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## *Minutes/Notes/Reports - Beautiful Gardens Committee Meeting*

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Monday, November 10, 2008 10:00 to 4:00  
Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, Danville, VA

The meeting was called to order by Doug Hensel with the following present: Linda Pinkham, Bill McCaleb, Lisa Lipsey, Rick Baker, Rumen Conev, Jeff Miller, Greg Eaton, Alex Niemiera, Fred Duis, Butch Gaddy, Neal Beasley, Barry Flinn, Kadong Da, and Jack Freeman.

Doug discussed the status of the Beautiful Gardens program and stressed the need to stay focused on the purpose and goals of the BG program. He noted that the success of the program will be based on the active participation of members and sustainability will be about continuing some things we're doing now, discontinuing some and doing some things differently.

**Financial Status** - Jeff Miller reviewed the status of the current grants and two applications for additional grants. The Tobacco Commission wants to close out the current grant by the end of the year which should be doable. A large portion of the funds are allocated to the tissue culture lab and tissue culture propagation work in Danville at the IALR.

The BG program has a VDACS grant for \$10,000 for marketing and another \$10,000 grant for training tobacco growers in southside and additional marketing.

Another grant request has been filed with VDACS for a portion of the USDA Specialty Crop Funds for \$25,000 for liner production demonstration greenhouses with tobacco growers, marketing, test site expansion, purchase of test plants, tissue culture and contractual services.

A third application has been made to the Tobacco Commission for an Agribusiness grant to initiate liner production from tissue culture plantlets produced by a IALR spin-off company for commercial micropropagation. The same grant addresses the need of BG to continue work with the plant evaluation and testing, program coordinator, economic production analyses, producer training workshops, establishment of tissue culture protocols, etc. Jeff stressed the continued need for establishing additional sources of income to maintain the program until it is self-sustaining. The Tobacco Commission is getting stricter on how their grant funds can be used, which puts additional expenses on the industry to cover.

**Website** – Jeff reported requested input from the committee on content for the website.

**Other suggestions for the program are:**

- Other Plant Introduction Programs in the US have had plant pool when they started marketing program, and we started with no gene pool, so there is a much longer startup period.
- The strength of the industry is not in the tobacco region, but we need to work with them so tobacco region can grow as part of the larger picture. We cannot operate in a vacuum in the tobacco region. We need to emphasis plant trips, plant breeding classes, and develop relationships with plant breeders around the world.
- We need to promote more of what has been done - lots of small banners.
- We need more info in Newsletter and need to play up the promotion effort to get people to come to BG to introduce/promote their new plants.

- The largest VNLA membership category is landscapers and the program benefits need to be marketed to this group also. Larger growers are not as interested as smaller growers who are still developing a market.
- Larger growers want exclusivity for a period of time.
- The PIP program needs to be run as a business for profitability.
- There was a discussion of using annuals and tropical plants. Jim Monroe has agreed to work with Beautiful Gardens through (his?) Hort Couture plant marketing program.

## **Executive Director's Report - Rumen Conev, PhD**

### **1. Revenue Sources:**

The initial steps for materializing the idea for **developing and delivering plant breeding seminars** were made: Development of the curriculum is set for 2009;

The seminars will be tailored for nursery industry professionals, however will be open for Master Gardeners and hobbyists' participation.;

It will be a joint VCE/VNLA program, the registration will be through VNLA and BG web sites.

## **New Plants in the Beautiful Gardens® Pipeline**

By Dr. Rumen Conev<sup>1</sup> and Lisa Lipsey<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Asst. Prof. at Virginia Tech, and Executive Director of Beautiful Gardens®

<sup>2</sup> Res. Spec. at Virginia Tech, and Program Coordinator of Beautiful Gardens®

Collaboration has been established between Dr. Dongyan Hu, a Senior Horticulturist and Vice-Curator at Beijing Botanical Garden in China, Dr. Ralph Scorza, Lead Scientist for the Genetic Improvement of Fruit Crops CRIS Work Unit at the USDA-ARS Appalachian Fruit Research Station, Kearneysville, WV, and Dr. Rumen Conev of Department of Horticulture at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg. In 2007 Conev has selected 30 peach genotypes as promising for ornamental use among the material collected and bred by Dr. Scorza. Conev propagated the selections and in spring 2008 they were planted in the UHC in Blacksburg. The 6 most promising genotypes (see brief descriptions below) were propagated in larger quantities and were made available in 2008 for testing at BG sites. Thirteen more genotypes have been identified as quite unique and with commercial potential in 2008 and therefore brought to UHC and propagated immediately. The germplasm is to be evaluated for either direct commercialization, or for breeding towards developing dwarf landscape/patio plants with excellent ornamental characteristics and edible fruit. In addition, as a part of a larger plant collection trip to China, Drs. A. Niemiera and R. Conev have visited Beijing Botanical Garden in 2008 where several interesting *Prunus* genotypes were identified in the world largest ornamental peach collection. The germplasm is to be requested for import to the US and available to Conev's breeding program after the official procedures with the federal plant quarantine authorities are completed.

