



**BEAUTIFUL GARDENS®**  
**2009 Spring Board Meeting**  
**@ J. Sargeant Reynolds C. C., Goochland Campus**  
**Minutes**

**Wednesday, May 27, 2009 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

10:10 am - Call to Order by Doug Hensel with the following people present: Dick and Judith Tyler, Duane Shumaker, Fred Duis, Alex Niemiera, Roger Harris, Lisa Lipsey, Butch Gaddy, Kadong Da, Barry Flinn, Jack Freeman, Rumen Conev, Jeff Miller,

**Review of Board Meeting Minutes** – February 18, 2009 by Doug Hensel

**Update on Beautiful Gardens®** was presented by Dr. Rumen Conev:

- June 15 is the deadline for the next round of Tobacco grant applications, but won't know the status of our current USDA grant application until after June.
- The April USDA grant application is for a 3-year period for \$1.7 million with another \$1.7 million in match in-kind participation by other BG partners and would cover, among other things:
  - plant evaluations and 50% salary/benefits for a technician, and 50% from another section of the grant for the balance of the salary/benefits for a technician.
  - Wages for summer workers, for 2 people at test sites.
  - \$2,000/year to purchase plants,
  - \$2,000/yr for travel to test sites.
  - Extension portion would cover greenhouse training courses for 3 years, Year 1 on basic training, Year 2 will be advanced training, Year 3 advanced greenhouse training and retrofitting
  - Financial estimates for demand and supply with Virginia Tech Ag Economics Department with interviews of growers, retailers, and consumers utilizing 2 graduate students.
- Glade Springs and South Boston will be observation sites, but test data will not be collected. Weather data will still be collected at South Boston and downloaded to a computer. Bedford and South Boston and are in same cold zone, but in different heat and soil.
- **Plant Review by Rumen**
  - Bill Smith's Magnolia hybrids with crosses of 27 varieties.
  - Variegated pagoda Dogwood, propagation of variegated portion has been started
  - Ornamental Peaches grafted in 2007 and planted in spring of 2008 at the Urban Horticulture Center and the test sites with positive responses for performance so far
  - Oleander had winter injury and dieback
  - Plants acquired from National Arboretum: 'Betsy Ross' lilac, *Callicarpa* 'Duet'

**Financial report** by Jeff Miller on the 2009 Budget and status of the Tobacco grant status. There is approximately \$23,000 still available on the current grant that has not been spent.

### **Committee Reports:**

**Lisa Lipsey** - Update on plant selection, testing sites (see attached report)

**Kadong Da** presented an update from IALR on the current status of plants in tissue culture

<b>IALR Commercial Lab Potential Production capacity</b>	
Theoretical (Jocelyne's Pink) <i>(Cotoneaster bollutas)</i>	$3^{12} = 531,441/\text{yr}$ $= 4,400/\text{mo}$ $= 2,200/\text{day}$ $= 1,100/2\text{person}\cdot\text{day}$ $= 550/4\text{person}\cdot\text{day}$ $= 275/8\text{person}\cdot\text{day}^*$
Present condition	In vitro plant: 2,000; Plug plant: 2,000.

**Jack Freeman** – IALR Development, reported that they have a proposal submitted to the Danville Regional Foundation for approximately \$1 million over a 3-year period to complete the commercial lab setup and operate it for the period under the supervision of Kadong Da and up to four technicians, beginning September 1, if funding is approved.

**Rick Baker** -Update on marketing of BG (see attached reports)

- Workshop update
- Financial update
- Demonstration Greenhouse

**Butch Gaddy** - Liner Plant update – see Lisa Lipsey's report for liner production with Claire Robertson.

Lisa Lipsey will contact Brent and Becky's Bulbs about growing out the Jocelyne Lily. This lily won't directly benefit many Virginia growers, but has great potential for a revenue stream to help bring sustainability to the program.

#### **Addressing VNLA concern with future funding of BG**

Accountability and concerns from some VNLA members was presented by Doug for discussion. The 'Plants of Distinction' program have clouded the purpose of the plant introduction program, there are concerns with plant selections for the 'Plants of Distinction', why have BG tags now, and concerns about getting "new" plants into testing and production.

