

SERA-27

Nursery Crops and Landscape Systems Business Meeting Minutes - 2014

Wednesday June 4, 2014

LSU AgCenter, Hammond Research Station, Hammond, LA

Participants

Advisor(s)

- Patricia Knight (Mississippi State University)
- Regina Bracy (LSU AgCenter, Hammond Research Station, Louisiana State University)

Representatives

- Matt Chappell (Extension, University of Georgia)
- Gary Bachman (Extension, Mississippi State University)
- Win Dunwell (Extension, University of Kentucky)
- Allen Owings (Extension, Louisiana State University)
- Ed Bush (Research, Louisiana State University)
- Yan Chen (LSU AgCenter, Hammond Research Station, Louisiana State University)
- Jim Robbins (Extension, University of Arkansas)
- Gary Knox (Extension, University of Florida)
- Mike Arnold (Research, Texas A&M University)
- Gene Blythe (Research, Mississippi State University)
- Zhanao Deng (Research, University of Florida)
- Geoff Denny (Mississippi State University)

States Not Represented

- Alabama
- South Carolina
- North Carolina (Tom Ranney arrived later but missed the business meeting)
- Oklahoma
- Tennessee
- Virginia (state report submitted)
- West Virginia

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

1. Welcome

The SERA 27 Business Meeting was called to order at 10:29 a.m. on Wednesday, June 4, 2014 by President Gary Bachman.

On behalf of the group, Gary B. expressed thanks to Allen and Ed and Regina for their arrangements and great hospitality.

The business meeting was preceded by tours of the LSU AgCenter, Hammond Research Station, Louisiana State University, and followed by tours of Jenkins Farms and Bracy Nursery with dinner at the home of Regina and Randy Bracy. The following day two SERA27 members spoke at the Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden Horticulture Lecture Series (see Appendix 1 for a report on this activity).

2. Attendance, Introductions, Minutes, Reports

Current officers, advisors, and guests were introduced. Current officers are: President, Gary Bachman; Secretary, Gary Knox; Board member, Zhanao Deng. Participants introduced themselves.

Minutes of the 2013 business meeting were reviewed, discussed and moved for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Jim Robbins, seconded by Ed Bush, and approved unanimously.

State Reports (see Appendix 2)

Verbal reports were given from:

- University of Georgia (Matthew Chappell)
- University of Kentucky (Win Dunwell)
- Louisiana State University (Allen Owings)
- Louisiana State University (Regina Bracy)
- Louisiana State University (Yan Chen)
- Texas A&M (Mike Arnold)
- University of Arkansas (Jim Robbins)
- University of Florida (Gary Knox and Zhanao Deng)
- Mississippi State University (Gene Blythe and Geoff Denny)

Written reports from the above and Virginia Tech are in Appendix 2.

3. Website Report

Allen Owings reported the website is up to date, including a compilation of our historical proceedings. The SERA27 website is currently housed on the LSU AgCenter website. Allen will email members with the correct URL. Allen plans to continue updating the website. Gary Bachman asked if he could check on the links.

4. Plant Evaluation Committee Report

Committee Chair Ed Bush reminded folks that those who submit plants are responsible for requesting data to complete a report. Matthew Chappell asked for members to send him info on the Japanese maples he distributed last year. Gene Blythe will send out an email asking for information.

5. Symposium

LSU host Allen Owings arranged for the Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden Horticulture Lecture Series to follow the SERA27 meeting on June 5. This is the second year that a symposium featuring SERA27 members is part of the SERA27 annual meeting. These members will include results of SERA27 plant evaluations as part of their presentations. Participants will include landscape professionals, nursery

growers, master gardeners, Extension agents, and home gardeners. Ed Bush asked if the purpose of the symposia is to generate revenue for the group. After discussion, the purpose of the seminars is to promote our activities and incidentally provide revenue. For example, last year's symposium revenue paid for meals during the SERA27 meeting. Allen Owings said he decided not to charge for this year's Hammond seminar in order to increase attendance; he is paying for member meals by other means.

