

SERA-27 Nursery Crop and Landscape Systems
Business Meeting Minutes - 2015

Wednesday July 22, 2015
Georgia International Convention Center, College Park, GA

Participants

Representatives

- Gene Blythe (Research, Mississippi State University)
- Ed Bush (Research, Louisiana State University)
- Matt Chappell (Extension, University of Georgia)
- Zhanao Deng (Research, University of Florida)
- Geoff Denny (Extension, Mississippi State University)
- Donna Fare (Research, USDA-ARD)
- Gary Knox (Extension, University of Florida)
- Allen Owings (Extension, Louisiana State University)

Guest

- Anthony Witcher (Research, Tennessee State University)
- Yan Chen (Research, LSU AgCenter, Louisiana State University)

States Not Represented

- Alabama
- Arkansas (state report submitted)
- South Carolina
- North Carolina
- Oklahoma
- Texas (state report submitted)
- Tennessee (Anthony Witcher attended as guest)
- Kentucky
- Virginia (state report submitted)
- West Virginia

GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

1. Welcome

The SERA 27 Business Meeting was called to order at 1:43 pm on Wednesday, July 22, 2015 by President Gary Knox.

Gary Knox welcomed participants. This business meeting was planned to be held in Louisville, KY. The proposed dates didn't work for most of the members, and thus this meeting is conducted in conjunction with the 2015 SNA meeting in Georgia.

2. Attendance, Introductions, and representatives

Gary Knox introduced the current officers, advisors, and guests. Current officers are: President, Gary Knox; Secretary, Zhanao Deng; Board member, Geoff Denny.

Participants introduced themselves. A new guest Anthony Witcher was present.

Currently there are no official representatives from Alabama, Tennessee, and South Carolina.

Gary Knox volunteered to contact South Carolina Botanical Gardens, if no faculty members are interested, for find a representative.

One to two representatives were able to secure some travel funds from their universities for this meeting, but most of the representatives were not able to obtain travel funds from respective universities.

3. Review, discussion, and approval of 2014 meeting minutes

Minutes of the 2014 business meeting were reviewed, discussed and moved for approval. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Geoff Denny, seconded by Ed Bush, and approved unanimously.

4. State Reports (see Appendix 1)

Verbal reports were given from:

- Louisiana State University (Allen Owings, Ed Bush, and Yan Chen)
- Mississippi State University (Gene Blythe and Geoff Denny)
- University of Florida (Gary Knox and Zhanao Deng)
- University of Georgia (Matthew Chappell)
- Tennessee State University (Anthony Witcher)
- USDA-ARS (Donna Fare)

Written reports are in Appendix 2.

- Louisiana State University (Allen Owings, Ed Bush, and Yan Chen)
- Mississippi State University (Gene Blythe and Geoff Denny)
- Texas A&M (Mike Arnold)
- Virginia Tech
- University of Arkansas (Jim Robbins)
- University of Florida (Gary Knox and Zhanao Deng)
- University of Georgia (Matthew Chappell)
- University of Kentucky (Win Dunwell)
- USDA-USNA (Donna Fare)

5. Website Report

The SERA27 website is currently housed on the LSU AgCenter website. Allen Owings reported the website is up to date, including a compilation of our historical proceedings. Allen plans to continue updating the website.

6. Structure and memberships

President Gary reminded the group of the structure of the SERA 27 group. The official representatives for each state include one extension specialist and one research-oriented faculty member, but welcome new members to join this group. Gary stressed the values and benefits of identifying and inviting faculty members from several states that lack official representatives. It was suggested to invite Dr. Wayne Mackay to join the SERA 27 group.

7. Plant Evaluation and plant evaluation Report

Several plants were officially accepted into the plant evaluation trials, including dwarf crape myrtle.

Callicarpa: Did not survive in GA. Matthew suggested using a uniform form for data collection and Google documents for sharing data.

Gary urged all who trialed accepted plants to submit collected data so that they can be used for the development of future grant proposals and publications, presentations, etc.

Donna distributed yellow magnolia to interested parties: three each of *Magnolia* 'Sunspire' and *M.* 'Butterflies'.

Gary will have another magnolia species for distribution in the future.

Yan is evaluating tea varieties for ornamental and beverage uses.

Gene distributed *Centaurea gymnocarpa*, three plants per site.

