

Corn Maze Features Louisiana Agriculture

Preston Dumont
Intern

The urban population continues to increase, making up about 80% of the population of the United States — approximately 60 million people — while the rural population and workforce in agriculture continues to decrease. This has led to limited opportunities for the majority of the population to have direct, hands-on experiences with food and agricultural plants outside of retail purchasing, meal preparation and food consumption. Dr. James Wandersee, an LSU professor in biology, termed this disconnect between people and plants “plant blindness.” To bridge the gap between people and the agricultural plants that feed us, the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens has planted a demonstration plot at the entrance of the Corn Maze. Last year we featured a corn plot titled “Corn Through the Ages,” which provided

a living example of the history and genetic variations of corn and the importance of corn in the production of thousands of products we use every day.

This year we will feature another important agricultural crop, sweet potatoes. A sweet potato breeding demonstration plot was planted this summer and will showcase varieties of sweet potatoes that have been bred and released by LSU dating back to 1937. The varieties that will be on display are Porto Rico, Murasaki, Beauregard, Evangeline, Bayou Belle and a new variety soon to be released for production. In addition to the traditional rows of sweet potatoes, a nursery for sweet potato breeding has been built in the center of the plot. These types of nurseries are an active part of the

LSU AgCenter sweet potato breeding program where the seed is harvested and evaluated for its potential to become a new commercial variety. The nursery plot at the Corn Maze demonstrates part of the sweet potato breeding program for weevil resistance.

The exhibit will also feature viewing boxes that demonstrate how sweet potatoes grow and produce the delicious roots we love to eat. As an LSU senior and intern at the Botanic Gardens, I have worked with Dr. Don La Bonte, the LSU AgCenter sweet potato breeder, and Dr. Christopher Clark, the LSU AgCenter sweet potato pathologist, to develop and implement the demonstration plot. We hope you will not only come out and enjoy the Corn Maze every Saturday in October but also open your eyes to an important agricultural crop that is bred in Louisiana and produced and eaten around the world. ■



Preston Dumont standing at his sweet potato plot.



Reflections From the Chair

Mary Tauzin
Chair, Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden

Since its inception, research has been a primary focus of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. Continuing to systematically study what works and what doesn't work leads us to establish the best practices in growing plants and people.

For those of us who have experienced raising children, I'm sure you will agree that the methods used by our parents and ourselves in contrast with new parents of today leave us to wonder how we ever survived! As a new grandparent, I am awed by the newest practices. My grandbaby's first food besides breast milk was delivered to her by the "self-feeding" method. This method shuns the traditional first foods of cereal and "baby food," which are replaced by natural fruits and vegetables that go from the baby's precious pudgy hands to her always-open-for-new-tastes mouth. So, my grandchild Ada's first food after breast milk was sweet potatoes! The videos of her attempting to eat them are hysterical, and I'll be glad to show them along with 100,000 other perfect pictures of her to anyone who indicates the slightest interest.

Sweet potatoes are the subject of the latest research conducted at the gardens. The results of this research will be on display at this year's Corn Maze. Come pass a good time every Saturday in October and learn about the best varieties of sweet potatoes for your table (or highchair, as the case may be).



Baby Ada's first food — sweet potatoes.

If you haven't been to Wine & Roses, you're missing out on a beautifully elegant night of cocktails, entertainment and art along with fabulous food and great fellowship in the middle of the Rose Garden. Tickets are on sale now.

The last event of the calendar year for the Botanic Gardens is the annual Poinsettia Sale. This year we're adding Breakfast With Santa and Mrs. Claus activities so the whole family can enjoy the outing. Come out on December 7 from 9 a.m. to noon to get the best selections of locally grown, healthy poinsettias. Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden members get an added benefit of being able to shop before the doors open for the public. If you want first pick, we'll be glad to get you joined up on the spot!

