

The Crosby Arboretum

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Quarterly News Journal

Winter 2011-12

26.1

FAVORITE WILDFLOWERS: TRILLIUM TALES AND TRAILS

It seems odd to profile my favorite wildflowers in fall, because to me, they symbolize the beginning of spring. **Trilliums, or wakerobins** as they are frequently called, are monocots in the Lily family. They have three leaves, three sepals and three petals. During late winter to early spring they emerge in a variety of habitats including rich woods and moist ravines in at least half of Mississippi's counties extending throughout the state. Unlike most families of plants that are found on many of the continents, this family of plants only has representatives in North American and Asia. One specific species of trillium, *Trillium foetidissimum*, or the Mississippi River wakerobin, is found only in southwest Mississippi and parts of southeast Louisiana. Found in a variety of habitats and adaptable to a wide range of soil moistures, this plant, which is also known as the stinking or fetid trillium because of its unpleasant smell of rotting meat, has a pink/maroon/brown flower in the early spring and produces a small purplish brown fleshy berry in the fall (www.efloras.org). Note this trillium's range in Mississippi on the below map (www.plants.usda.gov).



In the past I have found trilliums in the state park in Natchez, along the southern portions of the trace, outside of Hattiesburg in Ragland Hills, near Tishomingo State Park and in a small secluded area of Jones County, but this year I missed finding any trilliums blooming here in

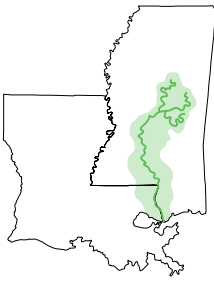


Mississippi River Wakerobin or Trillium foetidissimum.
Photo courtesy of southeasternflora.com.

my home state. However, my husband, Mike, and I were fortunate to have the opportunity this year to “follow” spring northward from the coast all the way to New Hampshire, so we looked for trilliums along the way. As we began our trip on April 17th, we first stopped at Mississippi State University to visit our daughter and then followed the Natchez Trace northward through to Tennessee. This northern part of the Trace was still lined with bright white blooming dogwoods which indicated to me that trillium was probably also still in bloom.

Our first sighting of trillium occurred across the Mississippi state line in Tennessee at a little pull out by a small stream called Glenrock Branch. After leaving the trace at its northern end near Nashville, we traveled to Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky. The Cedar Sink site in the park supported the most beautiful stands of trillium that we encountered on our trip. I have to admit that we travelled to Mammoth Cave NP for the cave, but really enjoyed it because of this beautiful, diverse sink. In addition to the two species of trilliums, including the nodding trillium pictured above, we saw may-apples, Jack in the pulpits, fire pinks, and many

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The **Crosby Arboretum**
Mississippi State University

A regional arboretum representing the native flora of the Pearl River Drainage Basin in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Picayune, Mississippi, USA

Director's Notebook: Winter Walks and Welcomes

I'm delighted to welcome our new senior curator, Richelle, who will function as the Crosby Arboretum's assistant director. With her arrival, I also welcome the fact that I will gain more time for interacting with the community, and for encouraging others to discover the Arboretum. Too many times, I've heard these words: "I never knew you were here." I look forward to building public awareness of our site and of its incredible wealth of educational programs and events. In addition, a key focus will be to acquaint others about our plans to construct a permanent education facility.

Winter is on the horizon, and although some may consider this to be a season of rest and low activity, we have many fun activities planned that will entice the most determined soul outside. Last January, despite chilly weather, thirty persons attended the Winter Botany field trip with Extension Forester Glen Hughes. This walk will return, along with a program by Ecologist Tate Thriffley from De Soto National Forest on the ecology and history of south Mississippi. Come for both programs that day and leave transformed, with a whole new perspective on our region.

Forge Day returns in January, with metalworkers who will showcase a variety of techniques and demonstrations. The heat emitted by their furnaces is a perfect combination with a cold winter day! Several new children's workshops will also take place this winter, including one called "Let It Snow," where participants will whip up a batch of "snow" with Master Naturalist Mary Cordray and create winter landscapes. I think you'll agree that there will be something to interest everyone this season, and we hope to see you soon!

– **Patricia R. Drackett**
Director, The Crosby Arboretum

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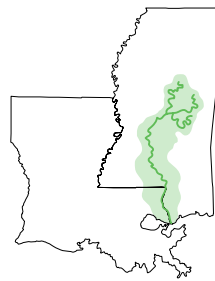


Meet our new Senior Curator: Richelle Stafne

Our new Senior Curator, Richelle Stafne, comes to us from a six-year stint in Oklahoma where she worked as a research specialist (horticulture) at Oklahoma State University and a garden writer for State-by-State Gardening Magazine. Though her gardening experiences have included Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee and south Florida, her six years in Oklahoma included gardening in extreme drought, hail, high winds, fire weather, blizzards, ice storms, and periods of flooded soils and late spring freezes. Her green thumb has at times been tested to its stubby limits.