8. 2016 and 2017 meetings

Win expressed willingness to host the 2016 meeting. It was suggested that a date in 2016 should be selected as early as possible. Previous meetings were held in early June. A date in early June 2016 is preferred. The meeting site needs to be determined.

Matthew volunteered to host the 2017 meeting in a format similar to previous plant conferences.

Gene suggested having a future meeting at the USDA-ARS, preferably in conjunction with plant symposiums.

9. Future grant proposals

Matthew planned to develop a SCRI planning grant, and invited group members to join his efforts. He proposed to focus on conducting uniform trials in the southeast or plant performance in response to climate changes.

Yan indicated that it is very important to have strong industry involvement and support to get invited for full proposal submission. It would be beneficial to get industries involved soon. It was suggested that Matthew leads the development of one preproposal, and Ed leads the development of another preproposal.

Other possible themes for future SCRI proposals include focusing on the ecological services and carbon footprints of the green industry.

10. 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.

11. Election of Officers for 2015-2016

Officer positions automatically progress from Board Member to Secretary to President. Thus, for 2016:

President, Zhanao Deng (former Secretary)

Secretary, Geoff Denny (former Board Member)

Donna nominated Matthew Chappell as the 2016 Board Member, Geoff seconded, and this was unanimously approved.

Donna moved that we approach our Administrative Advisors Patricia Knight and Regina Bracy to include Tennessee State University as an official representative. Geoff seconded the motion, and this was unanimously approved.

12. Other Business

Adjournment: Donna moved we adjourn, Geoff seconded, unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Zhanao Deng
Secretary

Louisiana State University Report

Statewide Horticulture Department, Station, Faculty Update:

Many of our ornamental horticulture faculty have moved into administrative positions in recent years – Regina Bracy, Allen Owings and Jeff Kuehny. This has hampered ornamental research efforts. Jason Stagg has been hired at the Hammond Research Station as an instructor (100% research) to work in plant trials and ornamental plant development/evaluation. Jeff Beasley and Charlie Johnson are faculty members from the turf and fruit areas, respectively, that are doing some secondary work in ornamentals. Ed Bush continues media work, coastal plant work and irrigation studies. Yan Chen continues landscape/nursery entomology, plant growth regulator evaluations and additional studies. Many minor appointment changes (modification of % extension/research/teaching). Funding for graduate assistantships continues to be difficult due to tuition and continued annual renewal requirements.

State funding remarkably stable from last year to this year. Still selective hiring freeze. 2% average raise July 2014. Despite this we have an essential “hiring freeze” on new positions.

Undergraduate enrollment (SPESS) is 80 with 40 students engaged in some horticulture area.

Graduate enrollment (SPESS) is 72 with 7 MS students and 0 PhD students engaged in some horticulture area.

Our Research and Extension Program Update:

- Olive evaluations with LDAF state specialty crop competitiveness block grant
- Continuation of Louisiana Super Plant
- New program – Plants with Potential
- USDA – SCRI *Camellia sinensis* Proposal with Mississippi State University
- May Margie Jenkins Lecture Series with Spring Industry Day
- October Landscape Horticulture Industry Day with SELNA Trade Show
- Master Gardener Appreciation Day
- Funding and Successful Annual Fund Raising with LNLFSR
- 50+ New *Lagerstroemia* Evaluations (cooperative with SFASU)
- Increased Plant Trial Fund from Woody Ornamental Nurseries
- National Plant Trials Database

Submitted by Ed Bush and Allen Owings, July 2015

Mississippi State University

Report for the Annual SERA-27 Meeting

July 22, 2015

University enrollment for last year was fairly steady with over 20,000 students, including 2,042 in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (a decrease of 5% from the previous year.). The Department of Plant and Soil Sciences included just over 151 undergraduate students and 76 graduate students during the spring 2015 semester, including 9 M.S students and 7 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. Dr. Shaun Broderick was hired onto the faculty last fall as a plant breeder at the Truck Crops Branch Experiment Station in Crystal Springs.

The university provided 3% merit increases for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station in Poplarville filled available trial beds again this spring to accommodate annual variety trials. Three additional companies sent plant materials for trials in 2015. All-America Selections vegetative ornamental trials were added to AAS flower trials in Poplarville this year, and the experiment station was also selected as a trial garden for the upcoming AAS perennial trials. The South Mississippi Branch Experiment Station participated in the third year (2014) of the National Plant Trials Database, and is continuing in 2015. HighLights newsletter is being sent via Email to a broad clientele and all Extension personnel in the state to provide quick updates on the trial gardens and horticultural research at the station. Information is also being posted on a new Facebook page.

