

The Donation of Windrush

By John Monroe

The year 1961 marked the beginning of serious efforts to find an appropriate recipient for Windrush Plantation. The Burden Foundation was formed with a board composed of the family members: Ione, Steele, Pike and Pike's wife Jeannette. The primary purpose of the Burden Foundation was to act as a vehicle to make the donation. The Burden family gave the property to the foundation which in turn gave the property to Louisiana State University. This arrangement created an entity (The Burden Foundation) that would exist in perpetuity to oversee the use of the property and insure that the covenants of the donation were not violated. After five years of effort, evaluating alternatives and planning, in October of 1966, an agreement was reached to transfer Windrush to the Louisiana State University.

Louisiana State University was not the only organization being considered as the recipient of

Reflections from the Chair

By Ginnie Bolin, Chairman



After a very cold and wet winter, are you looking forward to fresh air, sunshine, and green landscape? The Burden Center is a good place to visit and enjoy nature at its best. The Burden Horticulture Society is gearing up for our Afternoon of Roses, on Sunday, April 18 from

2:00 to 4:00. The roses have been pruned, dead-headed, and dressed for the occasion and ready for everyone to experience the beautiful Burden All American Rose Garden.

The Trees and Trails are open now and being enjoyed by many visitors, some taking daily walks through the woods. Take this opportunity to watch a forest devastated by Gustav regenerate itself. The woods at Burden, thanks to the “help” of nature, will be a better forest than before the Gustav event.

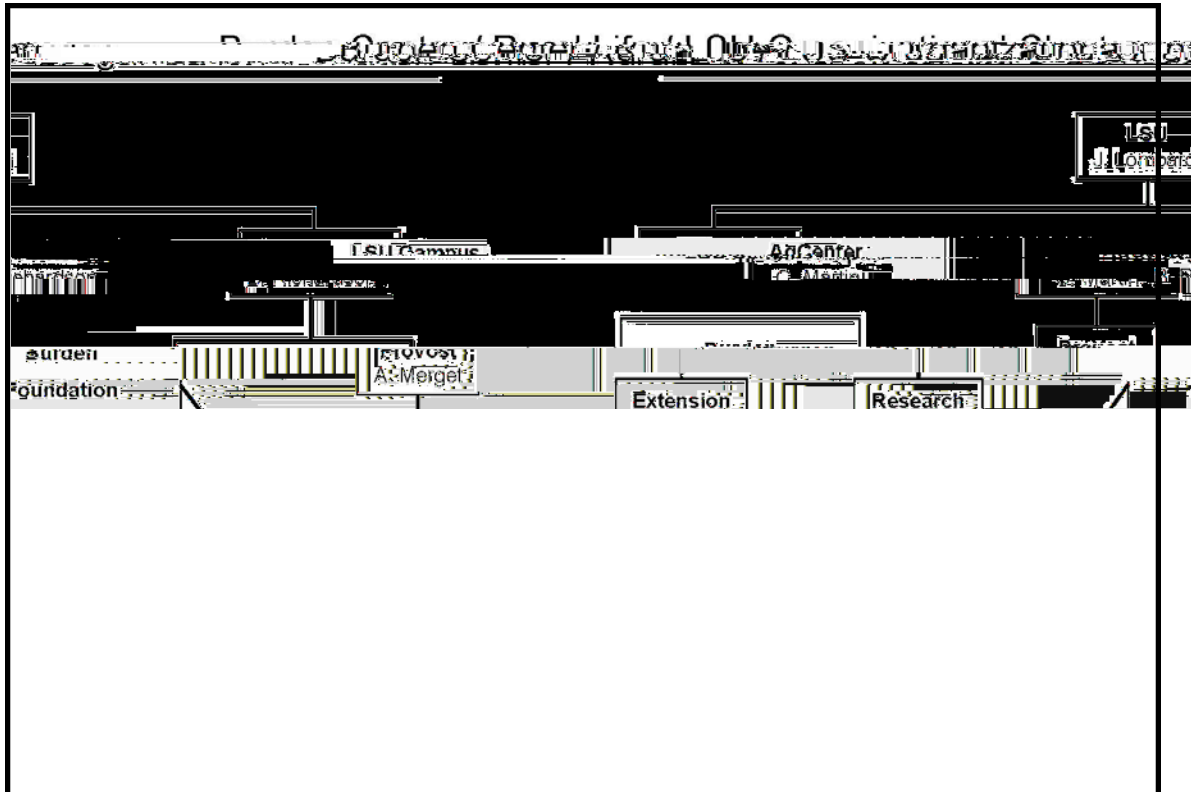
In January the first meeting of the BHS Board was an orientation for the four new Board members, the returning Board members, and the BHS Advisory Committee. John Monroe gave an overview of the history at the Burden Center and the donation of the Burden family to Louisiana State University. See John’s article on page 1 of this newsletter about the donation.