#### **Questions:**

- Can IALR commercial tissue culture production sell extra production to the open market with royalty payments to BG?
- What do we do if the next grant does not come through?
- How much money do we need to continue to operate next year?
- Need to determine what and when to patent plants, amount of royalty, patent process and who makes these decisions?
- 2010 Plants of Distinction – need to get photos and info together for a brochure and get commitments from growers to produce these.
- What are the timelines, procedures and costs for plants coming out of tissue culture?
- Leadership – who makes final decisions on questions - Chairman, Rumen as Executive Director, Beautiful Gardens Executive Committee?
- Follow-up with tobacco growers needs to be soon on establishing liner production from tissue cultured plants.

#### **Future actions:**

Rumen and Lisa will prepare a presentation that Rumen will make at the VNLA Board meeting on June 3 on the current status of the Beautiful Gardens program and future plans with input from Barry Flinn at IALR.

Lisa and Rumen will contact more individuals involved in plant breeding and introduction to establish sources of new plants for the program.

A motion was made by Butch Gaddy to make a firm commitment to designate the triploid daylily for introduction in 2012 (ownership: 50% IALR, 25% Linda Pinkham, 25% Beautiful Gardens); the Jocelyne Couture-Nowak Lily

for introduction in 2013 (100% Beautiful Gardens ownership); and a Helleborus in 2014. It was seconded and passed.

Set next meeting date: Doug will look at possible dates and get back with the committee.

Adjourn – being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

*Respectively submitted, Jeff Miller*

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## **Report on Beautiful Gardens® Trial Sites**

### **Additions to Trials, Spring 2009**

Plants that will be added to the trials this spring are:

- *Ilex glabra* selection from Mike Graham
  - This inkberry holly remains full to the ground without undue pruning
- *Ilex glabra* ‘Compacta’ – comparison plant
- *Cestrum* ‘Orange Peel’ – perennial in warmer zones, annual in colder
- *Agave virginica* ‘Spot’ – to determine hardiness

It has been suggested by Jack Campbell, member of the Plant Selection Committee, that a dwarf wax myrtle, *Myrica cerifera pumila*, be trialed along side *Myrica cerifera* ‘Little Bull’. Jack indicated in his ‘Plant Nomination Form’ that the *pumila* strain has proven to be more cold hardy than the ‘Little Bull’.

Linda Pinkham has suggested other plants for trial – see below.

### **Trial Plants**

Many of our trial plants are doing well. The following are plants that may have potential for future introduction.

#### **‘Axminster Gold’ *Symphytum x uplandicum* z5-9**

Quart plants were planted spring 2008 beneath shade structures at two of the test sites – UHC and Bedford. One plant was planted in a landscape setting at the Hahn Horticulture Garden. All plants increased greatly in size the first growing season, all emerged from winter dormancy with no problems, and are just beginning to flower. Flowers are pink standing above the foliage. Noteworthy characteristics – deer tolerant, attracts hummingbirds, fast grower, showy foliage, blooms early summer. One concern would be that liners are not readily available and propagation is somewhat difficult as indicated by the following: “A much sought after perennial that is quite rare in the trade because of it's difficulty in propagating itself. Root cuttings typically will produce all green plants. ‘Axminster Gold’ must be divided at the crown or flowering stem cuttings be rooted. There is still a small percentage that will not come true via these methods.” (from [http://www.rizreyes.com/Symphytum\\_Axminster\\_Gold.html](http://www.rizreyes.com/Symphytum_Axminster_Gold.html))

#### ***xAmarcrinum* ‘Fred Howard’ z7-10**

Plants were given by Linda Pinkham and planted at the UHC and Bedford in full sun the spring of 2008. One of the four plants at Bedford bloomed in early October, and one of the four plants at UHC bloomed. All eight plants are up and growing. Frost did damage the tips of emerging leaves at the UHC, but plants have recovered nicely. ‘Fred Howard’ may be more cold hardy than the z7 indicated.