Special thanks to the Byzantine Icon Workshop crew who just finished up yet another successful art and fundraising event for the Botanic Gardens. Please join me in a show of appreciation for Diana Wells, chair; Mary Tharp, hospitality chair; Kitty Hessburg Wiemer; Ginnie Bolin; Michele Deshotels; Mia Levert; Kristen Thompson; Wanda Ellis; Joyce Hensley; Aline Creed; Leslie Bardwell; Brenda Davis; Pat Brignac; and Ann Pearce for their work and donations.

The LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens is a place of continuous activity and a restful setting for our community. We love to share this treasure with you and yours. Visit us at www.BurdenGardens.com or friend us on Facebook ([LSUAgBotanicGardens](https://www.facebook.com/LSUAgBotanicGardens)) for up-to-date information. ■

If you would like to only receive this newsletter electronically, please email friends@burdengardens.com.

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The newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden, which is part of Burden Museum & Gardens.

DiscoverBurden.com

4560 Essen Lane
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Trees & Trails and More

Sarah Rayner
Youth Education Coordinator

Bringing people of all ages back to nature by providing diverse green places that engage, inspire and educate is part of the mission of the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. Providing a space where students and faculty engage in horticultural research and then sharing the knowledge of best practices gleaned from that research helps build a community that extends into our interconnected global world.

As I sit at my desk beginning the article for the newsletter, I find myself reflecting on the mission statement and vision of the Botanic Gardens for direction and clarity. The school buses and morning rush of traffic are in full gear once again. Summer for the students is over, although there is plenty of summer left with our fifth day of heat advisories. Inside the conference building the air conditioner is running, and I have sent emails to the schools welcoming teachers back to school for a new year with information about our Trees & Trails program and Corn Maze Fridays.

A fall orientation for individuals who are interested in becoming a docent in Trees & Trails was held on Aug. 20. Trees & Trails is a fun and educational program. The field trips give students in kindergarten through high school the opportunity to learn about ecosystems and reforestation of urban woodlands in outdoor classrooms. The students learn environmental content that correlates with national and state educational standards, strengthening students' critical thinking, team-building and problem-solving skills. To learn more about our Trees & Trails program, visit our website at <https://www.lsu.edu/botanic-gardens/research/trees.php>. If you missed the orientation program, you can always join us during a field trip to see firsthand what our programs are all about.

Corn Maze Fridays are great events for the students in kindergarten through the fourth grade! We have up to 400 students a day come out each Friday in October. Corn Maze is always exciting, and it is a fun-filled educational event. Corn Maze continues every Saturday in October, culminating in a Night Maze on October 26. We are looking for individuals to volunteer for either a Friday or Saturday for this awesome event. ■

Family Membership Benefit

Members who have contributed \$70 for a family membership receive four free admissions for each Corn Maze Saturday.

Great outdoor family fun every Saturday in October!



Join the crazy, mazy fun!

Corn Maze Saturdays
October 5, 12, 19 & 26
10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Enjoy some crazy, mazy family fun as you find your way through the maze. Test your skill at the giant sling shots, climb Hay Mountain, visit the farm animals and take a hayride. Other activities include pumpkin decorating, a children's zipline, a corn crib and more.
Concessions available.

Night Maze & Bonfire
October 26 . 6-9 p.m.

Cozy up to the bonfire and listen to music. Go batty on the Bat Walk. Climb Hay Mountain, decorate a pumpkin, try your hand at some mazy games, see the dance of the witches and more. Make s'mores, and enjoy jambalaya and other concessions.

Admission to each event is \$10 per person. Free for children 3 and younger.



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New Arrivals

Bluebirds in Residence at Botanic Gardens

You may have noticed the addition of nesting boxes in and around the gardens at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. This summer's mating season has resulted in multiple broods of bluebirds. The Eastern bluebird habitat preference is a rural area, and they favor edges of open areas near meadows, fence lines and roads. Next to the road — aka the interstate — the birds chose a box in the Children's Garden to raise their chicks.

Sarah Rayner, education coordinator, has introduced citizen science to the Botanic Gardens. She spoke on this subject at Reflections in the Garden. Thanks to her efforts, data on our newest residents was collected and uploaded to NestWatch, a program that monitors when nesting occurs, the number of eggs laid and how many hatch, and the number of hatchlings that survive and fledge.