6. Renewal of SERA-27 for 2012-2017

Renewal of SERA27 was approved through 2017. Advisor Patricia Knight reminded us we need to record accomplishments, outcomes and impacts in order to keep our group active and continue receiving support.

7. New Plants for Evaluation

Each plant proposed for evaluation requires a sponsor, protocol and description of plant. Proposals of new plants for evaluation include:

Hemerocallis 'Suburban Nancy Gale': This plant was approved for distribution last year. Plants were brought by Gary Bachman, bred by Earl Watts, and donated by Suburban Daylilies, Hattiesburg, MS.

Amsonia 'Big John': Proposed by Win Dunwell

Muhlenbergia capillaris 'Purple Haze': Proposed by Gary Knox. This is a new non-patented release from USDA-NRCS and UF (NFREC). UGA, UK, and LSU requested it; UA already has it. Matt motioned approval, Mike seconded for the group to accept this plant, and members unanimously voted to approve it.

Buxus microphylla var. *japonica* 'Gregem' (Baby Gem Boxwood), *Hibiscus syriacus* 'DS01BS' (Blueberry Smoothie™ Althea), *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Grenan' (Nantucket Blue™ Hydrangea), *Lagerstroemia* 'GA 0804' (Princess Lyla™ Crapemyrtle) and *Ophiopogon jaburan* 'HO CF' (Crystal Falls® Mondo Grass): Sponsored by Allen Owings and Jim Robbins and donated by Greenleaf Nursery (Garden Debut, Mark Andrews, Supervisor, New Product Development, Greenleaf Nursery Company, 28406 Highway 82, Park Hill, OK 74451). Gary moved we evaluate these, Ed seconded, and the group unanimously accepted the plants.

Callicarpa rubella: Proposed by Gary Knox. Grown by Gary Knox, UF NFREC, from seed collected by Richard Olsen (US National Arboretum, MD) at Kunming Botanical Garden, Kunming, China, in November 2013 (NA 81624). The parent plant had dark fruit but hardiness is unknown. Allen moved we evaluate this plant, Gary B. seconded, and it was unanimously accepted.

Camellia (unnamed): Proposed by Matt Chappell. It is a fastigiated, white flowered hybrid derived from *C. japonica* (a historic plant in VA) and 'Professor Charles S. Sargent'; flowers are 6 inches in diameter; it is not patented but is from CANR. Gary K. moved we evaluate it, Ed seconded, and it was unanimously accepted.

New Plants for 2015:

Centaurea gymnocarpa: Proposed by Gene Blythe. This is a dusty miller growing 3 ft. tall with purple flowers, hardy in Poplarville MS. Win moved we evaluate it, Geoff seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

8. Election of Officers for 2014-2015

Officer positions automatically progress from Board Member to Secretary to President. Thus, for 2015:

President, Gary Knox (former Secretary)

Secretary, Zhanao Deng (former Board Member)

Matt nominated Geoff Denny for 2015 Board Member. Ed seconded, Win moved we close nominations and elect Geoff by acclamation, and this was unanimously approved.

Board member: Geoff Denny

9. Future Meeting Sites

2015 – Louisville, KY: During lunch, Win relayed some of the potential activities there, including visits to Cave Hill Cemetery, Yew Dell Botanic Garden, Hidden Hill Nursery, a new botanic garden in Louisville, possibly Bernheim Arboretum, a brewery and a restaurant garden. There was discussion about a program in association with our meeting. The group concurred that it is up to the local host as to audience, where, when, how long and whether to charge participants. Discussion centered on a half day program.

2016 – Memphis or Jackson, TN, to be hosted by Geoff Denny and Jim Robbins. The motion to hold the meeting in this area in 2016 was made by Jim, seconded by Mike, and unanimously approved.