From Plant Delights website: “The short, glossy, strap-like leaves to 18" give rise in the hottest part of summer to 2' stalks, each topped with 6-8 large, lovely pink, exquisitely fragrant flowers. As soon as one stalk finishes flowering, another emerges, and this flowering pattern continues until frost. In colder climates, *xAmarcrinum* makes a superb potted specimen!”

#### ***Chionanthus* ‘Spring Fleecing’**

Planted the summer of 2007 (spring 2008 at Glade Spring), this has been a good performer in both flowering and growth rate as compared to the ‘Seedling’ and to our other evaluation plant, ‘Emerald Knight’. A male cultivar

which to date has shown no disease or insect problems and plants have over-wintered well at all the test sites. With only one full year in evaluation, I believe this has high potential for promotion - a native, small flowering tree that begins blooming in mid-April.

### ***Hemerocallis #33***

Sterile, triploid daylily tested by Linda Pinkham. 100 plants were planted at UHC, fall 2009, 4 plants each were planted at Glade Spring, Bedford and South Boston, and plants were given to NBG. Plants are growing well – at UHC, 85 plants survived the winter. Most of those dead were prolifs, not divisions. At the other sites there has been some mortality, but in general plants are doing well.

### ***Prunus species***

Planted late summer or early fall 2008, all of Rumen's peach selections are doing well. None had any winter damage. Dormant shoots of BG 18, BG 27 and BG 29 were eaten by rabbits but all plants have recovered nicely. Some quick notes:

- **BG 13** – nice columnar form; bloomed well this spring - nice pink, double – fruit small, green, primarily hidden by dense foliage
- **BG 28** – nice rounded form and deep purple leaf color; no fruit

### **Future Trial Plants suggested by Linda**

Peony - Intersectional cross – a beautiful yellow flower color  
Crown of Thorns, *Euphorbia splendens* – annual

### **BG Liner Production – update**

At the suggestion of Fred Duis, Clair Robertson, Horticulture teacher for Bedford Co. schools, VT hort graduate and annual/ perennial grower, was asked to help with the transition of tissue culture liners produced at the Institute for Sustainable and Renewable Resources, Danville. Plants from the tissue culture lab require a time for acclimation from lab to real-world growing conditions, and a period of growth before being sold to Beautiful Gardens® growers.

The first plants, a hybrid lily, were given to Clair on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Her intention is to allow the bulblets to acclimate for a few weeks in her greenhouse, and then transplant survivors into 1801 deep pots using well drained media. She will keep extensive records as to methods, procedures, and the rate of growth.

### **BG Plants at Hahn Hort Garden Sale**

Dr. Holly Scoggins, Associate Professor & Director, Hahn Horticulture Garden, graciously agreed to include BG 2009 Plants of Distinction in their annual spring plant sale. Coordinating with Stephanie Huckestein, Education and Outreach Coordinator, plants were purchased from BG/VNLA member growers and sold with our plant tags. BG plants sold very well with buyers particularly excited about *Musa basjoo* (we had a few single stem, tree-form with no leaves ! that were gone the first morning), *Agapanthus* 'Midnight Blue' and *Cercis* 'Don Egolf'. Butch Gaddy, Colesville Nursery, donated some beautiful *Ilex* x 'Virginia' that also sold that first morning.

Those I spoke with were impressed with the scope of the BG program and the plants that had been selected for our first promotion. Plants advocated by a partnership between VNLA and Virginia Tech seemed to give people a sense of confidence and trust, and many were looking forward to our selections for next year and beyond.

The Gardens have asked if we could have a grouping of our 2009 plants for the silent auction during their Garden Gala on June 13

*Lisa Lipsey, Site Coordinator, May 27, 2009, Board Meeting – J Sargent Reynolds Community College, [llipse@vt.edu](mailto:llipse@vt.edu)*

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## **Marketing Committee Report**

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**BEAUTIFUL GARDENS!**  
A Plant Introduction Program for the Mid-Atlantic and Beyond

To strengthen Virginia's quality and diversity of ornamental plants, the Virginia Nurserymen's Association Horticulture Research Foundation Inc. has initiated its own plant introduction program, Beautiful Gardens®. For 2009, Beautiful Gardens® offer "Plants of Distinction," plants that are not new but are determined to be underutilized in the landscape.