The Botanic Gardens provides many opportunities for citizen scientists to observe and record information on birds, frogs, bats, butterflies, bees and other animals as well as invasive plants. Collaborating with scientists providing data on biodiversity is instrumental in understanding the effects of climate change, habitat loss and pesticides. More information is available at <https://www.lsu.edu/botanic-gardens/research/citizenscience.php> or by contacting Sarah at srayner@agcenter.lsu.edu. ■



Bluebirds nesting.



Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Cocktails and Hors d'oeuvres
6 p.m.

Flora and Fine Art
Music by John Gray Jazz Trio
6 p.m.

Dinner
7 p.m.

Cocktail attire
\$125 per person for members
\$150 per person for nonmembers
Table \$1,500
(seats eight to ten)
Limited seating



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StoryTime and StoryWalk Volunteers Needed

Becky White

StoryTime and StoryWalk Coordinator

At StoryTime in the Garden, children get to hear great storybooks read in a garden setting and can complete related craft activities. Many of the storybooks featured are nature-themed, in keeping with the beautiful gardens. We typically have 60 to 100 people attend for these three-hour events held one Saturday each month from 9 a.m. to noon from September through April. Beginning this year, we have an additional feature to celebrate! StoryWalk in the Garden will have a new book each quarter for families with young children to enjoy. At these celebrations, volunteers can walk through the StoryWalk in the Garden and read to a group of children the featured storybook as they stroll along the trail.

We are seeking interested volunteers to assist with our 2019-20 StoryTime and StoryWalk in the Garden events. If you enjoy young children, reading storybooks or helping with child craft activities, this volunteer experience is for you. Contact Becky White at rwhite@lsu.edu or 225-937-7366 to learn more. Another source to learn more about StoryTime is at <https://www.facebook.com/storytimeinthegarden>.

Our 2019-20 schedule for StoryTime in the Garden has been set:

- **October 5** (held in conjunction with the opening of Corn Maze)
- **November 16** (plus new StoryWalk book will be featured at the event)
- **January 18** (held in conjunction with Arbor Day at Burden)
- **February 8** (plus new StoryWalk book will be featured at the event)
- **March 7**
- **April 4**
- **May 9** (plus new StoryWalk book will be featured at the event) ■



Picture Perfect: Shutterflies Are Buzzing

Amateurs, professionals, photographers and painters have been flocking to the fields at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden to capture images of nature's wonder. A field of multicolored zinnias, sunflowers and more is a beautiful backdrop for toddlers and family photos. Near the Herb Garden, the plot is grown in rows with an open path in the middle making it easy to get up close — or to get a close-up.

The sunflower field across the bridge around the corner from the pavilion is another splendid scene. Plein air artists have been setting up their easels in the shade of the pines and painting away all day. An additional field will be coming into bloom in the days to come.

Information about fees, professional photographer passes and making reservations for photo shoots is available by contacting Katie Guitreau at kguitreau@agcenter.lsu.edu. Amateurs using cell phone cameras are not subject to charge but are encouraged to park only in designated areas and to be careful sharing space with the pollinators.

So smile, say bees and wave for the camera if you please! ■



Christmas in the Garden

Dec. 7

9 a.m. to
Noon

LSU AgCenter
Botanic Gardens

\$30 per person
Children 1 year old
and younger get in free.

Tickets at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com)
Advance tickets required.



Pancake Breakfast

Picture with Santa

Stories with Mrs. Claus

Holiday Crafts

Write and Send Your
Letter to Santa

Make Reindeer Food

Poinsettia Show & Sale
Free Entry

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Houseplants Can Liven Up Any Room

Lee Rouse
Extension Agent

Adding houseplants to your living room, study, kitchen or bathroom can liven up any one of these spaces. Houseplants seem to be making a rapid comeback with the younger generation. This could be because many millennials are living in apartments, tiny rent houses or houses with small yards. Because of this push, houseplants are back and very easy to find in any nursery or garden center.

