

Steele Burden, Landscape Artist: Windrush Gardens

By John Monroe

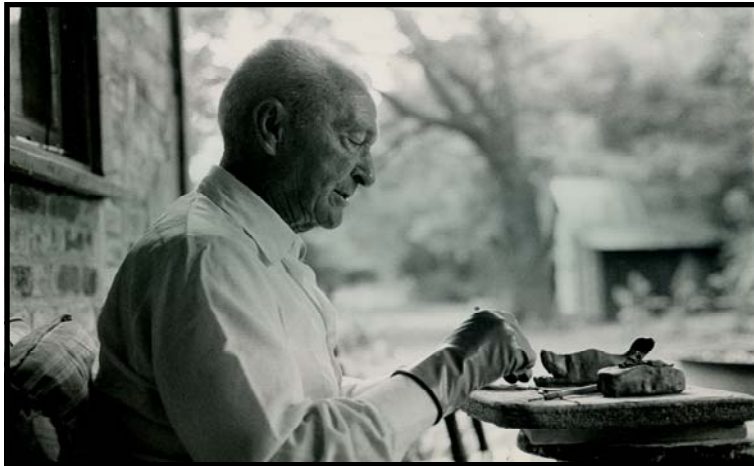
Steele Burden

was first an artist. He expressed his artistic ideas in several ways: as a painter, as a sculptor of small clay figurines and as a landscape designer and builder. He is remembered for all of these works but primarily for his landscapes.

Steele developed his landscaping style through observation and experience. Even though the term "landscape architect" has been used to describe him, he had no formal training in this field. As a young man, he traveled to Europe and South America. He visited many gardens and parks and was moved by the effect these landscapes had on him. Serene, peaceful and contemplative are words he often used to describe the experiences he enjoyed the most. They came to describe the objective of his landscape designs. His goal was to recreate at home the emotions he felt when visiting these landscapes.

If one of Steele's landscapes is to be singled out as the best representation of his style, it would be Windrush Gardens, the gardens surrounding the family home. He began developing Windrush Gardens in the 1920's as a young man beginning with the areas surrounding the Burden family home. He expanded the gardens over the following three decades. Today we call the result "Old Windrush Gardens." It is roughly contained within a seven acre tract around the home.

Although he was inspired by the grand and elaborate gardens he visited,



he faced significant limitations here at Windrush that prevented him from simply recreating what he saw during his travels. Adapting his ideas to the Louisiana climate was certainly one issue, but, more importantly, the fact that resources available to him were limited was the real challenge.

Labor was not abundant. Steele himself cut the lawn areas with a walk behind power mower during early periods of the garden's development. Occasionally he could get a small crew together to complete a construction or planting project, but most of the time he only had one or two men a day or two a week to maintain the gardens. For extended periods he had one worker, George Raby, to help maintain Windrush Gardens.

Although the gardens have a modern irrigation system now, this was not the case during Steele's life. Continuously running water through a single small supply pipe for a week would supply less than ¼ inch if spread over five acres of lawns and beds. Water was applied to new plantings and as an emergency procedure during prolonged droughts during the hottest part of the

summer to avoid losing the garden entirely.

These challenges eventually influenced the design style and plant preference used to develop Windrush Gardens. Borders of monkey grass or liriope were used to define the open lawn spaces and paths. These shapes were of primary importance in Steele's view. These borders preserved these

shapes even when maintenance of the edges was less than perfect. Growth of undesirable vegetation was hidden from view avoiding the need for constant weeding. Pruning was done over long cycles so tolerance of severe pruning was an important attribute. Plants that could not survive periods of inattention and drought were soon abandoned in favor of more hardy materials. Indian azaleas, camellias, aspidistra, nandinas, ligustrums, crepe myrtles, live oaks, spruce pines, ardisias and cypress trees found their way into Steele's final palette for Windrush. Bedding plantings of annuals and perennials were reserved only for special spots: small areas on the "points" of beds and at entrances to garden rooms or to enhance the garden statuary that he collected and displayed there. Lawns were mowed but not sodded with special grasses. St. Augustine, carpet, some Bermuda and even monkey grass escapees were cut for lawns.