10. Competitive Grants

The Farm Bill passed late this year so Matt didn't have time to contact anyone to work on an SCRI for this year. He will lead grant efforts for next year. Matt and others concluded possibilities for funding include SCRI Planning Grant and Southern SARE. Jim suggested Southern REMEC. After discussion, it was decided that a SCRI Planning Grant would be the most appropriate venue with an emphasis on sustainability, how climate change impacts the ornamental landscape, or invasiveness. Matt probably will contact us to start working on this in late fall.

11. New Member Recruiting

We discussed the need to recruit new members and encourage states not participating to select members. Potential new members identified who were contacted last year include UT's Amy Fulcher (contacted by Tricia and not interested) and UA's Garry McDonald (Jim approached Garry and he intends to participate). Mike and Bruce at Oklahoma State were contacted by Matt Chappell and they seemed interested but Tricia said they did not contact her. Matt also talked to VT's Jim Owen (currently overwhelmed so he declined), Sarah White (not interested), and Sandy Reed's replacement (no response yet). Jason Griffin at Kansas State might be interested. Andrew Koeser at UF GCREC is a possibility. Gary contacted Mark Arena at Clemson, but did not get a response. Matt asked Amy Wright at Auburn and she isn't interested. Adam Newbie at Auburn is a possibility as well as Daniel Wells at Auburn. Jim will contact Garry to firm up involvement and Allen/Ed will try Daniel and Adam.

12. Other Business

Impacts and achievements: We obtained a copy of the evaluation Anthony used last year so as to adapt it to future symposia evaluations. This would help us produce consistent results from year to year. Allen will use a modified version to evaluate the Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden Horticulture Lecture Series.

Adjournment: Gary moved we adjourn, Matt seconded, unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Knox

Secretary

Appendix 1: SERA27 Symposium Results and Evaluation

2nd Annual Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden Horticulture Lecture Series & Industry Open House
Thursday, June 5, 2014
LSU AgCenter
Hammond Research Station, Hammond, LA

SERA 27 held a horticultural educational program (Margie Jenkins Azalea Garden Horticulture Lecture series) in cooperation with the LSU AgCenter on Thursday June 5th at the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station, Hammond, LA. There were 105 persons in attendance with 86 being nursery, landscape, garden center industry members and 19 being home gardeners or master gardeners. Topics presented were “Development of Coastal Native Plants for Xeric and Saline Landscapes” (Mike Arnold, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX), “Plants from the Big Bend Garden Trials” (Gary Knox, University of Florida/IFAS, Quincy, FL) and “Magnolias, Camellias and Additional Native and Exotic Plants with Gulf States Potential” (Bobby Green, Green Nurseries, Fairhope, AL).

A survey of attendees was conducted with completed surveys being 60% industry and 40% home gardeners/master gardeners. The topics of most interest to attendees (based on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1=no interest, 3=average interest, 5=high interest) were:

- Xeric and Saline Landscape Plant Development – 3.5
- Plants from the Big Bend Trials – 4.5
- Magnolias, Camellias, Etc. – 5.0

Using the same scale, attendees were asked if they would use information that was presented. The results:

- Xeric and Saline Landscape Plant Development – 4.2
- Plants from the Big Bend Trials – 4.6
- Magnolias, Camellias, Etc. – 4.8

All nursery, landscape and garden center attendees reported a positive economic impact to their business from attending this program.

Comments included:

- “the information on lesser known magnolias species, varieties was great”
- “changing climate information and development of plants for low water use and saline landscapes was very interesting”
- “Florida trials and Louisiana trials help multi-state efforts”
- “October Magic camellias look like they have great potential”
- “enjoyed thinking about the potential of the native plants discussed”

Submitted by Allen Owings.