When picking out a houseplant, look to see where it's placed in the nursery. Be sure the plant is coming from the houseplant section and not just a shaded area within the nursery. Check the mature size of the plants you're interested in and be sure that it is an appropriate plant for the area where you would like to put it. Once you get your houseplant home, leave it in its original container for a few months. You want to allow the houseplant to get acclimated to your home.

Repotting the plant immediately will add extra stress to your new addition. If you do not want to see the nursery container it came in, then pick out a larger pot that you would like to plant it in later and simply set the plant inside the pot without repotting.

Houseplants are typically low maintenance and will perform very well, but sometimes they will show signs of stress if they are receiving too much or too little care. Be sure to check the amount of sunlight the plant is receiving. One of the top reasons a houseplant will perform poorly inside is that it simply is not receiving enough light.

Another factor to check if your houseplant is doing poorly inside is the amount of water your plant is receiving. Overwatering your houseplants can lead to their decline very quickly. When watering houseplants, be sure to let them dry out and then water your plants thoroughly until water comes out of the bottom of the pot. This is a great indicator to know that you have given your plant enough water. This can be done in a sink, or you can take your plant outside. If you decide to water the plant in place, be sure that the plant has a saucer underneath so that water does not spill onto your floor.

It is very important to also fertilize your houseplants. Using a slow-release fertilizer is an easy way to provide your plants with all the nutrients they need. If your plants were fertilized with a slow-release fertilizer in the spring, they will not need to be fertilized again during the summer months. Overfertilization can be detrimental to houseplants. Excessive fertilizer salt in the soil can cause brown leaf edges and could possibly kill the plant. Weeds are rarely as large of a problem for houseplants as they would be for outdoor container plants. If you do happen to see a weed or two pop up, pick it out immediately. Mulching indoor plants could help with weed suppression, but it makes it very difficult to know when your plant needs to be watered. ■

Saints Up by 10

Byzantine Icon Workshop a Winner

This summer the conference center at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden was the site for the 10th Icon Painting Workshop. Twenty-three people attended, some for the first time and others who have come again and again. Based on interest indicators, the subject chosen was a beautiful, detailed and complex icon of St. Michael the Archangel.

The volunteers who plan and present the icon workshops conduct extensive research and intensive preparations to ensure the highest quality experience possible. Evaluations after every workshop are carefully reviewed. Based on the feedback and suggestions received, numerous changes and additions have been implemented to enhance the experience for attendees.

Committee member Michele Deshotels thoroughly researches available data and compiles a presentation that delves into the history of the subject icon, its symbolism, origin, location and the context of the times surrounding its creation. Participants are treated to a comprehensive lecture and Power Point presentation by Michele. Mia Levert and Kristen Thompson provide the technology and skills needed to record and provide downloadable videos of the demonstrations. This allows participants an opportunity to review them on their phones as desired while they proceed through the icon painting process. Most recently, specially created fabric covers to store and protect the icons were offered by Mary Tauzin.

Leading the way and guiding the committee from its very inception is Ginnie Bolin. Her generosity, visible in the way she shares her interest, knowledge and experience in Byzantine iconography, has made this event a repeated success. Her love of art and education and her devotion to the Botanic Gardens inspires the committee of volunteers and the participating artists. Thank you to all the committee members, Diana Wells, Kitty Hessburg, Michele Deshotels, Wanda Ellis, Joyce Hensley, Mia Levert, Mary Tauzin, Mary Tharp, Kristen Thompson and all the “kitchen angels.” The Botanic Gardens at Burden is indeed blessed.

Beginning Feb. 4 is the St. Helena (the mother of Constantine the Great) Byzantine Icon Workshop. An initial deposit of \$175 is required by Dec. 1, 2020, to reserve your place. For more information, please call Diana Wells at 225-927-8646 or Kitty Hessburg Wiemer at 225-284-7440. ■



Don't Miss the
**Poinsettia
Sale & Show**
at Christmas in the Garden
Saturday, December 7
9 a.m.-Noon

Entry is free to the Poinsettia Sale & Show.
Admission to Christmas in the Garden
is charged separately.