Windrush Gardens was not intended as a botanical collection of exotics. It was the composition of an artist who used the landscape around his family home to express his ideas and emotions in hopes that those who experienced his work would feel the same.

Reflections from the Chair

By Ginnie Bolin, Chairman



An old saying is that there is a silver lining in every cloud. The silver lining after a very cold, sometimes bitter winter was a glorious spring. This was most evident at the BHS **Afternoon of Roses** on April 18. The sky was blue, the sun warm, and the wind was cool and gentle. While standing in the midst of the many varieties of award winning roses, one could look in any direction and see a panorama of different hues layered with green vegetation and the distant explosion of colored annuals and perennials. The Burden Center presented a fantastic show throughout the grounds with the camellias, azaleas and flowering trees at their very best. The educational program was outstanding with **Allen Owings** answering questions about the selection, planting and maintenance of roses.

On May 16 the **Rural Life Museum** had an open house in remembrance of their fortieth anniversary. **BHS docents** met about fifty people at the Hostler House, one of the two nineteenth century structures still remaining in the Windrush gardens and led them through the semiformal gardens with garden "rooms", sculptures and garden ornamentation that Steele Burden collected during his travels.

Have you had a chance to look at the calendar for future events you may want to enjoy at Burden Center? **Ginger Day** will be held the morning of August 14. **Dr. Jeff Kuehny** will give a short talk and answer all your questions. Gingers and crinums will be sold after his talk. The **Wine and Roses Dinner** will be October 27th. Do you know someone you would like to invite to join us at your table for a fun-filled elegant evening? It is a great way to introduce new members to the BHS community and the lovely setting at Burden Center's improved Orangerie and the Ione Burden Conference Center. You all know how football season can be; it is not too soon to put it on everyone's calendar!

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"Reflection in the Garden" Lunch Series

Noon to 1:00 PM in the
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 the first Monday of each month

Special guest speakers!
Bring a brown bag lunch
Drinks will be provided!

Aug 2	More Than Ginger Ale	Jeff Kuehny
Sept 13	Fall/Winter Landscape Planning	Dan Gill
Oct 4	Sweet Potatoes: They're Not Just for Thanksgiving Anymore	Don Labonte
Nov 1	Strawberries: Planting, Caring and Eating	Charlie Johnson
Dec 6	Design on a Dime Holiday Decorating	Barbara Laudun and Jeanie LeBlanc

Digging in the Dirt

By Jeff Kuehny



Gingers are classified in a strangely named family called the Zingiberaceae family. The Latin name *Zingiber* is derived from the Sanskrit word *shringavera*. Sanskrit is an historical Indo-Aryan language, one of the liturgical languages of Hinduism and Buddhism, and one of the 22 official languages of India. The Sanskrit word

shringavera, means "shaped like a deer's antlers." If you have ever used fresh ginger root (*Zingiber officinale*) for culinary purposes then you will understand why this description fits perfectly. The word ginger evolved in English from the Latin *zingiber* as "gingifer" and "gingivere." So, as one of my favorite radio commentators Paul Harvey used to say, "And now you know the rest of the story". But wait, there is much more to gingers than just an edible rhizome!

There are more than 1000 species of gingers. The genera of the more common flowering and culinary gingers in the Zingiberaceae family include: *Alpinia*, *Curcuma*, *Etilingera*, *Globba*, *Hedychium*, *Kaempferia*, *Siphonichilus* and *Zingiber*. The genera of the ginger in the Costaceae family have also been considered part of Zingiberaceae family; however, the two families remain separate.