Appendix 2: State Reports

2014 Annual Report from Virginia Tech

2014 SERA-27 Nursery Crops and Landscape Systems Meeting

1. Undergraduate enrollment is down by about 15% - currently have about 85 undergraduate students; 70% of students are in the Environmental Horticulture major and 30% are in the Landscape contracting major. The Horticulture Department just developed a Viticulture minor (in effect this fall). The Department is receiving a relatively high number of solicitations for full time and internship positions.
2. Graduate enrollment is steady at about 32; 80% of graduate students are at the Ph.D. level and 20% at the M.S. level.
3. New Hires: Just hired a bioinformatics assistant professor (VT campus) and a vegetable specialist for the Painter, VA experiment station. In January, we hired a sustainable food production instructor; fifty percent of his salary is paid by the College and 50% from the Dining Services (this person is also the Sustainable Food Systems Director for the Dining Services – he manages the growing of vegetables that are supplied to the dining halls on campus).

Submitted by Alex X. Niemiera

SERA-27 Texas Report 2014

Departmental Update:

Dr. R. Daniel Lineberger continues as Department Head for Horticultural Sciences and has turned over the role of Associate Head for Undergraduate Programs to me. I have turned over the role as Associate Head for Graduate Programs to Dr. Patricia Klein. Dr. Larry Stein continues in his role as Associate Head for Extension. The have hired a new extension viticulturist and are interviewing for two new vegetable breeding positions, one in Uvalde and one in Weslaco. We have hired no new professorial teaching positions in approximately eight years. Dr. Astrid Volder has left to take a teaching / research position at U.C. Davis.

Our undergraduate student numbers have dipped to about 170, about 100 of whom are in our B.S. program and the remainder in our B.A. program. The reduction of about 30 students is largely due to the loss of a landscape design, construction and maintenance instructor positions which we hope to be permitted to refill. Graduate student numbers are at about 45 of which about half are Ph.D. and half M.S. students. About a third of these are slated to graduate this year with relatively few being replaced. The Department suffered a total of about a 25% budget cut over the last few years, resulting in the loss of all technicians, save one general farm technician who maintains equipment and mows common areas, and two of our four instructor positions. New dorms are being built on the old Horticulture farm displacing one building and several greenhouses, the greenhouses on main campus are also being lost to another building project and the new Horticulture Farm is being taken over a sequence of years to expand the equine facilities. Consequently, our field and greenhouse operations are being consolidated and moved to a new location adjacent to the pecan orchards in the Brazos bottoms about eight to ten miles from campus. Budgets are projected to remain flat this year. Outsourcing of physical facilities, grounds and many other campus support services are causing serious issues for some on-going research and teaching activities.

Our Lab Group's Update:

Research efforts in our lab group continue in a variety of areas including testing of plants from SERA-IEG members. A paper on the response of *Taxodium distichum* in a multi-state cold tolerance trial was written and published. Another paper on this broad landscape trials of candidate *Taxodium distichum* selections of which several SERA members were cooperators is anticipated in the future. We are looking at releasing two to four clones of *Taxodium distichum* from this work. One survived -27°F in Iowa without damage. All have performed well on alkaline soils. These are now being trialed by a nursery cooperator along with a white flowering *Vitex agnus-castus* selection and an orange fruiting *Ilex decidua* selection.

A Ph.D. student (Mr. Sean Carver) continues to evaluate collections of some promising native herbaceous perennial groundcovers and low evergreen shrubs species from along the Texas coastal dunes for initial screening. Another Ph.D. student (Mr. Andrew King) is following up on production issues for some of these groundcover species and is investigating marketing studies to assess their appeal in the industry. Some of these selections are now being trialed by industry partners for commercial potential. A presentation will be presented on this work at an accompanying industry meeting to this working group meeting.

A large scale transplant study is underway by a M.S. student (Ms. Lauren Garcia) in which we are looking at the impact of container size on tree establishment and water use on three species of trees each

grown in five container sizes ranging from 1 gallon to 45 gallon sizes. The study is being replicated in Texas and Mississippi (by Dr. Geoff Denny).