An organizational chart of the entire Burden facility which includes

Burden Center, Windrush Garden, and Rural Life Museum was presented to show the complex structure, relationships, and levels of responsibilities at the Center. Please refer to the chart for details.

Dr. Pat Hegwood and Dr. Jeff Kuehny did a thorough review of new Master Plan for Burden comparing the present map to the maps showing the new design concepts in the Master Plan. All of this information is available for review at the Burden Center or you can view the map of the Master Plan at our website, www.burdenhorticulturesociety.com. Dr. Kuehny informed the Board that a feasibility study by a national firm is being considered before any capital campaign to raise money for the Master Plan would be undertaken.

The Board and the Advisory Committee are eagerly looking forward to an exciting and productive year. We invite you to be part of this adventure to transform Burden into a world-class research center and a university sponsored botanical garden. You can do this by renewing your membership or becoming a member of BHS by sending in the membership form in this issue of the newsletter.



Digging in the Dirt

By Jeff Kuehny

Lilting for Lilies

How often have you seen beautiful lilies in a flower arrangement and thought to yourself, “These lilies would look great in the landscape!”? Dream no more! Burden Center

has been conducting a lily perennialization study for landscape planting of some of the very same lilies that you see in flower arrangements with some great results.

Where do lilies come from and why should you consider them? Lilies are some of the oldest flowers in cultivation but have only been grown in the US for about 60 years. A tremendous amount of hybridizing of the different sections of lilies has been conducted since the end of World War II by the Dutch. During this time hybrid lilies have been grown primarily for cut flowers and as potted flowering plants with great success.

My earliest memories of lilies being grown in the landscape were from my childhood in Oklahoma. My grandmother grew these beautiful lilies with bright orange flowers sporting brown/black spots on the petals and she called them ‘Tiger Lilies’. As a pass-along-plant, my great aunt had a huge bed of these Tiger Lilies with what was probably a row of Stella d’Ora daylilies as a border in the front of the bed. This bed of lilies was a traffic stopper on Highway 11 in Deer Creek, Oklahoma! I believe these Tiger Lilies were *Lilium lancifolium*, native to

Windrush Gardens: An Historic Treasure

By Maia Butler

I lucked out on the sunny day in February when I met Peggy Cox at Burden Center to be escorted around the historic garden site of the Burden family home known as Windrush Gardens. Peggy has been for many years the curator of this restful, beautiful and somewhat hidden idle wild that is found in the middle of Baton Rouge. Her pride in its beauty and her faithful efforts to preserve its historical perspective are a reflection of her dedication to her craft and her love of gardens and gardening.

Peggy joined me in my car at the Burden Conference Center and directed me to drive through the Burden farmland to enter the Windrush Gardens by the back way through the Piney Woods. The Piney Woods were developed late in the life of Steele Burden, the original gardener for Windrush, and are relatively young compared to other garden areas. They create an open woodscape full of dappled sunlight with mounds of azaleas, camellias and small trees as under story plants giving it an expansive feel that belies its relative youth as a wooded area. It was developed to and serves the purpose of a transitional space between the semi-formal gardens and the surrounding farmland.

On our right Peggy pointed out the large pond that in summer is dotted with Louisiana Irises and is frequented year round by water fowl of all kinds. There is a gazebo with access through the garden and another that stands on the edge of the lake. At one time in the recent past a beaver had tried to make a home in the pond. It did considerable damage to some of the cypress trees that mark the edge of the pond, and had to be trapped and relocated. The decision to leave the damaged trees in place provided

favorites in the garden selected by the original gardener, Steele Burden. They include azalea, nandina, ardisia, and several varieties of ferns. Peggy explained Mr. Burden choose plants for color, texture, and fragrance not necessarily for blooming. He must have been an intelligent and practical man to have figured out how to enjoy a garden full of color without the heartache of trying to get sun loving plants to bloom in the heavy shade of the southern garden, especially if we note Windrush was developed in a time before air conditioning so shade was a valuable, even life giving commodity.