### **2008 Plantings at Beautiful Gardens® Trial Sites:**

***Hemerocallis:*** 1 genotype has been planted for statewide testing:

- A sterile, triploid daylily developed by Conev, Pinkham and Li. Pre-testing observations were done by Linda Pinkham. We currently have 115 plants plus those planted in BG site at Norfolk Botanical Garden. At UHC, 100 plants are planted in our BG site with three prolifs remaining in containers; at Glade Spring, Bedford and South Boston, 4 plants at each site are planted for evaluation. The future plans are to continue its testing and meanwhile to increase the number of plants for liner production and promotion in 2012.

***Prunus persica:*** 6 genotypes are being tested under agreement with USDA in our BG sites, as follows:

- A semi-rounded shrub, dwarf habit, green leaf, semi-showy candy pink flowers, not a very prolific bloomer, does not normally produce any fruit;
- A small to mid-size upright dense shrub or small tree branching almost at ground level, small, narrow, very clean green leaf and greenish 1-yr shoots. Abundant bloomer, flowers deep pink, double;

- An upright, dwarf shrub, heterozygous red leaf, clean foliage, large to very large double pink flowers, early blooming;
- A super-dwarf shrub, very large narrow leaves, very nice foliage - homozygous red leaf clusters on top of lush green leaves bellow, excellent contrast, red shoots. Selected for foliage and habit;
- A round dwarf shrub (4x4 ft at 20 years), homozygous red leaf clusters on top of lush green leaves bellow, shiny, glossy leaf, a bit empty at bottom, no fruit. Selected for habit and foliage;
- A columnar dwarf shrub, with long, green, shiny, big leaves, very "tropical" look, large, tasty fruit. Selected for its bold tropical look and nice fruit - potential for marketing as edible landscape plant.

### **2009 Plantings at Beautiful Gardens® Trial Sites**

In spring 2009 the following plants will be planted in Beautiful Gardens® test sites:

An *Ilex glabra* selection made by Michael Graham (to be compared against *Ilex glabra* 'Nigra'); *Cestrum* 'Orange Peel' will be tested for hardiness; A Triploid Daylily developed in Virginia by BG/ISRR/VT team; *Panicum virgatum* 'Cheyenne Sky' (to be compared against *Panicum virgatum* 'Shenandoah'); *Acuba japonica* 'Fructo-Albo' (to be compared vs. *Acuba japonica* 'Variegata'); *Daphne x rollsdorfii* 'Wilhelm Schacht' and *Daphne x rollsdorfii* 'Arnold Cihlarz' will be tested for hardiness

### **Plants in final stage of evaluation and beginning of mass propagation**

*Lilium* x 'Jocelyne's Pink Bouquet'

This lily is being tested across the state and in 2008 had an excellent performance. More research is needed to identify the exact stage and size of the bulbs associated with the magnificent fasciation and formation of 50-150 blooms per plant. A mid-scale propagation has been already initiated and we are prepared with the initial stock for tissue culture mass propagation.

***Virginia Nursery and Landscape Members are strongly encouraged to participate in Beautiful Gardens® plant selection for evaluation and promotion. Please visit frequently our web site [www.beautifulgardens.org](http://www.beautifulgardens.org) where more information and a nomination form are available.***

**NEW directions** – I am going to officially introduce to the Horticulture senior faculty and the Department Head my idea for initiation of a systematic work on collection of hardy and highly ornamental germplasm and developing commercial lines of edible landscape plants.

3. **BG Growers** – Should participating growers benefit by exclusivity on first "new" introductions?

**Barry Flinn gave an update on tissue culture protocols.**

- **Azalea propagation.** They are getting good masses of shoots from tissue culture of azaleas. Working on determining growth rates from different treatments and time to harden off plants for transplanting to the linger stage.
- **Hellebores** – developing protocols that work – developing a high throughput micro-propagation system for Hellebores (*H. niger* and *H. x hybridus*). Linda will meet with the Tyler's about plants they might have available for the Beautiful Gardens introduction.
- **Lilies** – IALR can now produce 5,000 tissue culture plants per year in current lab, ready for growing on to liners in a commercial greenhouse. They also have the possibility of creating new varieties with treatments and somatic propagation.

