



**Master  
Gardener™**

An educational program of the LSU AgCenter

Louisiana Super  
Plants 2019 2-3

Field Trip to  
Audubon Louisiana  
Nature Center  
in NOE 4-5

Vegucator Notes:  
Safe Chemicals for a  
Sustainable Garden  
(Part 1) 6-7

Field Trip to LSU  
Hilltop Arboretum 8-10

STMGA Plant  
Sale 2019 11-15

Local Farmers  
Markets 16-17

Louisiana Iris 18

## ST. TAMMANY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION

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To see the world in a grain of sand,  
and to see heaven in a wild flower,  
hold infinity in the palm of your hand,  
and eternity in an hour.

William Blake



Photo by J Blazek

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2019 Louisiana Super Plant:  
Lime Sizzler™ Firebush  
(*Hamelia patens* ‘Grelmsiz’  
PP26247)

The Louisiana Super Plant program is an educational and marketing campaign that highlights tough, beautiful, and easy to grow plants that perform well in the Louisiana garden. After several years of research and observation, Dr. Jeb Fields, LSU AgCenter Ornamental Specialist, and the Louisiana Super Plant Selection Committee will be promoting Lime Sizzler™ Firebush as a Louisiana Super Plant for the summer of 2019.



The striking foliage color of the Lime Sizzler firebush provides a nice contrast amongst darker colored plants and adds a brightness to the landscape.

Common firebush, *Hemelia patens*, is a semi-tropical shrub found in the plant family Rubiaceae. Other members of this family include gardenia, pentas, and coffee. Firebush plants are known for their tubular flowers, which make them great additions to butterfly and hummingbird gardens.



2019 Louisiana Super Plant:  
Lime Sizzler™ Firebush  
(*Hamelia patens* ‘Grelmsiz’  
PP26247)

Lime Sizzler™ Firebush is known for its exotic lime-green and yellow foliage. The orange-red flowers produce a lot of nectar, which makes it appealing to all types of pollinators including butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees. It is hardy in USDA zones 9-11. In zone 8b, expect the plant to be root hardy, similar to that of a Luna hibiscus. Expect the bush to reach a height between four to five feet tall and bloom all summer long.



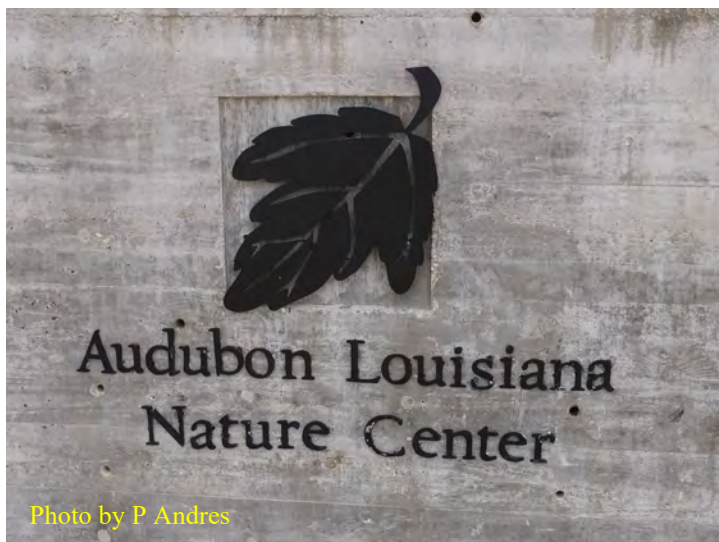
Lime Sizzler firebush can be considered a root-hardy tropical in St. Tammany Parish. Cold weather will damage the above ground parts during winter. As soon as the weather warms, the plant will regrow from the old root system.

Will Afton  
County Agent  
LSU AgCenter





## Audubon Louisiana Nature Center In New Orleans East



The Vegucators took a field trip to the Audubon Louisiana Nature Center (ALNC) in New Orleans East on Thursday February 28, 2019.

Mikayla Mettler gave a demonstration of the site's planetarium.



The ALNC director, Isaac Watts, and ranger Sarah Robertson lead an informative walk through this urban hardwood bottomland forest covering topics such as the center's recovery from hurricane Katrina and the invasiveness of Chinese tallow trees.