Rick Baker, Market Development Manager in the Division of Marketing, is VDACS' representative to the program. He's shown at the right in the photo with Doug Hensel, President of the Great Big Greenhouse and Nursery in Richmond, which is a distribution site for "Plant of Distinction." According to Rick, The Beautiful Gardens® plant introduction program has been taking shape since 2003. "A group of interested and proactive individuals from many segments of the industry came together and formed an organization that would introduce new plants to the market and expand production opportunities for Virginia growers," he explained.

While most plant introduction programs tempt the gardening public's need to acquire the latest and greatest plants, Beautiful Gardens® focuses on "Plants of Distinction," plants tested across varied climactic zones of the state of Virginia. The result is that customers have confidence in the success of a Beautiful Gardens® selection.

To initiate the 2009 program, Beautiful Gardens® is promoting the following underutilized plants with stable performance in USDA hardiness/AHS heat zones 6a/2 to 8a/7 and excellent ornamental display:

- *Cercis chinensis* 'Don Egolf, Chinese Redbud
- *Helleborus x hybridus* Pine Knot Strains, Lenten Rose
- *Agapanthus x* 'Monmid' Midnight Blue® Lily of the Nile
- *Hydrangea quercifolia* 'Snowflake'. Oakleaf Hydrangea
- *Ilex x* 'Virginia'. Holly
- *Thuja x* 'Steeplechase' (PP), Arborvitae
- *Buxus x*'Green Velvet'. Boxwood
- *Stokesia laevis* 'Peachie's Pick'. Stokes' Aster
- *Musa basjoo*, Hardy Banana

Plant descriptions are available at <http://beautifulgardens.org/promotionplants/Plants2009.htm> . Additional plants are scheduled for release in 2010 and the program is presently soliciting nominations for its 2011 distribution. For details of how to nominate a plant, see [www.beautifulgardens.org](http://www.beautifulgardens.org) and click on the "nominate a plant" option.

**Beautiful Gardens®**  
**Spring 2009 Retail Garden Center**

Status Report — May 27, 2009

This has been our first year/spring introducing the Beautiful Gardens program to the retail garden centers and the buying public. We have had to face challenges presented by the economy, other major branding programs and a higher than anticipated level of indifference from our growers. Following is a brief review of the contacts I've made and the responses generated to date:

- VA Grower Commitment– 15 growers
- Growers Tagging Plants – 3
- Retail Garden Centers – 25 Active Participants – 21
- Tag Revenue - \$616.00 (3 growers –16 garden centers)
- Garden Center Use of Promotional Materials – 21

- Garden Center Web Site Promotion and Link – 5
- Newsletter, Seminar Mention by Garden Center – 12
- Rick's participation in seminars and open houses – 8
- News Releases – VDACS, Jeff, Sylvia Wright, Farm Bureau, Extension, others – 12 plus
- Response to 2009 'plants of distinction' – in order of sales: Hellebores, Agapanthus, Don Egolf, (Holly), Peachie's Pick, Banana. Snowflake, Green Velvet, Steeple Chase.

Observations – Suggestions

1. Garden Center staffs were down this spring due to the economy making their response to BG less enthusiastic.
2. Monrovia 'featured' the Agapanthus this spring.
3. Difficult to get displays up
4. Most used promotional materials to good results – tagging difficult– 6"x8" BG signs well received and used.
5. GC's upset at having to pay for tags (why don't the growers?)
6. Suggest use of more 6"x 8" signs and fewer tags.
7. Have completed 2 to 3 visits per garden center this spring – suggest more frequent visits.

*Provided by Rick Baker, VDACS Division of Marketing, Beautiful Gardens Marketing Committee Chair*

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