



Friends of
HILLTOP ARBORETUM

EXPLORE.

LEARN.

ENJOY.



Spring 2024 Newsletter



News and Events



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Letter from the President

Hello Friends,

It's an exciting time at Hilltop. All manner of things are growing, sprouting and blooming and not just plants. We are making progress in a number of very important areas. Just recently the Board of Directors adopted a formal definition of what a native plant is for Hilltop (see page 3). I'd like to extend a special thank you to our authors, Dr. Marcia Hardy, Dr. Jenneke Visser, and Virginia Gardner. This has been a long-standing goal and is a surprisingly complex issue. It will help us to continue to move forward in this very important area. Also, our Emory Smith Legacy planting project is nearing completion. Final plantings of beautiful native trees and shrubs are in the works in the north perimeter and woodland walk areas. The ravines are being cleared of invasives. Additional master plan work has been completed in the Cajun prairie with new paths and bridges.

As our Spring Fling plant sale approaches, as well as camps and other activities, volunteer opportunities abound. Hilltop needs your support! Working together, we have created a wonderful oasis at Hilltop. New events are being planned to celebrate Hilltop in exciting ways. Stay tuned for more information. Thank you for the ongoing support of our donors and volunteers. You are truly an amazing group.

I look forward to seeing all of you out at Hilltop.

Chris Werner



Letter from the Director

Dear Hilltop Friends,

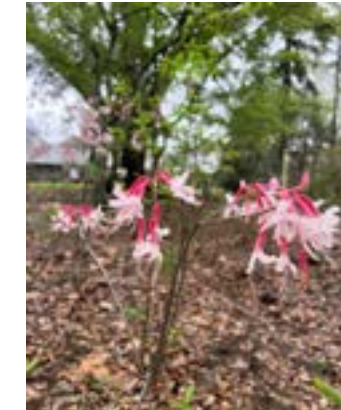
It's been a wonderful experience on-boarding with Hilltop. These past several months I have enjoyed collaborating with the staff, Hodge Podge, and volunteers who contribute their time and talents to Hilltop. I am grateful that so many value Hilltop and treat it as their own.

We have been diligently tending to the site. The fall and winter shedding afforded us the opportunity to observe Hilltop through a new lens. We have welcomed several volunteer groups who assisted with site clean-up, invasive plant removal, and meadow seeding. I continue to work closely with LSU to address facility updates, repairs, and maintenance. I am grateful for their responsiveness and prioritization of Hilltop. The list only grows as we check off items, but this is a testament to the number of visitors we have daily and the high-demand of our site. I remain inspired as I observe the many ways Hilltop is enjoyed by its visitors. It is my goal to continue to make Hilltop a beautiful and immersive experience for all who visit.

We are deep in our preparations for Spring Fling, which is right around the corner! We are excited to offer an increased inventory of native plants this year and have worked hard on updating our plant signs. You will notice a new green Louisiana logo on each plant sign stating a plant's native designation. As many of us are "Going Native", we hope this helps to continue to steer you in that direction. Please join us for the sale as a volunteer, shopper, or both.

It is a wonderful season to visit Hilltop. I hope to see you soon.

Tara



In Memoriam

Pete Newton

Pete's love for Hilltop was palpable. As we've done so many projects over the years, Pete was there with a vision and a guiding hand. The genius of his landscape design will always be seen at Hilltop. His work on our master plan and our mission of design, horticulture, and outreach was his love. He shared the passion and inspiration of Emory Smith and faculty of the LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture who founded Hilltop. Think of Pete when you stroll the Arboretum. So much of the beauty that you see is due to his landscape company and his attention to detail. Fitting for a landscape architect, he gave us a strong foundation of support for the future. We enjoyed knowing Pete and miss him greatly.



Randy Harelson

Randy's love of Hilltop was inspirational. His positive energy and enthusiasm drew people together promoting all things Hilltop. His support was instrumental to the continuing mission of Hilltop as a unique educational and cultural facility. He shared greatly of himself with everyone who had contact with him. This included garden tours and open houses at the LeJeune House in New Roads to support Hilltop. Seeing his restoration of the house and gardens was a special treat. His interest in Louisiana plants promoted Emory Smith and native plants at Hilltop. Randy also wrote a number of children's books and used his joy of working with children to support our summer camps. Randy's boundless spirit, energy, and respect for life is greatly missed.