Barry also discussed the progress of the commercial production greenhouse, and reviewed the business plan and the funding to start the new commercial tissue culture lab, as well as the feasibility of the VNLA as a partner in its establishment.

**Linda Pinkham presented possible 2011 Promotion Plants for BG:**

- *Adina rubella*, Chinese Buttonbush
- *Panicum virgatum* 'Cheyenne Sky', Compact Switch Grass
- *Rudbeckia* 'Early Bird Gold'
- *Cornus kousa* 'Lustgarten Weeping'
- *Parrotia persica*
- *Helleborus x hybridus* Southern Belle (if Danville TC is successful)
- *Iris cristata* 'Tennessee White' (from Don Shadow; should we register it with a different name?)
- *Narcissus* 'Golden Echo' (hybridized by VA growers Brent & Becky Heath)
- *Brunnera* 'Jack Frost'
- *Heuchera* 'Beaujoulais' or 'Pinot Noir' (looks promising in trials)
- *Hemerocallis* 'Shores Of Time' (if Danville could produce in TC)
- *Hemerocallis* 'Catapult Sam' or 'Dances With Giraffes' (from breeding program of VA hybridizers Margo Reed and Jim Murphy) Only one of these 3 daylilies would be selected; Linda will send pictures and specs to BG committee members to make selection of which 1

#### **Possible 2012 Promotion Plants for BG:**

- *Chionanthus* 'Spring Fleecing' (looks promising in trials)
- *Hemerocallis* #33 (maybe after it has been converted to hexaploid)
- *Lilium* 'Jocelyn's Pink Bouquet' (dependent on TC success in Danville)
- *Hemerocallis* 'Shores of Time' Daylily possible 2012 promotion, dormant habit, 3 sets of bloomscapes, 2 scapes per fan, fast increaser, \$40 value now. Lisa and Linda are growing and Bert Carr is growing some use BAP-10 to get plantlets forming on scapes.

**China Trip** - Alex Niemiera did a presentation on his recent trip to China with Rumen Conev on a plant hunting expedition.

#### **Marketing Strategy / Timetable report for Beautiful Gardens® Plants of Merit, Spring 2009 Promotions – Rick Baker**

1. 2009 plants listed on [www.beautifulgardens.org](http://www.beautifulgardens.org)
2. Garden Centers to be listed on [www.beautifulgardens.org](http://www.beautifulgardens.org)
3. Links to Garden Centers and from Garden Center web sites to BG
4. Plant Tags available in December (need good picture of Ilex Virginia)
5. Plant Tags sold to growers for \$.13 for stakes and \$.23 for hangers (from Jeff)
6. Working with Garden Centers to feature BG on their web sites and in their spring ads
7. Winter visits to each Garden Center to discuss displays and give POP material.
8. Participate in and/or consider the following shows:
  - MANTS – Maymont – MAHSC – Get Green (?) – Mid Atlantic Home and Flower Show (?) – Lessburg Flower and Garden Show (?)
9. Use contacts and talents of Sylvia Wright – garden writer (fee ?)
10. VDACS – Elaine Lidholm for written media – Olivia for radio and TV
11. Support from existing gardening shows – Doug, Richard, Andre, Jeff Ishee, others?
12. Farm Bureau communications – Cathy
13. Virginia Garden Clubs – Linda Pinkham
14. Virginia Extension – MG's – Jim Riddell
15. Contact list of Virginia garden writers
16. 2010 plants of merit list – contact participating growers
17. Reach new growers!

Final list of participating retail garden centers and participating growers. (see attached lists)

**Plant Selection Committee** – Linda Pinkham reported on the need to finalize plant selection process and to establish clear guidelines from plant selection to the propagation process.

**Plant propagation update** – David Seward / John Wise - no report (not in attendance). BG needs to establish guidelines & expectations of JSRCC.

**Liner production update** – Butch Gaddy noted the need to establish clear guidelines of expectations of this committee. Barry suggested having a bi-weekly/monthly conference call with BG contacts, Kadong Da.

**Test Sites** - Lisa Lipsey gave an update on plants in our test sites and physical maintenance that needs to be done.

## **REPORT ON TRIAL SITES - BEAUTIFUL GARDENS®**

Lisa Lipsey, Site Coordinator

All trial sites are operating well with data collection and maintenance being done either by Master Gardeners or staff at Virginia Tech Dept of Horticulture, Claytor Nature Study Center, Halifax Co and AREC Glade Spring.