The genus *Costus* is native to tropical America. The most common species of flowering gingers in the Costaceae family include: *Costus* and *Monocostus*. Many ginger species originated in tropical regions of Asia, mainly in Southeast Asia. A smaller number of the Zingiberaceae family is native to Africa, north Australia and Madagascar. Gingers have aromatic rhizomes or underground stems growing horizontally just below the soil surface, that may be thick and fleshy or thin and slender. Soils with poor drainage may cause rhizomes or tubers to rot. Thus, a well drained, but moist soilless medium or soil is necessary for optimum growth.

Most gingers are native to tropical and subtropical

forests, in the shaded interior or on the outer perimeters of the forest. Most gingers go dormant in October through November when day time temperatures fall below 60 F and day length is less than 12 hours. Gingers are similar to caladiums in that the soil temperature must warm to about 70F before emergence will occur, thus, gingers start to emerge in our area at the end of April and through May. This year, however, due to an unusual winter they emerged about a month later than expected.

Most everyone is familiar with the *Alpinia zerumbet* referred to as "shell ginger" or "pink porcelain lily" which is a common landscape plant grown in the South in full shade or full sun. This ginger has a white to pink inflorescence with fragrant, pendulous white flowers that bloom only on 2 year-old growth and will bloom more prolifically when grown in full sun. These gingers can quickly take over a landscape bed so plant them judiciously! The variegated form is not as invasive and

adds a nice contrast in the landscape full sun to part shade.

Curcuma species have become popular as landscape plants in the South. They are commonly called "hidden ginger" or "surprise gingers" because the inflorescence of some of these gingers does not rise above the foliage. They range in height from 1 to 8 feet. *Curcuma* can be divided into two groups, spring bloomers and summer bloomers. Spring bloomers

bloom before or while the first foliage appears; inflorescences are on separate stalks and bloom in early May such as *Curcuma elata* which can reach heights of 8' by middle summer so give it some room. Summer bloomers, such as *C. petioloata (cordata)* and *Curcuma rhobdata*, have a central inflorescence that arises from the center of the plant and is surrounded by leaves. Some *Curcuma* are grown more for their foliage than for their flower, *Curcuma amade* 'Emperor' *Curcuma* 'Scarlet Fever' are two examples. They bloom from midsummer to early fall. Most will grow in full sun to part sun.

There are approximately 70 *Globba* species and they grow best in part sun to full shade. Most of the *Globba* are 2 feet or less in height but some can grow up

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Research Wrapped in Beauty at the Burden Center in Baton Rouge

By Rick Bogren

In 2004, the LSU AgCenter transformed a former hay field into a 25-acre turf grass and ornamental horticulture research area as the newest addition to the Burden Center in Baton Rouge, a facility dedicated to the viability and success of Louisiana's commercial nursery, landscape and turf grass industry.

"Much of the research results also are adaptable to home lawns and gardens," said Pat Hegwood, the center coordinator.

Originally called Windrush Plantation, the tract now known as the Burden Center was acquired by John Charles Burden in the mid-19th century and is home to a wide array of formal and informal gardens and woods in addition to horticulture research.



John Charles Burden's descendants include Steele Burden, a former landscaper for the LSU campus; Ione Burden, his sister and former assistant dean of women at LSU; and Jeanette Burden, the widow of their brother, Pike Burden. In 1966, they donated 50 acres to LSU, and over the succeeding years, they donated additional tracts until the final parcel was given in 1992, for a total of 440 acres at the Burden Center.

The Burden family stipulated in the act of donation that the property be used for horticultural and agronomic research, for development of a Rural Life Museum and as a green area devoid of buildings not necessary for these purposes. To secure LSU's future adherence to these stipulations, the Ione Burden Foundation was formed.

Over the years, the focus of research at Burden Center has changed. In 1979, when Warren Meadows was appointed resident director of the Burden Research Plantation, as it was known then, the research included soybeans and other agronomic crops such as wheat.

"Very little horticultural research was in progress," Meadows said.