## Audubon Louisiana Nature Center In New Orleans East, *continued*

The group was shown the progress made since the reopening of center's 86 acres in October 2017. Many questions were answered regarding flora and fauna found on site.



The field trip was concluded with a visit to ALNC's Botany Center, a greenhouse where many native trees are grown from seeds and saplings.

Paul Andres  
Master Gardener & Vegucator



## Vegucator Notes

### "Safe" Chemicals for Sustainable Gardening: Part One

On March 27, 2019 Mimi Padgett presented a lecture to the Vegucators on Safe Chemicals for Sustainable Gardening. The following is part one of a series based on her lecture.



#### Insecticidal or Horticultural Soap

There are several chemical controls that can be used in your garden. If organic gardening is your goal, then you can use OMRI as a guide. The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) is a nonprofit organization that provides an independent review of products such as fertilizers, pest controls, and livestock health care products. OMRI supports organic integrity by developing clear information and guidance about materials so that producers know which are appropriate for organic operations. If you want more information about OMRI, check out their website at [www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org).



Insecticidal soap and/or horticultural soap is an environmentally friendly application used to eliminate small soft-bodied insects such as aphids, whiteflies, spider mites and mealybugs. This spray may be used indoors or outdoors and on vegetables. It is nontoxic to animals and birds and will not harm beneficial insects. It is derived from petroleum or plant oils. The soap disrupts the cell membranes of the insect resulting in suffocation. It must be applied thoroughly and may need to be reapplied weekly until you attain the desired result. Insecticidal soaps have a beneficial effect in the removal of sooty mold, honeydew and other leaf fungi.

## Vegucator Notes

### "Safe" Chemicals for Sustainable Gardening, *continued*

Do-it-yourself recipe for Insecticidal/horticultural soap:

- Combine one cup of oil (vegetable, peanut, corn, etc.) with one tablespoon of dish washing liquid (such as Dawn). Avoid using any bleach-based soaps.
- Mix two teaspoons of “soap” mixture to one cup of warm water and put in a spray bottle.
- Mix only what you need for a one-day application
- Do not apply on a hot or bright sunny day

Commercially formulated horticultural soaps are available at garden supply stores and sold as either a concentrate or ready-to-use.



Editor's note: Vegucators is a group of STMGA master gardeners who meet at the Covington AgCenter from nine in the morning until noon every first and last Wednesday of the month. The meetings include in depth educational presentations on various horticultural topics. All STMGA members are invited to the presentations and field trips. Topics are announced in MOM. The purpose of the Vegucator group is to create, present, and promote horticultural education. If you want to learn more about becoming a Vegucator, you are welcome to attend any meeting or contact Mimi Padgett or Dawn Lavoie.

Mimi Padgett  
Master Gardener & Vegucator



## STMGA Field Trip On April 4, 2019

The weather did not cooperate. So we donned our raincoats and rubber boots. We toted our umbrellas and we took off for Baton Rouge. Our first stop was LSU Hilltop Arboretum where Peggy Coates, Hilltop's Director, treated us to a virtual tour of the fourteen acres of Hilltop's woodlands and wetlands.



Photo by J Blazek

Peggy is both a master gardener and a landscape designer. She pointed out both the native and non-native plants and trees on the property. She gave us a brief history of Emory Smith's gift of Hilltop to LSU and how it has evolved through the years. She also spoke about documenting our own gardens by using books and on line apps as descriptive and photographic journals.



Photo by J Blazek

Hilltop's bookshop has an incredible selection of gardening books, tools and one-of-a-kind items for any horticultural interest. This bookshop also accepts used gardening book donations and sells them at a reduced price to help defray the cost of maintaining Hilltop.



Photo by J Blazek

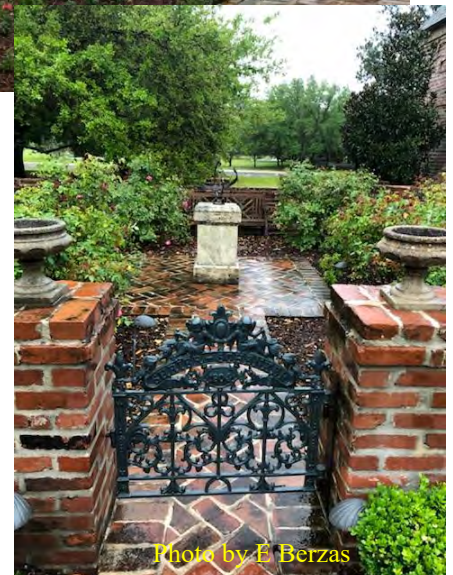


## STMGA Field Trip On April 4, 2019, *continued*



Our second stop was the private gardens of Russ and Nancy Westfall, where we were greeted with blueberry mimosa cocktails. Russ, a master gardener, and his wife have visited gardens all over the world.