Submitted by Michael A. Arnold, June 2014

University of Florida

Statewide Environmental Horticulture Program

Gary W. Knox
UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center
Quincy, FL 32351
June 4, 2014

Total Undergraduate Enrollment:

- Environmental Horticulture undergraduate students are encompassed in "Plant Sciences"
 - A joint undergraduate major serving EH, Agronomy and Plant Pathology
 - Enrollment during Spring Semester 2014 was 86 (2013=70; 2012=107)
 - 42 of these have emphases relating to environmental horticulture
 - 22 are on main campus
 - 20 are located at RECs
- Instruction takes place at: Main Campus (Gainesville), Ft. Lauderdale REC, Gulf Coast REC (Plant City outside Tampa), Mid-Florida REC (Orlando area), West Florida REC (Pensacola area); the program at TREC-Homestead was dropped
- Does not include students in fruit/vegetable programs
- Represents mostly juniors and seniors

Total Graduate Student Enrollment (selected years)

| Year | M.S. | Ph.D. | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 2005 | 21 | 16 | 37 |
| 2006 | 18 | 14 | 32 |
| 2007 | 15 | 14 | 29 |
| 2008 | 15 | 13 | 28 |
| 2009 | 20 | 12 | 32 |
| 2012 | 17 | 13 | 30 |
| 2014 | 15 | 15 | 30 |

2013 – 2014 Faculty Retirements

- Bob Stamps (cut foliage and weed management; Mid-Florida REC (Orlando area))

Impending Faculty Retirements

- June 30: Jake Henny (foliage plant breeder; Mid-Florida REC (Orlando area))
- February 2015: Sydney Park Brown (Extension/teaching, consumer horticulture; GCREC-Plant City (Tampa area))

New Environmental Horticulture Faculty

- Andrew Koeser, Extension/research, landscape/urban trees, Gulf Coast REC (Tampa area)
- Chris Marble, Extension/research, cut foliage and weed management, Mid-Florida REC (Orlando area)

Louisiana State University
LSU AgCenter
Statewide Nursery / Landscape Program
Allen Owings and Ed Bush
June 4, 2014

Undergraduate Program: LSU offers a B.S. degree in Environmental Management and Plant/Soil Systems curriculums. There are three concentrations in Environmental Management and there are 9 concentrations (with 4 in horticulture) in the Plant and Soil Systems. LSU works with Baton Rouge Community College on a fairly successful 2+2 program. 40 environmental management undergraduate students. 44 undergraduate horticulture students.

Graduate Program: The LSU graduate program in the School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences offers concentration in Agronomy, Horticulture and Soil Science with the degree titles being Plant Science, Environmental Management or Soil Science. M.S. and Ph.D. degrees are offered. Assistantships are now faculty extramural funding generated and require full funding for the entire graduate education period before an assistantship can be offered. 60 graduates students in the overall program.

Faculty:

Yan Chen, Associate Professor, Hammond Research Station
80% research, 20% extension in landscape horticulture

Ed Bush, Associate Professor, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences
30% teaching, 70% research in nursery crops

Roger Hinson, Professor, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness (retired December 2013)
20% teaching, 80% research in horticulture economics and marketing

Daniel Wells, Post Doc Research, Hammond Research Station (accept faculty position Auburn May 2014)
100% ornamental/landscape, plant introduction, distribution, development, evaluation

Bob Mirabello, Instructor, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences
100% teaching

Charlie Johnson, Professor, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences
New appointment effort in ornamental plant breeding

Dan Gill, Associate Professor, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences
100% extension consumer horticulture, mass media

Rag Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology
100% extension plant diagnostic clinic

Melanie Ivy, Assistant Professor, Department of Plant Pathology and Crop Physiology
80% extension, 20% teaching horticulture crop plant pathology

Dennis Ring, Professor, Department of Entomology

100% extension – spends 30% time nursery, landscape entomology

Ron Strahan, Associate Professor, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences
100% extension weed science ornamentals and turf and turfgrass extension specialist

Administrative Faculty:

Regina Bracy, Research Coordinator, Hammond Research Station and Regional Director (SE)

Jeff Kuehny, Professor, School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences and Resident Director, Botanical Gardens at Burden

Positive Initiatives / News:

Botanical garden focus at Burden now
Industry support for Hammond Research Station efforts
Lack of funding for graduate assistantships
Loss of faculty to retirement and movement to administration
Continued support staff support at Burden and Hammond
Mergers, College of Ag, AgCenter, Vice President of Ag
Specialty Crop Block Grant Funding

Strong Nursery and Landscape Extension Program Effort
Strong Need for Ag Economics / Ag Business Support
High turnout in young extension faculty, pending field retirements
Louisiana Super Plants program
LNLA, LTA, LSHS, LSHR, SELNA other groups appreciate us
Strong LA Master Gardener program
Horticulture mass media education efforts

Mississippi State University
Report for the Annual SERA-27 Meeting
June 4, 2014

University enrollment for last year was fairly steady with over 20,000 students, including 2,152 in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (an increase of over 10% from the previous year.). Graduate school enrollment showed a decline, a main factor being continued federal funding reductions. The Department of Plant and Soil Sciences included just over 132 undergraduate students and 73 graduate students during the spring 2014 semester, including 6 M.S students and 9 Ph.D. students in horticulture. Full-time faculty in the state with primary emphasis on ornamental crops includes 3 in research, 3 in extension, and 2 in teaching.

State-appropriated funding levels were up 0.7% for the 2014 fiscal year, but still below pre-recession levels of five years ago. MSU President Mark Keenum recently announced that 2% merit increases will be provided for the upcoming fiscal year.

The South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville filled available trial beds again this spring to accommodate annual variety trials. American Takii returned as a trial supplier and University of Florida sent their sterile *Ruellia* cultivars for trial. All-America Selections bedding plant trials were added to AAS flower trials in Poplarville this year. The South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station participated in the second year (2013) of the National Plant Trials Database, and will continue in 2014. Gene Blythe has started sending out a newsletter via Email to a broad clientele to provide quick updates on the trial gardens and horticultural research at the station.

Three items previously provided by Mississippi for SERA-27 trials, *Artemisia afra*, *Eucalyptus neglecta*, and *Tagetes nelsonii*, continue to do well in our Poplarville trial garden, with no loss or plant damage during winter 2014, which had a few nights in the mid-teens (F). *Artemisia afra* has shown no reseeding thus far. *Tagetes nelsonii* has shown limited reseeding. Updates on these three items from other trialing states would be appreciated. *Fallugia paradoxa* is still pending for distribution; plants did not produce enough cutting wood or seed for propagation last year. *Artemisia arborescens*, not yet distributed, is being withdrawn since all plants in Poplarville died during the past winter, thus answering the question of its cold hardiness.

Trial beds were planted this spring for ornamental variety trials across the state. Sites include the new Mississippi State Trial Gardens (MSTG) and Veterans Memorial Rose Garden (VMRG) on Main Campus in Starkville (Denny and Collins), at the North Mississippi Research and Extension Center (NMREC) in Verona (Sloan), at the Truck Crops Branch Experiment Station (TCBES) in Crystal Springs (Staff), and at the Coastal Research and Extension Center (CREC) in Biloxi (Bachman). Following are project being conducted at these sites:

1. Hardy Hibiscus Trials (MSTG) and (LSU) [Denny and Owings] - In 2013, we set up a trial of 23 cultivars of hardy hibiscus in conjunction with Dr. Allen Owings at LSU. These hibiscus are a great way to add a tropical feel to a landscape and are easy to produce. The goal is to evaluate the cultivars, identify new products for Mississippi growers and landscapers, and to raise consumer awareness of the products in general.
2. Evaluation of Rose Cultivars on a Wet Site (VMRG) [Collins and Denny] - An evaluation of commonly used rose cultivars for use in extremely wet Mississippi landscapes. We are talking advantage of the perpetually wet areas at the Veteran's Memorial Rose Garden. The goal is to evaluate species and cultivars, identify new products for Mississippi growers and landscapers,

and to raise consumer awareness of the products in general. Seven cultivars were donated by Star Roses.