When he started at Burden, Meadows learned Ione Burden was more interested in the development of the horticultural research program there than Steele Burden.

"Nevertheless, they both wished to see more horticulture activity and less soybeans occupying the property," Meadows said. "The increased emphasis on urban horticulture research, I believe, would have met with Mr. Burden's approval."

Now, AgCenter researchers conduct plant trials throughout the year at Burden to evaluate the performance of landscape bedding

plants and vegetable plants appropriate for south Louisiana. Warm-season and cool-season plants are rotated annually in approximately 5,000 square feet of raised beds.

The researchers evaluate a broad range of landscape plants to determine disease and insect resistance, bloom quality and duration, cut flower potential, cold and heat tolerance, and overall landscape performance and adaptability. In addition, Burden Center is home to trials to evaluate various varieties of tomatoes, sweet potatoes, strawberries and many other commercial and home garden vegetables and fruits.

Zhijun Liu of the School of Renewable Natural Resources has several projects at Burden Center. He's growing 21 camptotheca trees for a study with the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Seeds from the trees contain camptothecin, a naturally occurring compound that holds promise in cancer therapy.

Liu is also growing a second tree, eucommia, for studies in cooperation with the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine and Pennington Biomedical Research Center. Eucommia bark contains substances that have anti-hypertension properties.

Sweet potato researchers at Burden Center are studying host-plant resistance to sweet potato weevils and banded cucumber beetles. Sweet potato weevils are a pest under quarantine and are not present in most north Louisiana parishes. Other research includes screening lines from the AgCenter breeding program for resistance to major diseases and determining the role of viruses in the decline in yield and quality of sweet potato varieties.

Other researchers use the facilities at Burden Center to evaluate performance of varieties of strawberries, mahaws, figs, peaches and pawpaws while vegetable studies include tomato variety performance and new technologies and practices to improve the

Research Wrapped in Beauty at the Burden Center in Baton Rouge

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profitability for small and medium-scale fresh-market producers.

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A massive rose display at Burden.

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Sustainable agriculture research includes organic vegetable production, summer and winter cover crops, production practices and variety trials. Extension demonstration projects feature field days and organic vegetable production demonstrations.

In the greenhouse, researchers are working with tomatoes and hydroponic lettuce. In addition, they're investigating the effects of heat stress on bedding plants and developing a method for determining heat tolerance.

The Burden Center also hosts ongoing evaluations of roses, crape myrtles and bedding plants to develop recommendations for the production and landscape industry. Plant researchers are looking at postharvest longevity of sunflowers, rose diseases and poinsettia stem strength. Turf grass research includes a national turf grass evaluation and research in plant nutrition and weed control. Researchers also are evaluating the use of biodegradable containers and investigating particle size and distribution of various wood products for use as a soilless substrate.

The original Windrush Garden is a 3.5-acre area around the original Burden home with formal gardens including bronze and marble statues and water features. The Burden Center maintains it exactly as it was when Steele Burden designed it.

"We don't add to it or take anything away," Hegwood said. "We have a documented inventory of the original Windrush Garden."

Over the intervening years, the cultivated garden area has grown to about 15 acres but still in keeping with Steele Burden's original design. In the newer area, the AgCenter has been adding and enhancing the garden with newer plant varieties. In areas where Steele Burden planted camellias, the AgCenter has planted camellias; where he planted azaleas, the AgCenter has planted azaleas.

Complementing Steele Burden's original plantings, the AgCenter acquired more than 450 identified camellia varieties from the private collection of Violet Stone in 2002. Now planted in several locations at Burden Center, the camellia gardens are supported by the Baton Rouge Camellia Society, which propagates plants from the collection and sells them. Burden Center receives a portion of the proceeds of the sales.