### **Few challenges remain:**

Glade Spring – thistle management - This past growing season, roundup was sprayed every three to four weeks to kill and the site was kept mowed to prevent seed set. Plans are for fall seeding of fescue, and to keep the entire site mowed. Continued spraying of herbicide will be necessary. Trial plants are performing well.

South Boston – clay soils and poor drainage - We lost many newly planted trial plants here, I believe primarily because of high clay content of soil and resulting drainage. Soil at the does varies greatly from row to row and even from one planting hole to the next.

Bedford – shade structure - The snow fencing is deteriorating quickly and will have to be repaired or removed. My suggestion would be to remove the fencing from the entire shade structure and replace with shade cloth. This cloth we would have to purchase. In order to repeat the amount of shade at other test sites, half the structure would have 30% and half would have 80%. We have used shade cloth exclusively at Glade Spring and it works well – easy to install and to remove.

**Data Collection** - In the past, there has been insufficient, incomplete or total lack of data for our evaluation plants. Evaluation forms were re-designed this spring and the process simplified. I spoke with MGs at the sites about how to use these new forms and the evaluation process in general - when to take what measurements, what features of particular plants we were most interested in, sending reminders and sharing observations between sites, etc. My hope is that when all the data is sent to me it will be complete and useful in making decisions about the value of each trial plant.

### **New Plantings at Trial Sites:**

***Hemerocallis* #33** - Sterile, triploid daylily tested by Linda Pinkham. We currently have 115 plants plus those given by Linda to Brian O'Neil for Norfolk. At UHC, 100 plants are planted in our BG site with three prolifs remaining in containers; at Glade Spring, Bedford and South Boston, 4 plants at each site are planted for evaluation.

The future plan is to increase the number of plants for liner production and promotion in 2012.

### **Promising Trial Plants for Promotion:**

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

From observations through this years growing season, I believe ‘Spring Fleecing’ has the greatest potential for promotion. Selected in 1990 by Sam Allen of Tarheel Native Trees, it is a male cultivar of the native species. As I wrote in my report from our last meeting at JSRCC:

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.

I think we should plan for liner propagation and eventual promotion in 2012.

### ***Hesperaloe parviflora***

Plants were delivered Oct 2005 to Norfolk and South Boston. Two plants only remain at South Boston, but they are doing well and bloomed much of the summer. Originally labeled as *Hesperaloe funifera* at our test sites, they are now considered to be *parviflora* from internet searches and in the opinion of Dr. Holly Scoggins.

*Hesperaloe parviflora* is a clumping plant with narrow, dark green arching leaves that grow from the base. Leaves are deeply channeled, have very thin, tightly curled marginal fibers and can grow to 4 feet long, but usually are about 2 feet long. Red Flowered Hesperaloe starts as a single plant, but eventually forms clumps to 3 feet across. A 4 foot to 7 foot tall flower spike shoots from the center of the leaves in summer and fall. Flowers are narrow, tubular and vary in color from salmon to various shades of red, rarely a yellow flowered form is available. These flowers are perfect for attracting hummingbirds.

Holly Scoggins reports that her plants are doing great, over-wintering in well-drained soil, and another gardener in Blacksburg has been growing this plant for years. It is drought tolerant, deer resistant and has an unusual form and flower – very eye catching. Liners are listed as available from Magnolia Gardens and McHutchison ?. Listed for consideration on the 2011 Promotion list.

### **New Plantings at the Trial Sites – Spring 2009**

<u>Evaluation Plant</u>	<u>Comparison Plant</u>
<i>Ilex glabra</i> selection (Michael Graham) (purchase fm/given by MG)	<i>Ilex glabra</i> 'Nigra' (purchase)
<i>Cestrum</i> 'Orange Peel' (purchase fm Lazy SS)	none - test for hardiness
#33 Triploid Daylily (already planted)	existing
<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Cheyenne Sky ' (purchase fm Walters Garden)	<i>Panicum virgatum</i> 'Shenandoah' (purchase fm Walters Garden)
<i>Acuba japonica</i> 'Fructo-Albo' (fm JSRCC)	<i>Acuba japonica</i> 'Variegata' (purchase)
<i>Daphne x rollsdorfii</i> 'Wilhelm Schacht'	none – test for hardiness
<i>Daphne x rollsdorfii</i> 'Arnold Cihlarz' (given by Linda Pinkham; being over-wintered at UHC)	none – test for hardiness

4:00 p.m. Adjourn

*Respectively submitted, Jeff Miller, VNLA Exec. Dir.*

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## ***VNLA Plant Introduction Program Grower Contact List for 2009 Plants of Merit***

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In the spring of 2009, the VNLA's Beautiful Gardens® Plant Introduction Program will begin promotion of "Plants of Merit". These are plants that are relatively unknown and/or underutilized that could help solve problems or enhance the end consumers landscape. These plants are being grown by the following VNLA members, so contact them to order your "Plants of Merit" for 2009. Click here for a Retailer BG Fact Sheet.