Ms. Stafne's background includes a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture (B.S.A.) in Landscape Design and Urban Horticulture, a Master's of Science in Horticulture, and a handful of post-graduate coursework, in particular plant ecophysiology and environmental conservation. Hailing from the Show-Me State, Richelle grew up on a small farm in rural southwest Missouri, playing in the woods and exploring the creeks and river bottoms of McDonald County. Her interest of coastal wetlands and native plant habitats was further developed during her residency in south Florida where she worked along the northern edge of the Everglades ecosystem for the USDA-ARS. She spent weekends hiking and exploring ecosystems including sand pine scrub, pine flatwoods, mangroves and river swamps. An ASHS Certified Professional Horticulturist, Richelle looks forward to tackling programming and curatorial duties at The Crosby Arboretum.

Richelle, her husband Eric (who happens to be a horticulture professor working with fruit crops in Poplarville), and their miniature dachshund Tiki are enjoying settling into the Piney Woods of southern Mississippi and taking advantage of all that the Gulf Coast has to offer.



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Picayune, Mississippi, USA



Nodding Trillium, *Trillium flexipes*.
Photo by Jennifer Buchanan.



Elliot's blueberry. Photo by Janine Conklin.

TRILLIUM TALES *(Continued from page 1)*

more brightly colored wildflowers. After we left the park, we continued northeastward on to New Hampshire by way of Blackwater Falls State Park in West Virginia, but we had overrun spring by that time and saw no more trillium until we returned south on our trip home.

This adventure got me thinking. Wouldn't be great to establish a Trillium Watch or Trail through Mississippi? Maybe it could be a phenology project that our group could develop to help monitor for the effects of climate change? Any takers?

– *Jennifer Buchanan, Education Coordinator*
Mississippi Dept. of Marine Resources'
Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

PLANT PROFILE: ELLIOT'S BLUEBERRY

Driving the area roadsides in fall, you may catch a quick glimpse of the lacy scarlet leaves of *Vaccinium elliotii*. Also known as mayberry, this shrub makes an equally eye-catching appearance in spring, as new leaves glow brightly for a few weeks before fading back into the forest. Young branches of this understory shrub are a distinctive green. Bees will work the tiny bell-shaped flowers on warm January days, when little else is in bloom. Sweet berries are formed on the previous year's growth and are delicious in muffins or eaten right off the bush. Suited to a variety of sites, both poorly drained and well-drained areas, it performs best in acidic soils. Elliot's blueberry makes an excellent addition to your wildlife garden, or it can simply be enjoyed for its graceful beauty. Commonly grows to around 10 feet, with a informal, open habit.

PLANTS AT THE ARBORETUM WITH WINTER INTEREST

COMMON NAME	BOTANICAL NAME	CHARACTERISTIC
RED MAPLE	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red and orange flower clusters; reddish twigs.
LITTLE BLUE STEM	<i>Andropogon spp.</i>	Tan, leafy stems with white, fluffy seeds.
PLUME GRASS	<i>Erianthus giganteus</i>	Tall grass with feathery seeds rising from top.
AMERICAN BEECH	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	Tan, drooping leaves persisting on stems.
DECIDUOUS HOLLY	<i>Ilex decidua</i>	Bright red fruit clinging to dormant stems.
INKBERRY HOLLY	<i>Ilex glabra</i>	Black fruit borne on small, leafy stems.
AMERICAN HOLLY	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	Female trees bear bright red drupes.
YELLOW JESSAMINE	<i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i>	Vine with fragrant yellow tubular flowers.

Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

December 2011 - January 2012

December 2011

HOLIDAY PAPERMAKING (Kids)

Saturday, December 3

10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Whip up a batch of handmade paper from recycled materials! Children will use paper pulp to fashion a variety of holiday ornaments, including some imbedded with seeds for planting, in this program with Master Naturalist **Mary Cordray** and Director **Pat Drackett**. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. All materials will be provided. Members' children \$2; non-members' children \$4. Register by December 2.

LANDSCAPE DESIGN INTERPRETIVE WALK

Saturday, December 3 (Adults)

1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Join former Arboretum Curator **Bob Brzuszek** on a walk around the Savanna and Pond Journeys. Bob will discuss the design intent behind the landscape exhibits, and explain the behind-the-scenes decisions for Pinecote. He'll probably tell an old story or two, some may even be true! Members free; non-members \$5. Register by December 2.