Hilltop's Native Plant Designation

Hilltop Arboretum has had a long-standing interest in the native plants of Louisiana, beginning with native plantings by founder Emory Smith and continuing with the installation of a native prairie meadow, educational programs, and the sale of native plants. Recently, the Friends of Hilltop Board of Directors approved the HodgePodge method for designating native plant status. A full description of the definitions, methodology, and procedure, authored by Dr. Marcia Hardy, Dr. Jenneke Visser, and Virginia Gardner, can be found on our website.

The methodology uses four classes that will be used on all future plant labels and signs. The classification of plants offered for sale at Hilltop is now as follows:

LA Native: Species native to Louisiana

LA Native Cultivar: Louisiana plant species bred to improve shape, color, size,

Native US: Plant native to the US, but not documented as native in Louisiana

Introduced: Plant not native to the US



Notes from Hilltop

Spring is blooming at Hilltop! We are observing new wonders daily. If you haven't downloaded the iNaturalist app to track your observations on the site, give it a try! Entries made at Hilltop will be automatically added to the *Hilltop Arboretum Species Survey*. Let us know if you need help. We are glad to guide you through the process.

We are making progress in our 3-acre Cajun prairie-inspired meadow. In February, with the help of several volunteers, we seeded the meadow with a variety of species of native wildflowers and grasses. In accordance with our master plan, the final two footbridges were installed, and the last three footpaths traversing the meadow were established. We have created a new meadow quadrant near the pond that will be used for education, testing, and demonstrations. Stay tuned for our fall meadow fundraising event, *Celebrate Hilltop: An Intimate Evening in the Cajun Prairie*, preceded by a hands-on 'teaser workshop' using pressed flowers and foliage from the meadow.

In 2022, the Friends of Hilltop launched a fundraising campaign, *Enhancing Emory Smith's Legacy*. Through the generosity of your support, our fundraising goal of \$50,000 was exceeded! Emory Smith donated Hilltop to LSU to preserve the site for the benefit of future generations. He envisioned a permanent arboretum of native plants, naturally displayed, open to the public and available for study by LSU. The primary condition of Emory's donation was that Hilltop be maintained as an arboretum and that the collection of native trees and shrubs be maintained and enlarged. He specified that future plantings be organized into natural appearing plant communities, extend into a large portion of the undeveloped areas of the arboretum, and be used to buffer the Arboretum from the sight of surrounding homes. Emory desired that each pathway serve a purpose and that areas of the Arboretum be entirely devoted to plantings presenting a natural appearance.

The *Emory Smith Legacy Project* has allowed us build upon the roots of the arboretum and realize Emory's vision for the site. Working within the framework of Emory's intent, the funds provided for the planting of native trees in the Central Ravine and Cathedral; the creation of a native hedgerow along the northern, eastern, and western perimeters of the site; the design, fabrication, and installation of the final two metal footbridges in the meadow; and the installation of irrigation to help establish our newly planted areas. Just this week, 26 native magnolias and hollies were installed in the northern hedgerow, expending the remainder of the project funds. We could not have done this without your support. We hope you are excited as we are to watch this new canopy thrive at Hilltop!



2024 Spring Fling Plant Sale

Wednesday, April 17, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Members Only Sale)

Saturday, April 20, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Sunday, April 21, 12 p.m. – 4 p.m.

The LSU Hilltop Arboretum will hold its annual Spring Fling Plant Sale on Saturday, April 20 and Sunday, April 21, at 11855 Highland Road. The sale is open to the public. Members of the Friends of Hilltop will receive first pick of plants at the Members-Only Sale, Wednesday, April 17.

Go Native!

This year's sale celebrates Hilltop's commitment to *Go Native!* while adhering to our commitment to masterfully collect people and plants and bring them together in the unique, natural space that is the LSU Hilltop Arboretum. We will offer an expanded selection of native plants and feature over 300 species of native and traditional trees, shrubs, perennials, vines, ferns, camellias, and grasses, all sourced from trusted nurseries in Texas and Louisiana. Plant experts will on hand to help with plant selections, and a limited number of wagons will be available to rent for \$5.

Return of your Favorites!

In addition to the plant sale, our ever-popular Yarden Sale, Vendor's Village, and Hilltop Gift Shop will return for visitors' enjoyment. A children's activity tent, led by outdoor education volunteers, will engage children in crafting spring-themed nature activities and take-home treats.

Become a member of the Friends of Hilltop Arboretum at the Violet level (\$35) and above by Thursday, April 11, to gain access to the members-only sale. Members at the Azalea level (\$50) and above will receive 10% off plants. Members at the Redbud level (\$75) and above will receive a 10% discount on Gift Shop items. All Hilltop plant, Gift Shop, and Yarden Sale purchases will be tax-free during the sale.