Burden Center is a member of All- America Rose Selection's nationwide network of approved public gardens. AARS public gardens contain a minimum of 800 rose bushes and offer special displays of outstanding new varieties chosen by AARS for their beauty, novelty and vigor. The garden at Burden Center was recognized with an "Outstanding Rose Garden Maintenance Award" for 2009, Hegwood said.

Private evaluators found the garden to be in excellent condition and "a tribute to the AARS varieties on display," Hegwood said.

Other features at Burden Center include:

- The Barton Arboretum, which has a pond and gazebo.
- A Memorial Live Oak Garden features trees that have been dedicated to friends of the AgCenter.
- The Steele Burden Memorial Orangerie, part conservatory and part interpretive in construction.
- The Ione E. Burden Conference Center, which includes a 2,400-squarefoot meeting room served by a kitchen and outdoor area for conferences and workshops.

Along with the AgCenter's research and demonstration activities, LSU A&M operates the Rural Life Museum in a 16-acre corner of Burden Center. Through its extensive collection of tools, utensils, furniture and farming equipment, the museum preserves and interprets an important part of the state's and nation's rural heritage. The museum also serves as a research facility for LSU students engaged in heritage conservation studies.

[www. BurdenHorticultureSociety.com](http://www.BurdenHorticultureSociety.com)

Please check our website for new activities, updates and changes as so much depends on the weather.

Digging in the Dirt

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to 5 feet tall. They are grown for their showy inflorescence. The most common *Globba* is *G. winitii* 'Dancing Ladies'. This name is derived from the shape of the flower with a yellow calyx that is often described to look like dancing ladies. My favorites are *Globba schomburgkii* and *Globba globulifera* which slowly spread by small bulbs that fall from the inflorescence and make an excellent flowering type of ground cover.

Another long-standing favorite in gardens of the deep south are the *Hedychium* gingers, commonly referred to as "ginger lily", "garland lily" or "butterfly ginger". The more popular common name "butterfly ginger" is attributed to butterfly-shaped inflorescence and to the gingers attraction to butterflies and moths. These are the only true fragrant gingers. The most common *Hedychium* ginger are: *H. coccineum* (red ginger lily, scarlet ginger lily), *H. coronarium* (butterfly lily, garland flower and white ginger), and *H. flavescens* (yellow ginger). New introductions with improved landscape characteristics are constantly being added to the market. A few of my favorites are 'Pink V' (nice pink bloom about 6' tall), 'Elizabeth' (another pink a little shorter to 5'), 'Dr. Moy' (variegated foliage with a yellow inflorescence only about 4' tall) and 'Tahitian Flame' (great variegation with a striking yellow/orange inflorescence and about 5' tall).

Kaempferia are commonly called "peacock gingers" because of the purple and/or silver pattern in their leaves which resemble the genus *Calathea*, commonly known as prayer plant. *Calathea*, however, belong to the Marantaceae family. *Kaempferia* can grow to 2 feet tall depending on

species and grow best in full shade. Some of my favorites are *Kaempferia* 'Shazam', *Kaempferia rotunda*, *Kaempferia rotunda* 'Raven' and *Cornukaempferia*. The flowers of *Kaempferia* are small ranging from purple to white with a longevity of approximately 1 day.

The diversity of various colors, sizes and shapes of flowers and leaves of the Zingiberaceae family provide a diversity of plants that can be used throughout the landscape. Please come by and explore the wonderful world of gingers at the BHS Ginger Day, Saturday August 14 at 9:00 AM at the Ione Burden Conference Center and Ornamental Ginger Garden. Several of the varieties I talked about in this article will be available for sale that morning along with some other tropical bulbs.