The Westfall's described their garden when they initially bought the property as "four crepe myrtles and that's it." They still have those crepe myrtles and have since created an English-influenced paradise in East Baton Rouge.





## STMGA Field Trip On April 4, 2019, *continued*

The Westfall garden is a tranquil floral respite from the hustle and bustle of Baton Rouge traffic. On their veranda we were served a delicious lunch and were graciously invited to enjoy their home and gardens for the all-to-brief time we stayed.



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J-Blazek



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by J Blazek

Our last stop was Clegg's Nursery #2 on Siegen Road where we were able to fill the cargo area of the bus with our purchases of plants, pots, tools, and gardening must-haves.

Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the day, despite the inclement weather, and kept asking when the next trip was scheduled.

Jamie Blazek  
Master Gardener and Vegucator



## STMGA Plant Sale 2019

Cold and rainy would describe our 2019 Plant Sale. But despite the weather, the vendors sold most of their inventory and thousands were able to purchase plants, take a chance on raffle baskets and learn about many garden topics. We had a very successful weekend! When you counted the paid attendance, kids, and master gardeners over 2000 attend the Plant Sale. There were 170 of our master gardeners that helped to make this the most successful Plant Sale we've ever had. Thanks to all of you for your hard work. We will be able to offer eight scholarships next year and have over \$3000 to use for the organization and for start-up costs for our 2020 Plant Sale.

Peggy Goertz and Pam Peltier made sure we had more vendors than ever before. They offered a great variety of plant material, garden art and tools.



Photo by J Blazek



Photo by C Lang

The Food Trucks, coordinated by Kappy Goodwin, stayed busy both days and the food was delicious.

Even Rolling Cones (how cute was that truck!) did well despite all the shivering. Kids don't care how cold it is if there is ice cream involved!

## STMGA Plant Sale 2019, *continued*

Our Raffle and Backyard Plant booths did exceptionally well. Anne Cigali, Chris Stellingworth and Joan Gagliano overcame a slow Friday and rebounded on Saturday when they ingeniously used a cow bell to draw attention to the booth. Great idea! We set a record this year with our Backyard Plants. The credit goes out to all the master gardeners who propagated and donated those wonderful plants and to Lisann Cheaney, Deb Litzenberger and Kathleen Erny for putting together the lovely display. Great job everyone!



I want to especially thank all the volunteers and chairs of the Parking, Plant Holding and Table Talk booths. Y'all were in the deep freeze, rain and wind and you hung in there like the champs you are. We couldn't do this without you! Pierre Bouchee and Ron Rowland kept the coffee coming to the parkers.



Kim Burt worked with Peggy and me to get the Table Talks moved to the center aisle where they had loads of people talking to them. Good teamwork. Sharon Hassinger and Dinah Keyes devised a more efficient, two lane plant pick-up system that moved people through much faster.



## STMGA Plant Sale 2019, *continued*



There were 110 children that visited the Children's Area where Debi Schoen, Lyn Monteleone, and their volunteers helped them plant and learn more about gardening. Nice job. Although not many kids completed our scavenger hunt, Christy Paulsell's stations generated good talking points for the families.

Betty Cronin, Billie Stanga and Bob Doolittle once again did a fantastic job keeping all the vendors and master gardeners hydrated with water and warm with Bob's coffee. Thanks to all the master gardeners who donated baked goods for all of us to enjoy!



The reception was a rousing success and a nice way for us to visit with the vendors. Great job guys!

## STMGA Plant Sale 2019, *continued*

The speakers were just outstanding. Thank you, Will, for getting us such a nice variety this year. Donna Dicharry and Ruthanne Johnson kept everything moving at the proper pace and made sure there were people to fill the seats.