Last Call for Yarden Sale Donations! Accepting items until Wednesday, April 10

We welcome gently-used yard, garden, and household items.
No clothing please.

Can't deliver to Hilltop? Call us, and we'll arrange a pickup.

We appreciate your help. Every dollar made supports Hilltop.



Spring Fling Volunteers Needed

We need your help! Spring Fling volunteers are needed before, during, and after the sale. Please consider volunteering for one or more of the following tasks and sign up using the QR code or call us.



Plant Unloading - April 4-5

Plant Experts: Identify the plants that are delivered.

Inventory Trackers: Ensure all plants paid for were delivered, confirm carts are ready to move.

Plant Tag Distributors: Provide plant ID signs and sales tags to each cart of plants.

Plant Movers: Move plants with tags and ID signs to their spot in the nursery.

Plant Taggers: Tag plants that have been delivered to their spot in the nursery.

Plant Watering - April 5-20

Watering: Water all plants daily, from date of delivery up to the plant sale. Ensure plants are well-watered and pots are upright after wind events.

Spring Fling Setup - April 16

Setup: Place tents, banners, signs around site.

Spring Fling - April 17, 20-21

Cashiers: Check membership status, calculate purchase price, collect payments.

Children's Activity Tent (weekend only): Assist youth volunteers, lead activities and crafts.

Floater: Assist volunteers and staff with various tasks.

Gift Shop: Talk with customers, assist with sales.

Greeter/ Way-finding (weekend only): Greet visitors and directs visitors to the various offerings.

Plant Experts: Provide information on plants for sale, advise customers on selections.

Tally Helpers: Assist customers with filling out tally sheets.

Traffic Control/ Security: Direct traffic, manage vehicles, assist with security.

Wagon Helpers (weekend only): Assist youth volunteers, help customers bring plants to cars.

Yarden Sale: Talk with customers, assist with sales.

Youth Volunteers: Help in the Children's Activity Tent, be a Wagon Helper.

Spring Fling Take Down - April 21

Take Down: Work with staff and other volunteers to take down event.

Volunteer After Party Set Up and Take Down - April 21

Plan after party; coordinate pick up of food and beverages; coordinate party set up/ take down.



Upcoming Programs

Discover Nature Lecture Series

Through a partnership with the Louisiana Master Naturalists of Greater Baton Rouge (LMNGBR), Hilltop offers monthly programs featuring local and national experts who are in touch with nature and are eager to share their experiences. Lectures are held in the Beverly Brown Coates Auditorium at Hilltop from 6:30 p.m – 8 p.m. Registration is \$10 for students, Hilltop members, and LMNGBR members; \$15 for non-members.

Louisiana Herb Journal – April 23

Corinne Martin, Clinical Herbalist

Monarchs, Migration and Milkweed – May 28

Linda Auld, NOLA Bug Lady

Medicinal Plants for the Garden – June 25

Jen Blanchard, LSU School of Plant, Environmental, & Soil Sciences

Composting- Nature's Way of Recycling – July 23

Bob Dilleuth, Louisiana Master Gardener & Friend of Hilltop

The Marvels & Menaces of Mushrooms – August 13

Dr. Stephen Antrobus, Mycologist

Compass Rose Minerals and Gems – September 24

Catherine Rouchon, Lapidarist

Workshop: Pressed Flowers of Hilltop's Meadow – October 22

Kelly Jean, Artist

Children's Camps

Backyard Habitat Gardener Easter Camp – *Plants & Pollinators*

Monday-Tuesday, April 1-2, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

Ages 7-10

Summer Sprouts – *Young Children's Camp*

Monday-Friday, June 3-7, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Ages 4-6

Backyard Habitat Gardener Summer Camp – *Wildlife, Oh My!*

Monday-Friday, June 10-14, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Ages 7-10

Backyard Habitat Gardener Thanksgiving Camp

Monday-Tuesday, November 25-26, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Ages 7-10



Upcoming Events

Spring Garden Tour: Tiny Gardens of Downtown Baton Rouge

Saturday, May 11, 1-5pm

Join the Friends of Hilltop for an afternoon stroll through the quaint downtown gardens of historic Beaugard Town and Spanish Town. The tour will feature seven beautiful urban gardens and conclude with a reception at Passé in the boutique Origin Hotel.

Tour tickets are \$25 per person; \$10 for students. Registration online early April.

Interested in volunteering? Please call us. Volunteers visit the gardens for free.