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 2015. *Artemisia afra* has shown no reseeding thus far. *Tagetes nelsonii* has shown limited reseeding. Updates on these three items from other trialing states will be requested in order to complete a final report.

Fallugia paradoxa is being withdrawn as an item for distribution.

Centaurea gymnocarpa will be available to those interested in trialing this plant.

Texas A&M Report

Submitted by Michael A. Arnold, July 2015

Departmental Update:

Dr. R. Daniel Lineberger continues as Department Head for Horticultural Sciences. I continue to serve as the Associate Head for Undergraduate Programs and Dr. Patricia Klein continues in her role as Associate Head for Graduate Programs. Dr. Larry Stein continues in his role as Associate Head for Extension. New vegetable breeding positions, one in Uvalde and one in Weslaco, have been hired. We have hired no new tenure track professorial teaching positions in approximately nine years. Dr. Fred Davies and Dr. Jayne Zajicek announced their retirements effective September 2015.

Our undergraduate student numbers have dipped to about 150, about 100 of whom are in our B.S. program and the remainder in our B.A. program. The reduction of about 40 students is largely due to the loss of a landscape design, construction and maintenance instructor positions, which we were partially permitted to refill with a lecturer position in July 2015. Dr. Whitney Griffin has joined our faculty as a lecturer in residential landscape design. Graduate student numbers are at about 40 of which about half are Ph.D. and half M.S. students. Numerous graduations occurred during this past year, but are being replaced by approximately a similar number of new graduate students. 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, a horticulture teaching, research, and extension center (HORTTREC) adjacent to the pecan orchards in the Brazos bottoms about eight to ten miles from campus. Budgets are projected to remain flat this year with perhaps a small allocation to faculty raises. Outsourcing of physical facilities, grounds and many other campus support services continues to cause 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. We continue to evaluate three 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, TreeTown, along with a white flowering *Vitex agnus-castus* selection and an orange fruiting *Ilex decidua* selection.

A recently graduated Ph.D. student (Dr. 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 and is in the process of releasing at least one selection of *Oenothera* to a cooperating marketing group. Another former Ph.D. student (Dr.

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 large scale transplant study is underway by a recent 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 Deny). We are evaluating the third season post transplant and searching for funding for the proposed fourth and fifth years. One paper on this has been submitted on the first year establishment across the two sites to Arboriculture and Urban Forestry; two more are in preparation on transplant stress responses and economic cost analysis and we hope to have them in submission in the coming year.

Evaluations of reblooming *Hemerocalis* taxa from the SERA group is on-going.

Virginia State Report

Submitted by Alex Niemiera,
Department of Horticulture, Virginia Tech
July 6, 2015

- I. The 1) Horticulture, 2) Crop Soils Environmental Sciences, and 3) Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Sciences departments are being combined to form a School of Plant and Environmental Sciences. The target date for this merger is the fall of 2016 but the realistic target date is fall of 2017. Working groups will develop the specifics of the merger (a HUGE task). We (horticulture) are positioning our undergraduate program to retain the horticulture name, majors, and identity; we hope for the best.
2. Undergraduate enrollment is about 75, which is down about 10 students from the last year.
3. Graduate enrollment is 30+, which is about the same as in recent years.
4. The most recent hire (Aug. 2014) was a bioinformatics scientist.

University of Arkansas Report 2015

Horticulture Department

Faculty:

I am pleased to announce that effective November 1, 2014 Dr. Wayne Mackay from the University of Florida became our Department Head.

As of this report we have the following faculty vacancies:

Turf Extension Specialist: vacant 5 years (June 2010)

Horticulture physiologist: vacant 3 years (2012)

Ornamental Breeding/selection: vacant 2 years (May 2013)

Vegetable Extension Specialist: vacant 1 year (July 2014)

In addition, Dr. Dave Hensley retired effective July 1, 2015 and our extension fruit specialist (Dr. Elena Garcia) moved from 75% ext:25% rsch. to 100% research on July 1.

Graduate student enrollment is 18 total, with 12 Masters and 6 Ph.D.

Undergraduate enrollment has stayed stable at approximately 85.