If you are a grower of BG plants, and do not see your name here please let us know and your nursery will be added to the list.

Contact Rick Baker at 301-275-2077, [rick.baker@vdacs.virginia.gov](mailto:rick.baker@vdacs.virginia.gov) for promotional posters, banners and brochures.

Bennett's Creek Nursery – Mike Twiford – [mike@bcnursery.com](mailto:mike@bcnursery.com) 1-800-343-4611  
Colesville Nursery– Butch Gaddy – [butchgaddy@comcast.net](mailto:butchgaddy@comcast.net) 804-798-5472  
David's Nursery – David Tankard – [davidsnursery@verizon.net](mailto:davidsnursery@verizon.net) 757-442-7000  
Duis Nursery – Fred Duis – [fred@duisnursery.com](mailto:fred@duisnursery.com) 540-586-0693  
Eastern Shore Nurseries of VA – Robin Rinaca - [esn@esnursery.com](mailto:esn@esnursery.com) 1-800-323-3008  
Horton Nursery – Hoyt March – [hmarch@vt.edu](mailto:hmarch@vt.edu) 757-816-0383  
Ingleside Plantation Nurseries – Fletch Flemer – [fletchf@inglesidenurseries.com](mailto:fletchf@inglesidenurseries.com) 804-224-7111  
Mobjack Nurseries – John Lee Machen – [lisas@mobjack.com](mailto:lisas@mobjack.com) 1-800-729-6625  
Riverbend Nursery – Jim Snyder – [jim@riverbend.com](mailto:jim@riverbend.com) 1-800-638-3362  
Sandy's Plants – Mitzi – [mitzi@sandysplants.com](mailto:mitzi@sandysplants.com) 804-746-7092  
Saunders Bros – Tom Saunders – [tom@saundersbrothers.com](mailto:tom@saundersbrothers.com) 434-277-5455  
Shreckhise Nurseries – Danny, Matt – [nursery@shreckhise.com](mailto:nursery@shreckhise.com) 1-800-628-5871  
Tankard's Nurseries – Ed Tankard – [ed@tankardnursery.com](mailto:ed@tankardnursery.com) 1-800-552-2088  
The Ivy Farm – Richard Davis – [jenniferr@esva.net](mailto:jenniferr@esva.net) 1-888-786-4096  
Waynesboro Nurseries – Kirk Quillen – [kquillen@waynesboronurseries.com](mailto:kquillen@waynesboronurseries.com) 1-800-868-8676

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## *List of Growers by Plant, for 2009 Plants of Merit*

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### *Cercis chinensis*

#### **'Don Egolf' Redbud**

Saunders Bros  
Eastern Shore Nursery  
Duis Nursery  
Shreckhise (sold out)

### *Helleborus x hybridus* **'Pine Knot Strains'**

Riverbend Nurseries  
Sandy's Plants  
The Ivy Farm  
Horton Nursery  
Colesville Nurseries

### *Ilex x 'Virginia'* **Holly**

Mobjack Nurseries

### *Buxus x 'Green Velvet'* **Boxwood**

Saunders Brothers  
Ingleside Plantation Nurseries  
Tankard Nurseries  
Waynesboro Nurseries  
Eastern Shore Nurseries of VA  
Duis Nursery  
Colesville Nurseries  
Shreckhise Nurseries  
Buckhorn Creek Nursery  
Bennett's Creek Nursery  
David's Nursery

### *Stokesia laevis* **'Peachie's Pick'**

#### **Stokes' Aster**

Saunders Bros.  
Sandy's Plants  
Riverbend Nursery  
Duis Nursery  
The Ivy Farm  
Horton Nursery

### *Hydrangea quercifolia* **'Snowflake'** **Oakleaf Hydrangea**

Colesville Nurseries  
Horton Nursery

### *Agapanthus x 'Monmid'* **Midnight Blue®** **Lily of the Nile**

Provided to growers by Monrovia  
Sandy's Plants

### *Thuja x 'Steeple Chase'* **(PP)** **Arborvitae**

Saunders Bros.  
Ingleside Plantation Nurseries  
Duis Nursery  
Shreckhise Nurseries  
David's Nursery

### *Musa Basjoo* - **Hardy Banana**

Saunders Brothers  
Sandy's Plants  
The Ivy Farm  
Horton Nursery  
Duis Nursery  
Colesville Nurseries (few)