3. Landscape Roses Planting Density Study (VMRG) [Collins and Denny] - This study tries to determine the effect of planting density on establishment, growth rate, aesthetic quality, and disease incidence of shrub roses (Sweet Drift) in a simulated commercial landscape setting. First year results were presented at the 2014 ASHS-SR Conference in Dallas.
4. Tree Establishment Study (MSTG) and (TAMU) [Arnold and Denny] - This project will help answer three basic questions: 1) How much time is needed to establish trees ranging from 1 to 45 gallons in the landscape? 2) Does this establishment rate vary among locations? 3) Do the trees from smaller containers eventually catch up to the trees from larger containers in the landscape? This study will allow us to estimate establishment rates for container-grown trees (*Vitex agnus-castus*, *Acer rubrum*, and *Taxodium distichum*) across the Southeastern U.S. These estimates will allow commercial and municipal arborists to make more accurate management decisions about tree selection and care after transplant. The long-term evaluation tree performance will help us determine the aesthetic and economic advantages of planting large versus small containerized trees. The trees will be planted at the Ornamental Plant Trialing Unit in May 2013 and the study will run for 3 years.
5. Multi-Site Trial of Old Garden Roses and Non-Patented Roses (VMRG, CMREC, TCBES, CREC) [Bachman, Collins, Denny, Evans, and Sloan] - Seven cultivars of old garden roses and non-patented roses are being evaluated at four sites. This is designed to be the "dry run" of a trial-based Mississippi Medallion program upgrade. This has been discussed for years within horticulture faculty and MNLA leaders, but has never been implemented. This will also serve as an evaluation of the EarthKind Evaluation Protocols for use in Mississippi. Funding will be tight, but we will continue to search for some funds to help fund this trial. We had to buy roses for the rose garden anyway, and decided to make this a stronger trial than it would be in the VMRG site alone.
6. Single-Site Trial of Old Garden Roses and Non-Patented Roses (VMRG) [Collins and Denny] This trial will supplement the multi-site trial above. OGR and non-patented roses were planted in the ground beds at VMRG. These are an additional six cultivars of upright form roses that will fit into the beds without support. Eighteen climbing roses are included, as well. Top performers this trial will be considered for future multi-site trialing for the overall Mississippi Medallion program.
7. Star Roses Modern Rose Trial (VMRG) [Collins and Denny] - Star Roses donated 24 cultivars for a trial of modern rose cultivars were planted in the raised beds at VMRG. This will be a no-spray trial, utilizing the EarthKind evaluation protocol.
8. Eudora Welty Camellia Collection (MSTG) [Denny] - The Mississippi State Trial Garden has been selected as the repository for the personal collection of camellias from the garden of author Eudora Welty. It includes grafted plants of approximately 33 cultivars. The Eudora Welty Home and Garden Foundation is interested in seeing the collection preserved because of its historical significance to gardening in Mississippi and the South.

Submitted by Gene Blythe, Associate Research Professor, Coastal Research and Extension Center

**University of Arkansas
SERA-IEG-27 Report 2014**

Horticulture Department

Faculty:

As we recall, Dr. Jon Lindstrom passed away in May 2013. It is unclear if this position will be refilled. In addition to Jon's position, we have two additional vacant positions (turf extension, vacant 4 years; horticulture physiologist, vacant 2 year). Doubtful these positions will be refilled in the next 12 months. Our vegetable breeding position, which has been open for 5 years, was filled last fall by Dr. Ainong Shi. Effective January 1, 2014, Dr. Dave Hensley stepped down as Department Head to rejoin the faculty. As this is written, candidates are being interviewed to fill that position. It was recently announced that our extension vegetable specialist, Dr. Craig Andersen will retire on July 7, 2014.

Graduate student enrollment is 19 total, with 13 Masters and 6 Ph.D.