Cactus and Succulents

By Davanna Hart

“All cactus are succulents but not all succulents are cactus”, is the saying among experienced gardeners, and of course, this saying like so many is correct. Succulents occur in many plant families but only the cactus family, Cactaceae, consists entirely of succulent plants. All cactus are solely native to the Western hemisphere. Cactus are distinguished from other plants by the presence of areoles. These are pore-like structures on the body of the plant from which spines, flowers and new growth emerge. If you are familiar with the prickly pear this is a good example, because you can see the spines emerging from the areoles as do the flowers. If you examine any cactus carefully, you will find this characteristic although it can be subtle on some species. The cactus family produces some of the most breath-taking if short-lived flowers in the plant world. Some cactus, grow in trees in the jungles of Central and South America in the same habitat as bromeliads and orchids. The night blooming cereus (there are many species besides the one we know), the *Epiphyllum*, the *Rhipsalis*, the *Schlumbergera*, Christmas cactus and others are all cactus that live in places other than deserts.



All succulents are plants that retain water in their bodies to sustain them during periods of drought. That is pretty much the definition of a succulent. Some store water in their leaves, some in their stems and others in their roots. Even they, however, will die if they never get any water. This is the tricky part to growing them. If you are losing plants, you are probably trying too hard. They need excellent drainage. A good quality potting mix with some additional perlite will do. Fine sand is not a really good additive as it tends to compact into a heavy mix. Composted pine bark drains well, and there are some others but perlite and sometimes pine bark are the only easy ones to find. Water succulents when they are completely dry. A water meter from any garden center is a good investment (approximately \$5).



Cacti decorated in masses can produce spectacular displays.

When you do water, water until it runs out the bottom of the pot. Then don't water again until the soil tests dry. Liquid feed every two or three weeks in warm weather. In cold weather reduce water and fertilizer. A good rule of thumb on watering succulent plants is “if in doubt, don't”.

Succulents occur in many plant families making a delightful variety of unusual and care free plants. They evolved in all the dry areas of the world to adapt to the lack of moisture, and one of the wonders is how much they resemble one another! Other than cactus, which are strictly new world plants, succulents occur almost everywhere. This has lead botanists to conclude cactus are

Cactus and Succulents

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relatively recent in evolution having arisen in the Western Hemisphere after the continents separated.

Many succulents other than cactus have spines. These plants are often understandably mistaken for cactus because many are very similar in form and very spiny. They are distinguishable from cactus because they don't have areoles. The Euphorbia are distributed world-wide and include the beautiful non-succulent poinsettia (from Mexico), but the best succulent ones come from southern Africa and Madagascar. One familiar one is the pencil cactus, (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) so named, but not a true cactus. All Euphorbias exude a milky sap when damaged,

which can be irritating to sensitive skin.