Budget:

State:

Year-to-date Net Available General Revenues: Fiscal year 2015 net available general revenue collections total \$5,250.5 million. This amount is \$228.1 million or 4.5 percent above prior year results. The resulting year-end **surplus** is \$191.6 million or 3.8 percent above the net available-for-distribution amount (budgeted) for fiscal year 2015. The fiscal year ended above forecast and above the budgeted amount as a result of improving growth in gross revenue (collections) and lower-than-expected payouts from Income tax refunds and other deductions.

University:

Faculty in the Division of Agriculture received a 1% raise with classified staff receiving a 2% COL and 1-3% merit raise.

SERA plants:

Nothing to report

Respectfully submitted:
Dr. James Robbins

**University of Florida Report
Statewide Environmental Horticulture Program¹**

Gary Knox² and Zhanao Deng³

University of Florida/IFAS

²North Florida Research and Education Center, Quincy, FL 32351

³Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, Baum, FL

2015

Total Undergraduate Enrollment:

- Environmental Horticulture undergraduate students are encompassed in "Plant Science"
 - A joint undergraduate collaborative major serving Environmental Horticulture, Agronomy and Plant Pathology
 - Enrollment for Plant Science during Spring Semester 2015 was 100 (2014=86; 2013=70; 2012=107)
 - 40 of these have emphases relating to environmental horticulture
 - 22 are on main campus
 - 18 are located at Research and Education Centers (RECs)
- Instruction takes place at: Main Campus (Gainesville), Ft. Lauderdale REC, Mid-Florida REC (Orlando area), and West Florida REC (Pensacola area)
 - Programs at Gulf Coast REC (Plant City outside Tampa) and TREC-Homestead (Miami area) were dropped
- Does not include students in fruit/vegetable programs
- Represents mostly juniors and seniors

Total Graduate Student Enrollment for Environmental Horticulture (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
2015	19	16	35

2014 – 2015 Faculty Retirements or Departures

- John Cisar (turfgrass; Fort Lauderdale REC)
- Jake Henny (foliage plant breeder; Mid-Florida REC (Orlando area))
- Wayne Mackay (Department Chair, Gainesville)
- Sydney Park Brown (teaching/extension, consumer horticulture; GCREC-Plant City (Tampa area))

Impending Faculty Retirements

- Ed Gilman, Professor, Arboriculture (Gainesville) – 2016
- Charles Guy, Professor, Plant Physiology and Plant Biochemistry (Gainesville) - 2016

New Environmental Horticulture Faculty in 2015

- Sandra B. (Sandy) Wilson moved from Indian River REC to Gainesville to become Interim Chair of the Environmental Horticulture Department (Statewide)
- John Peterson, Professor, Public Horticulture (August, 2015), Gainesville Campus
- Brian Pearson, Asst. Professor (July, 2015), Mid-Florida REC (Orlando area)
- TBD, Asst. Professor, Environmental Turfgrass Science (August, 2015), Fort Lauderdale REC

2013 – 2014 Faculty Retirements

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

New Environmental Horticulture Faculty in 2014

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

University of Georgia

Report for the Annual SERA-27 Meeting

August 4, 2015

Student enrollment in the Department of Horticulture includes 69 undergraduates (up 14 from 2014) and 26 graduate students (up 8 from 2014). Many of our undergraduates are interested in sustainable agriculture/organic production – however a shift is beginning to ornamental production of floriculture, nursery and vegetable crops. Our College budget appears to be stable this year and faculty received a merit-based pay increase of 0-8%.

In the past year we have added a Sustainable Horticulture position (Suzanne O’Connell - Athens) and a Peach Extension/Research position (Dario Chavez – Griffin). A technician position, focusing on ornamentals and breeding, will be hired as of 8/15/15 (this is significant as this position will collect data on SERA plants). Negotiations are underway with a targeted hire, who would focus on functional genomics. No other positions are anticipated in 2015-16 FY.

Fortunately, we have lost no faculty due to moves or retirement.

Report submitted by Matthew Chappell.

University of Kentucky Report

Prepared by Winston Dunwell

We are in the process of Reappointment of our Department of Horticulture Chair Dr. Robert Houtz.

Faculty and Staff received modest salary increases July 1, 2015.

We have 35 students in the Horticulture emphasis of Horticulture Plant Science.

We are tentatively announcing an opening for a BS or MS level Extension Associate for Nursery Crops to be housed at the UKREC, Princeton, KY. Actual approval to formally announce and open online application process has yet to be confirmed.