We got some interesting suggestions from our evaluations. But the most telling thing we learned was that Facebook really worked this year. Between the STMGA Facebook page and that final “blast” Betty did, as well as all of us posting the flyer on our FB pages and sharing the website posts, we got a tremendous number of people telling us that they heard about the Plant Sale on FB. The whole publicity team worked tirelessly getting the word out. And it showed in the number of people who came out in the rain and cold.

Pat Sharpe, Caryn Lang, Mary Kathryn Villere, Betty Cronin, Dede Hanby and Joan Rizzuto were the best publicity group! Thanks to all of you. Theresa Wilfert and her volunteers made sure the flyers and posters were distributed to many garden centers and businesses. Johnny Despeaux placed our signs for the day of the Plant Sale to direct people to the site. We will add more next year!

We sold a good number of gloves and books. The coffee sold very well thanks to Marilyn Bingham and her volunteers. The water didn’t sell, but if it had been warmer, I think it would have! Live and learn! If anyone would like to buy a case of water, I have many in my garage for \$3 a case. Come and get them.



Barbara Moore brought many of her own books to the Ask the Experts table. These were not only good references but also gave our patrons an idea of what they can buy themselves. Next year, we hope to have more handouts to give people.



## STMGA Plant Sale 2019, *continued*



Wes Goostrey and his crew worked throughout the Plant Sale to make sure garbage cans didn't overflow and the bathrooms were decent. They coordinated set-up and take down with great efficiency.

I want to say a special thank you to our security "team" of Susie and Paul Andres, Kappy and Ed Goodwin and Jane the Wonder Dog. Y'all kept us all safe and made sure there were no mishaps overnight. I heard dinners were gourmet!

The toughest job of all is to coordinate the volunteers. Jan Pesses did an exceptional job this year. She made sure we had people at each booth. She juggled them to where they were needed. More than one vendor said how grateful they were that someone was available from STMGA to stand in their booth so they could take a break or grab lunch. Another outstanding part of our Plant Sale.



All in all, we had a very successful Plant Sale. I am looking forward to an even bigger event in 2020! It will be our 20th Annual Plant Sale. We will start the planning in the Fall. See y'all then!

Julie Deus  
Master Gardener  
Plant Sale 2019 Chair

## STMGA At Covington Farmers Market

Master gardeners volunteer to provide horticultural education at two community projects, the Covington and Slidell Farmers Markets. In Covington, STMGA hosts a table on the first and third Saturday of each month to answer questions and provide gardening tips. If you frequent that farmers market on Saturdays, you know it is busy with lots of people buying fresh vegetables and fruits, freshly baked bread, meat, cheese, fresh seafood, milk, local honey, prepared food, and plants. It's a perfect place to provide community education and promote STMGA local events.



Diana Cammatte is the project chair on the first Saturday of the month in Covington. Many STMGA members have joined her there to share information with our neighbors.

Here's what Diana has to say about volunteering at the Farmer's Market: "Covington Farmers Market producers and buyers are multicultural, multiparish, with some even coming from other states. Being a master gardener and vegucator gives me the opportunity to assist them with gardening needs. What else could you ask for but good food, live music, entertainment and, perhaps best of all, great weather."



## STMGA At Covington Farmers Market, *continued*

Billie Stanga organizes the volunteers at the Covington Farmers Market on the third Saturday of the month.



Photo by J Blazek

Here's what Billie has to say about her hours there:

"I've organized the volunteers for the market for several years now. It's a lot of fun to chat with people about gardening while enjoying the Saturday morning atmosphere in downtown Covington. We promote Master Gardener activities and programs as well as offer advice and encouragement to fellow gardeners. There's always live music, delicious food and, best of all, a great sense of community. I look forward to it each month."

Mimi Padgett  
Master Gardener & Vegucator

## Louisiana Iris



Photo by J Blazek

Iris Giganticaerulea became the official Louisiana State Wildflower in 1990. It has the largest flower of the Louisiana irises. The flower can range from light blue to lavender to purple. It is commonly found growing in shallow water, wet ditches and along fresh water lakes in Louisiana. The Fleur de lis is thought to be a stylized iris and has long been associated with Louisiana and its French heritage.

Jamie Blazek  
Master Gardener and Vegucator  
Editor, *The Gardengoer*



### THE GARDENGOER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE

ST. TAMMANY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION



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