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Upcoming Events at LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden

October 2019

Oct. 1	6 p.m.	East Baton Rouge Master Gardener Association	Monthly meeting.
Oct. 5, 12, 19 and 26	10 a.m.-5 p.m.	Corn Maze Saturdays	Corn Maze, farm animals, pumpkin and face painting, corn crib, children's zip line, giant sling shots, and hay mountain and hay rides. \$10. Free for children 3 and under.
Oct. 5	10 a.m.-1 p.m., every 30 mins.	StoryTime in the Garden	Storybook reading and imagination-themed activities at the Corn Maze. Ages 3-8. Free.
Oct. 7	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens	Reflections in the Garden — "Creative Cooking Demonstrations," Louisiana Culinary Institute instructors and students. Members free, nonmembers \$10.
Oct. 9	7 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.
Oct. 16	6-9 p.m.	Wine and Roses	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden annual formal dinner with cocktails in the Rose Garden. \$125 members, \$150 nonmembers.
Oct. 24	6:30 p.m.	Herb Society of America, Baton Rouge Unit	Monthly meeting. "Myths and Mysteries of Herbs," Mary Williams.
Oct. 26	6-9 p.m.	Night Maze	Corn Maze, farm animals, corn crib and hay mountain. Evening bonfire with s'mores and music. \$10. Free for children 3 and under.
Oct. 27	3:30-6 p.m.	Rural Life Museum Haints, Haunts and Halloween	Storytelling, cake walks, old-fashioned games and trick-or-treating. \$5.

November 2019

Nov. 3	1 p.m.	Baton Rouge Camellia Society	Regular meeting.
Nov. 4	noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens	Reflections in the Garden — "Winter Hummingbirds," Jane Patterson, president, Baton Rouge Audubon Society. Members free, nonmembers \$10.
Nov. 5	12:30 p.m.	East Baton Rouge Master Gardener Association	Monthly meeting.
Nov. 7	6:30-9:30 p.m.	Rural Life Museum Red Rooster Bash	A silent and live auction with numerous auction items and lively music with delicious barbeque.
Nov. 16	9 a.m.-noon	StoryTime in the Garden	Storybook reading and imagination-themed activities. Ages 3-8. Free.
Nov. 20	7 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.

December 2019

Dec. 2	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens	Reflections in the Garden — "Place, Memory, and Garden-Making at Le Petit Versailles and Rowan Oak," Kevin Risk, associate professor, LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture. Members free, nonmembers \$10.
Dec. 3	6 p.m.	East Baton Rouge Master Gardener Association	Master Gardener Christmas Social.
Dec. 7	9 a.m.-noon	Poinsettia Sale	Annual Poinsettia Show and Sale. Free admission.
Dec. 7	9 a.m.-noon	Christmas in the Garden	Breakfast, pictures with Santa and more holiday fun. \$30.
Dec. 8	Noon-6 p.m.	A Rural Life Christmas	A 19th-century Louisiana celebration with musical groups, demonstrating artisans, storytellers, costumed re-enactors and Papa Noel. \$10. Free for children 10 and under.
Dec. 24, 25 and Jan. 1	Closed	Burden Museum and Gardens Holidays	Burden Museum and Gardens is closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

January 2020

Jan. 6	Noon-1 p.m.	Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens	Reflections in the Garden. Members free, nonmembers \$10.
Jan. 18	9 a.m.-1 p.m.	Arbor Day	Plant a tree, Smokey Bear, tree climbing. Free.
Jan. 18	9 a.m.-noon	StoryTime in the Garden at Arbor Day	Storybook reading and imagination-themed activities at Arbor Day. Ages 3 - 8. Free.
Jan. 20	7 p.m.	Baton Rouge Orchid Society	Monthly meeting.

Visit our website: www.LSUAgCenter.com

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