A busy year moving the National Boxwood Trial under a shade structure and getting numerous plants in containers planted out into the evaluation area.

Plant Report

In spite of cuttings and division I still don't have the numbers for distribution of Giant Jon *Amsonia* (Jon Lindstrom named and gave Win the plant at the SERA meeting in Fayetteville, Arkansas) but we are getting there and the original plant is finally out of the container and growing quickly in a plant bed so hopefully next year we can take a bunch of cuttings.

Japanese maple evaluation: plants are in partial shade and are doing well. Fjellheim (2nd year), Bihou, and Hefner's Red Select.

Hypericum olympicum: We have lost the plant we distributed. It was vigorous to start in the evaluation then slowly went away.

Viburnum luzonicum has recovered from January 7, 2014 -0.8°F, January 29, 2014 -1.3°F winter damage following the colder winter (February 19, 2015 -13.3°F) of 2015. We assume snow cover protected it.

Muhlenbergia capillaris Purple Haze from Gary Knox died in the overwintering house we would like to get more plants for the evaluation as Muhly Grass does grow in Kentucky.

Callicarpa rubella is still in a container but will be planted out this fall. It bloomed and has fruit.

Syringa 'Betsy Ross' continues to impress us at the UKREC but reports from the Louisville area say it is susceptible to powdery mildew.

Cephalotaxus harringtonia TN98-01 'Berry College' continues its remarkably slow growth to 40" in 2015.

Pinus ayacahuite is still doing well.

The Tennessee *Forsythia* series has performed well and will be removed from trials.

Daphniphyllum macropodum DC02-01 open field was lost in 2015. The one in a protected spot near a building was lost in 2014.

x*Sinocalycalycanthus raulstonii* 'Hartlege Wine' NC02-01 has done very well but will no longer be evaluated. We have rooted cuttings to plant in a display bed and the 8-10 foot tall shrub original plant will be removed.

Calycanthus Venus™ will be removed. The annual floral spotting makes it an unacceptable plant for our area.

Betula nigra 'Summer Cascade' NC03-01 has survived to a 12 foot weeping plant that looks good but the scorch wounds on the top of the branches make it unacceptable for Kentucky.

Callicarpa dichomata 'Duet' TN07-01 all three plants have performed well in trials and are now part of a display planting.

Hemerocallis Nancy Gayle is large, hand-sized, with medium width red petals and large green-yellow throat.

Eucalyptus neglecta following 2 years of growth from seedlings to 7 gallon pots has been planted in a field with some wind protection from a row of *Pinus ayacahuite*. Desperately need training; possibly cut to ground but we will see if winter cold does that for us.

Amsonia SPH from Jon Lindstrom has been propagated and planted in a display bed. The original plant will be removed.

x *Gordonia grandiflora* – from Margie Jenkins. Planted in good soil in a grove of pin oaks. Irrigated. Showed a bit of scorch when in the container.

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/fletcher/mcilab/publications/ranney-and-fantz-2006.pdf>

Greenleaf plants – all have survived and are growing vigorously from late spring planting.

Buxus microphylla var. *japonica* 'Gegem' Baby Gem™ has been planted under a shade structure with the National Boxwood Trials plants

Hydrangea macrophylla 'GRENAN' - Nantucket Blue™ *Hydrangea* bloomed pink in the Boxwood shade structure. The 3 plants have been fertilized with Everris® Blue Max™ Coated Aluminum Sulfate.

Hibiscus syriacus 'DS01BS' - Blueberry Smoothie™ *Althea* Tree was planted in open sun. It started bloom July 16, 2015.

Lagerstroemia x 'GA 0804' - Princess Lyla™ Crapemyrtle was planted in a site with early shade and late sun. The three plants have set numerous buds but as of July 20, 2015 have not yet opened.

Hemerocallis x 'SPd 06-11' - Aruba Red™ Daylily – loud red, green throat

Hemerocallis x 'SPd 06-12' - Jamaica Sunrise™ Daylily - almost neon red-purple with green-yellow throat.

US National Arboretum, USDA-ARS Nursery Research Center

There has not been much activity as far as personnel changes at the arboretum, with the exception of Dr. Richard Olson. He accepted the position of Director of the National Arboretum and has vacated his research appointment. His research position is critical so we are hoping for the position to be filled in the near future.

Submitted by Donna C. Fare