Peggy and I mounted the steps to the porch of the former Burden residence that is now a part of the museum. It is in a style called Creole Vernacular Architecture. It is a simple structure with a quiet elegance. She points out the symmetrical selection of plants in the landscape always chosen for texture and color. We peer through the floor length windows. The house is filled with interesting artifacts of a life gone by, visible through the windows that I call French doors. I am sure that during the summer months they were left open to gather the breezes. They were probably screened to prevent mosquito infestation,

but would have afforded a delightful view of the garden surrounding the home in every direction.

There are shutters for closing out the winter winds to make a cozy space with large and beckoning fireplaces and chairs for gathering about the fire and tables for

meals.

Peggy and I walked around the house to the other side which would have been the back of the original house. This according to the tour information I read before coming is the first of the garden rooms developed by Steele Burden. If we think back to the time the home was part of a working farm, this area behind the house was reported to have been a fenced area for pigs. It was near enough to keep an eye on and far enough away to avoid some of the inevitable animal odors that would have been ever present, especially in the summer!

Peggy and the staff at Windrush have worked hard to restore these gardens following the recent hurricanes, especially Gustav that hit the Baton Rouge area particularly hard. The garden lost several trees and specimen plants that were focal features of the garden spaces; some others were damaged so much that their survival is in question to this day. The loss of trees has changed the nature of this garden as these shade loving plants struggle to adapt to their new sunny environment. It is in this area that the true sense of Peggy's love of the garden and respect for the work of preserving the concept and feel of Windrush became most evident to me.

I saw Peggy first study the garden as a whole for its overall appearance and note the color was off on some gardenias and a few other plants. She noted the preparation of some beds was coming along, then she lamented the loss of the planned plantings due to the unusual freeze that caused a power outage in the green house. I could tell she had switched into horticulturalist mode. She regretted the hours of work of her valuable group of volunteers that was lost. She was acutely aware of the well being of her plant charges and thinking in terms of how the loss of one set of carefully cultivated cuttings was going to affect the outcome of her budget for the next year. It was easy to see the balance of the business woman, horticulturalist, and artist that make up Peggy's personality and makes her so well suited for her job! Peggy seems to love every aspect of the job as curator of Windrush Gardens: the plants, the gardens, the volunteers, the planning and the problem solving.

Windrush Gardens: An Historic Treasure

KEY

- (1) **Hostler's House:** Entrance to the gardens and one of the two 19th century structures original to Windrush. The hostler was a hired hand employed to tend the horses.
- (2) **Pigeonnier:** Wealthy plantation owners often had pigeonniers to provide squab for fine dining. This one was constructed as an ornamental garden shed.
- (3) **Garden I & Garden House:** Steele Burden spent many of his early days here painting, reading and entertaining guests. He developed this area during the 1920s.
- (4) **Young Hermes:** A bronze sculpture of young Hermes in repose on an old well.
- (5) **Water Lily Pond:** The fountain in the pond was acquired in 1925. This zinc statue is thought to be one of the first pieces of sculpture in downtown Baton Rouge and later moved to Windrush.
- (6) **Windrush House and Porch:** The Burden home is an example of Creole Vernacular Architecture, with an expansive front lawn bordered by Wards Creek.
- (7) **Garden II:** Developed in the 1930s, these flowerbeds exhibit seasonal color.
- (8) **Hermes & Zeus:** Hermes whispering to Zeus. Acquired in 1935, bronze.
- (9) **Garden III:** These shrub borders, developed in the 1940s, surround a large expanse of lawn.
- (10) **Atalanta:** This mythological female athlete agreed to marry any man who could beat her in a foot race.
- (11) **Hippomenes:** In the race, he threw golden apples in front of Atalanta, she stopped to pick them up and he won.
- (12) **A Wounded Amazon:** Marble sculpture circa 1850.
- (13) **Bacchus:** This carved stone statue is the god of wine, the inspirer of ritual madness and ecstasy.
- (14) **Piney Woods**

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