the Tobacco Commission reimbursements requested and received, funds still available, and estimated expenses for the rest of 2009, leaving an estimated balance of \$12,516 cash available. (see attached financial/budget report) He also recommended that we request an extension of the current grant into 2010.

Grant(s) update: Rumen reported that he still had not heard back a response from the \$1.77 million USDA grant through Virginia Tech of which 1/7 would be for Beautiful Gardens program for 3 years. Final determination is supposed to be by 9/30/09. The smaller USDA grant through Virginia Tech and VDACS is also still pending. The next round of Tobacco Commission Agri-Business grant deadline is November 2 for fiscal year 2010.

Rick Baker noted that the VDACS promotional funds expire at the end of 2009 and the demo greenhouse grant can be extended up to another 1 ½ years if needed.

Bill McCaleb suggested that the Beautiful Gardens Committee meet with some of the tobacco commission members and Tim Pfohl in Danville to review the ongoing projects. He discussed potential nursery growers to help with the educational process of training tobacco growers in liner production and/or to begin liner production for Beautiful Gardens plants. He also suggested some contacts in southside to meet with to discuss the best way to approach the political issues regarding grant funds.

Rumen Conev reported on progress on the flowering peach selections. He noted that the *Persica* plants from HRAREC were planted at all the test sites as well as at Bennett's Creek Nursery. 160 sourwood seedlings were ordered this spring for grafting HRAREC selections, but only about 30 seedlings were adequate for budding.

Other items of discussion:

When, and the process to patent potential BG plants and the naming process for patenting and then for marketing.

Plant Selection: Lisa Lipsey reported that she and Rumen had met with Mark Worthington about potential plants for introduction and had also talked to Tony Avent about the possibility of testing his plants for hardiness.

2010 Plants of Distinction brochures were distributed.

The continuation of Plants of Distinction was discussed and Neal Beasley noted that part of the Beautiful Gardens program is educating the consumer on what is available on the market.

Judith Tyler suggested that Cole Burrell would be a good resource on plant introduction for BG.

2011 Plants of Distinction – several potential plants discussed were Azaleas 'White Spider', Koromo Shikibu, and Sandra's Green Ice. Don Hyatt will send some photos and additional details on these plants and other potential plants.

Jocelyne's Pink Bouquet – We seem to be running into a concern of how to handle the Lily plants now that Claire is no longer growing. Butch Gaddy will talk to Brent Heath at Brent & Becky's Bulbs about field testing the lily in their gardens and in containers. Some lilies will also be planted at the Bedford test site. He will also talk to them about a realistic timeline for mass production of the bulbs to market salability. The consensus was that this is a potential introduction for 2013.

2012 – Hellebore are on track by Pine Knot Farms

Other sources of plants for testing – Fred Duis stressed the need to be acquiring new sources for germplasm for testing and possible introduction and should be the main topic at the next meeting.

Test sites – Lisa reported that there were still some repair needs for the shade structure at the Bedford site

Liner Production: A missing link in our program was discussed. We need to have a specific written agreement outlining rules, regulations, expectations (from us as well). Who pays for what, etc.

IALR Commercial Tissue Culture Lab and greenhouse should be ready within 30-45 days to begin commercial tissue culture production and needs to know what BG plants they need to bulk up. Barry Flinn also wants to develop a partnership agreement with Beautiful Gardens. It was the consensus that Duane Shumaker, Ed Tankard, Mark Maslow and Jeff Miller meet with Barry at ILAR in the near future to discuss possibilities.

Workshops in tobacco region to find liner growers – we need specific timelines and who is responsible for the workshops.

***Ilex* 'Virginia'** – Is anyone propagating the *Ilex* Virginia? Who is encouraging growers to produce? *Ilex* Virginia is our “gold nugget” at the moment and we need to exploit it more.

We need to get more growers and retailers involved in BG. Once a year at MANTS is not cutting it.

Partnerships with the Master Gardeners and Beautiful Gardens needs to be improved and enhanced as a participation partnership.

News releases – two publications had picked up info and ran articles on Beautiful Gardens Plants of Distinction:

- NMPPro featured *Ilex* Virginia in their Green Guide section in July 2009
- The American Gardener (magazine for the American Horticultural Society) featured the *Cercis* “Don Egolf” in their Gardener's Notebook in the March/April 2009 issue.

Rick Baker – gave a marketing update noting that the response to the use of BG tags by growers did not work as well as expected. For the spring of 2010, he has developed a 6x8” sign with the BG logo and “Recommended Plant of Distinction” for garden centers to display with these plants rather than trying to tag each individual plants.

Feedback from VNLA Field Day – the 2010 Plants of Distinction brochure was distributed at the VNLA Field Day as well as the 2010 plant poster.

The next meeting date is tentatively set for November 10. [actual date will be November 11]

Being on other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectively submitted, Jeff Miller