ARBORETUM OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, December 10

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please join us for the Arboretum's annual holiday open house celebration. Come browse the Gift Shop, as well as the work of local artisans and craftspersons. Light refreshments will be served. Free admission; open to the public.



Hedy Cibula and daughter Maureen Pollitz at Bugfest, with Maureen's celebrated hissing cockroach colony.

WINTER VOLUNTEER MEETINGS:

Sat., January 7 & Sat., February 4

9:00 a.m.

Many exciting volunteer opportunities are available at the Crosby Arboretum! For more information, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Robin Veerkamp at (601) 799-2311, Ext. 104.

January 2012

LET IT SNOW! (Kids!)

Saturday, January 14

10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Mix up a batch of "snow" and add natural objects such as twigs and vines to create a winter landscape rarely seen in South Mississippi in this workshop led by Master Naturalist **Mary Cordray**. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. All materials provided. Members' children \$2; non-members' children \$4. Please register by January 13.

FORGE DAY: BLACKSMITHING & METAL-WORKING DEMONSTRATIONS

Saturday, January 28 (Family)

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

This event showcases the work of area craftsmen who will present a variety of metalsmithing demonstrations. A great chance to learn techniques and tips for how to get started in metal-working! Enjoy watching the demonstrations, or try your hand at the forge. (Those doing forge work must complete a waiver form prior to participating). Safety equipment for participants will be provided. Members free; non-members \$5, and \$2 for non-members' children.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR:

March 3: Flying Wild Teachers' Workshop

March 10: "How to Have a Firewise Home"

March 31: Fifth Jean Chisholm Lindsey Lecture in Landscape Design, Jackson, MS, 12:00 Noon, with author Susan Haltom, with tea to follow in Eudora Welty's garden.

- Details in Spring 2012 News Journal -

Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

February 2012

February 2012

WINTER BOTANY FIELD WALK

Saturday, February 4 (Family)
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Winter is the time when the beautiful architecture of plants are revealed. Take a walk through the Arboretum grounds with **Glenn Hughes**, Mississippi State Extension Forestry Professor, and learn how to identify plants in winter – especially trees – by their characteristic shapes as well as their buds, bark, persistent fruits, inner bark fragrance, and pith structure. Suited to ages 7 and up. Members free; non-members \$5; non-members' children \$2. Register by February 3.

ECOLOGY OF THE PINEY WOODS – WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Saturday, February 4 (Adults)
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Join **Tate Thriffley**, Ecologist with the USDA Forest Service for an enlightening discussion about ecology, sustainable forestry, and ecosystem restoration activities in the De Soto National Forest, the causes/effects of human migrations during the last 130,000 years, and what all of this means to us now in south Mississippi. Following his presentation indoors, Tate will lead a short walk on the grounds and speak further on the ecology and relationships on the land at the Arboretum. Members free; non-members \$5. Register by February 3.

Walk-ins can usually be accommodated, but if possible, to help with our preparations, please call (601) 799-2311 to sign up prior to classes.

Reservations: Call the Arboretum office at (601) 799-2311, to confirm all events and to make program reservations, as seating is limited. Programs are subject to change.

Physical Address: 370 Ridge Road, Picayune, MS 39466

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1639, Picayune, MS 39466

E-mail Contact: drackett@ext.msstate.edu

Hours of Operation: Wednesday-Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

2011 Admission Fees: Adults, \$5; Seniors (over 55), \$4; Children under 12, \$2; Members, free admission to grounds and programs.

Webpage: www.crosbyarboretum.msstate.edu. Lists programs and events, volunteer opportunities, Arboretum and Natural Area information, and news updates.



Lance Middleton of the Mississippi Soil & Water Conservation Commission surprised teachers at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science's Project Wild Workshop in November with a presentation on turkeys.

MISSISSIPPI ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION: PLANTING IN GUM POND EXHIBIT

Friday, February 10
1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Area organizations and individuals are invited to celebrate Mississippi Arbor Day by planting a tree at the Crosby Arboretum's new Gum Pond! **Free admission**, but if possible, please call to register prior to event.

ARBOR DAY PLANT SALE

Saturday, February 11

Members' Only Sale – 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

General Public – 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Winter is a good time to plant trees and woody shrubs. Choose from a variety of trees and shrubs at this plant sale, and come early for the best selection of many hard-to-find native plants. We'll help you select the right plant for the right place! **Free admission.** Arboretum Greenhouse.

"NEST IN PEACE" (Kids!)

Saturday, February 25

10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Spring is approaching and our feathered friends are gathering materials for nest building. Take a closer look at bird nests, then shape a nest from yarn and add a baby bird molded from clay. Workshop led by Master Naturalist **Mary Cordray**. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. All materials provided. Members' children \$2; non-members' children \$4. Please register by February 24.