Annual Hilltop Meadow Workshop featuring Dr. Charles Allen

Wednesday, August 14, 9am – 1pm

PlantFest! Teaser featuring Heather Kirk-Ballard

Sunday, September 29, 2pm – 3:30pm

Celebrate Hilltop: An Intimate Evening in the Cajun Prairie

Friday, October 25, 5-8pm

Join us at Hilltop this fall to celebrate our Cajun prairie-inspired meadow of tall grasses and blooming wildflowers!

Enjoy libations and appetizers under the Emory Smith Wedding Oak and around the pond. Stroll Hilltop's Cajun Prairie and listen to live Cajun music in the Amphitheater. Dinner to follow under the pavilion. Silent auction items will celebrate nature, Louisiana cooking and art themes.

Stay tuned to our website for more details.



SAVE THE DATE! 2025 Annual Symposium featuring Douglas W. Tallamy

Saturday, January 25, 2025, 9am – 1pm

Location TBD

Volunteer Opportunities



Volunteers provide the power that sustains Hilltop Arboretum! We are always welcoming new volunteers. Below are some ways you can help. Click on the QR code to view opportunities and learn more.

Hodge Podge Nursery – Emory Smith shared and encouraged the sharing of plants, particularly those native to Louisiana. The Hodge Podge has followed Emory’s lead by giving arboretum friends the opportunity to scour their gardens for plants in need of a new home. From its humble beginnings in a quiet corner at the annual plant sale, the Podge has blossomed into a volunteer small-nursery operation. The Podge gathers most Wednesdays, 9 a.m. – noon to propagate plants, weed, water, create plant signs, maintain the nursery, and plan annual plant sales. The day ends with a potluck lunch. *All are welcome!*

PlantFest and Spring Fling Plant Sales – Work begins long before these events occur annually in April and October. *Please visit page 6 for more information on how to sign up!*

Storm and Hurricane Cleanup – After major storm events, we rely on nearby volunteers to help with initial storm clean up, making the parking lot and paths accessible. Hilltop and community volunteers are then called upon to clear out tree debris and further clear the pathways. If you can safely access Hilltop, we always appreciate the extra help (and tools!). *Let us know if you’d like to be added to our storm cleanup list!*

Meadow – Volunteers are called upon to assist with removing invasives and reseeding Hilltop’s beautiful 3-acre meadow. Interested in working year-round to help tend to our meadow and help us identify and log the sprouting seedlings? *We invite those with a knack for native plants to become a Hilltop Meadow-keeper.*

Site Work Days – Hilltop hosts Saturday site workdays several times per year to assist with spreading gravel in the pathways, mulching trees, removing invasive species, and clearing out overgrowth. Volunteers include individuals, families, students, and Scouts. *Email us to be added to our volunteer work day list!*

Site-Specific Work – Several volunteers assist with our ongoing site needs. One maintains the bamboo pass; another maintains the seasonal lights; a neighbor bush-hogs the meadow and clears the overgrowth. Service groups undertake creative projects. *Let us know if you have an area of interest or expertise that you’d like to share.*

It’s Not All Outside – If plants aren’t your thing, but you would like to help in other ways, we are always accepting help with indoor tasks. *Let us know how, and when, you’re able to contribute!*



CALENDAR

APRIL

Spring Break Children’s Camp
Mon, Apr 1 - Tues, Apr 2

Spring Fling Volunteering
Thu, Apr 4 - Sun, Apr 22

Spring Fling Plant Sale
Wed, Apr 17 & Sat-Sun, Apr 20-21

Discover Nature
Tues, Apr 23

MAY

Spring Garden Tour
Sat, May 11

Discover Nature
Tues, May 28

JUNE

Summer Children’s Camps
Mon-Fri, Jun 3-7 & Jun 10-14

Discover Nature
Tues, Jun 25

JULY

Discover Nature
Tues, Jul 23

AUGUST

Discover Nature
Tues, Aug 13

Annual Meadow Workshop
Wed, Aug 14

SEPTEMBER

Discover Nature
Tues, Sept 24

PlantFest! Teaser
Sun, Sept 29

OCTOBER

PlantFest! Plant Sale
Wed, Oct 2 & Sat-Sun, Oct 5-6

Discover Nature
Tue, Oct 22

Celebrate Hilltop
Fri, Oct 25

GET IN TOUCH



CALL

225.767.6916



MEET

Tuesday-Friday, 9am - 4:30pm



CLICK

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www.lsu.edu/hilltop

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VOLUNTEER

Visit our website for upcoming volunteer opportunities.