Budget:

State:

Year-to-date Net Available General Revenues: Year-to-date net available general revenues total \$4,168.0 million, \$22.2 million or 0.5 percent above year ago levels. After ten months into the fiscal year and the largest collection month (April), net available revenue is above forecast by \$77.6 million or 1.9 percent.

University:

University of Arkansas Board of Trustees' Fiscal Affairs Committee are proposing a 5.0 percent increase for the 2014-2015 school year. No announcement has been made for a raise for Faculty in the Division of Agriculture.

SERA plants:

Nothing to report

Submitted by Jim Robbins

U.S. National Arboretum
2014 SERA Floral Nursery Research Report

State of Affairs –

The US National Arboretum is proud to announce the appointment of Dr. Lisa Alexander to the plant breeder position at the McMinnville, TN location. She will continue work with hydrangeas as well as expand the current breeding program. Dr. Alexander will strengthen the breeding program at the Arboretum and will work jointly with Richard Olson is working with small stature trees and Margaret Pooler who is working with small flowering trees. Funding for the research programs have remained level.

Donna C. Fare
US National Arboretum, USDA-ARS

University of Kentucky (UK) – 2014 report

Undergraduate and graduate student numbers continue to increase.

Nursery/Landscape Faculty and Staff in areas related to SERA-27

Faculty:

Dr. Winston Dunwell, SERA-27 Official Representative, Professor, UK Research and Education Center (UKREC) Department of Horticulture, Princeton, KY – Nursery Crop Production.

Dr. Dewayne Ingram, Professor, UK Department of Horticulture, Lexington, Nursery Crop Production/Life Cycle Assessment

Dr. Robert Geneve, Professor, UK Department of Horticulture, Lexington, Plant Propagation Research, Horticulture Undergraduate and Graduate Program Coordinator.

Extension Associates for Nursery Crops:

Carey Grable, UKREC

Sarah Vanek, UK will be leaving the program in July.

Post Doc:

Susmitha S. Nambuthiri

SERA Plant trials continue at the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton, KY.

Several plants continue to perform well:

Tennessee Forsythia

Kentucky Iris and Daylilies

Cornus mas 'Spring Glow'

Cephalotaxus harringtonia 'Berry College Selection'

Magnolia x 'Jon Jon' FLOI-01,

xSinocalycalycanthus raulstonii (*calycanthus raulstonii*) 'Hartlege Wine'

Amsonia 'SPH'

Viburnum luzonicum

Pinus ayacahuite

Callicarpa dichomata 'Duet'

Syringa 'Betty Ross'

Daphniphyllum macropodum was severely damaged in winter of 2014 and ultimately had to be cut to the ground and is now recovering.

Eucalyptus neglecta – has struggled but six plants appear to be growing in containers and will be placed in field trials.

Tagetes nelsonii – was abandoned in 2013 because it never flowered in our environment and proved a tall rangy plant that fell over.

Of interest in Kentucky

The UKREC Horticulture Group has instituted an annual Open House for the ornamental and fruit programs in June. Topics are annual, perennial, and woody plant evaluations including SERA-27 plants, nursery research, and fruit root stock evaluations NC-140; peach, grape and apple variety trials. Initial attendee numbers are small. An educational program will be added for 2015 with a focus on Global Warming: the place of properly grown plants in our environment. There has been the interest among artists; painters and photographers, in the plants and gardens. The artists posting their work to social media have led to greater interest in the UKREC Horticulture program.

Losses due to deer foraging and rubbing required installation of a deer fence to protect the UKREC orchard. Thus far the more public ornamental areas have not suffered from deer damage.

The field nursery industry continues to have sold out digging seasons mostly due to insufficient planting during the severe slump in landscaping from 2008 – 2012.

Blueberry production continues to increase in the form of commercial fruit production, field and container production of plants to establish wholesale and retail fruit orchards and edible landscape plants. The greatest problem is substrate management.

The University of Kentucky has subcontracted campus student learning/housing to a commercial firm in order to have new upscale housing built; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7O3y0P1Wh6k> 600 units are currently available and another 2000 are to be built.