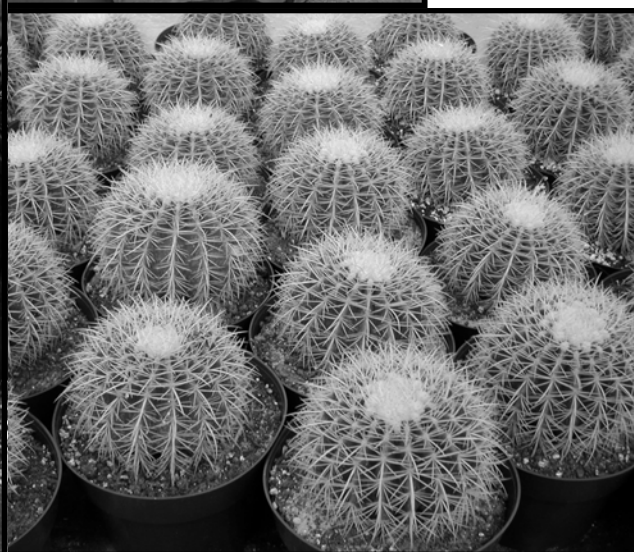
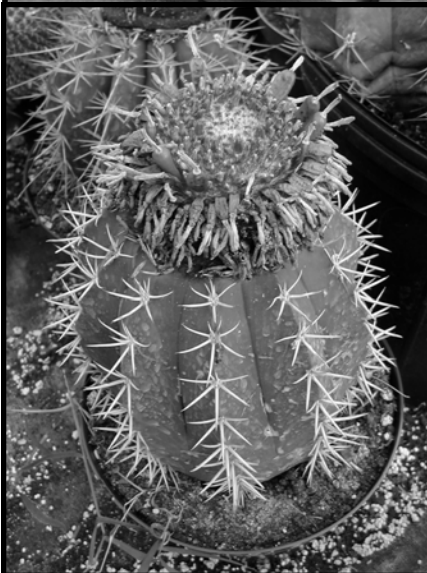
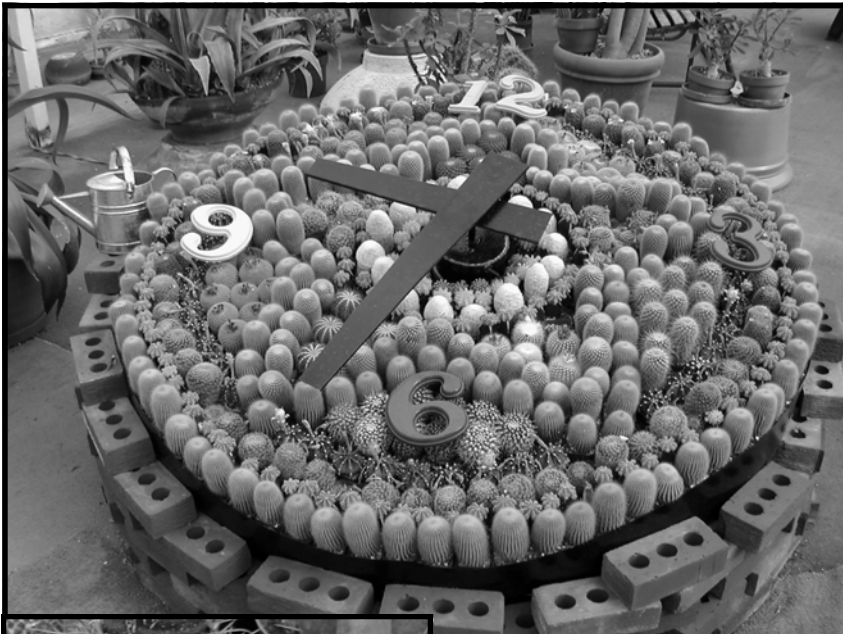
The family Agavaceae is another group of familiar succulent plants that are well worth seeking out. Most familiar is the huge century plant which blooms more often than every 100 years, but infrequently enough that it may seem like one hundred years between blooms. That is how it got its name! This family includes large plants several feet across and others which never achieve 4 inches in diameter as well as all sizes in between. All are rosette in form and most die after blooming, although they usually produce offsets beforehand.

Haworthias are another popular group of succulents. They belong to the Liliaceae, or the lily family. All are small and take the rosette form. Most familiar is *Haworthia fasciata*. There are hundreds of species, however, and collecting *Haworthias* can be a hobby in itself.

Another large and popular group of succulents are the family Crassulaceae. Some of these may be difficult to grow in the deep south because of the heat and humidity, but many *Echeveria* do well. These have a rosette form and are often found in local nurseries.

Other succulents include the *Aloes* (Liliaceae), *Ipomoea* (Convolvulaceae) this family includes our beloved Beauregard sweet potato (the kind we enjoy eating) and Morning Glories, *Kalanchoes* (Crassulaceae), *Pelargonium* (Geraniaceae), and the *Sedums* (Crassulaceae).

This is the teeny, teeny tip of the iceberg of the world of succulent plants and describes some of the more normal ones. If you are into really weird plants, the Baton Rouge Cactus and Succulent Society meets at 7pm on the fourth Thursday of each month at the library on Goodwood.



Volunteer Spotlight—Outdoors in the Gardens

If ever there were a more energetic person than Barbara Quirk, you would wonder if they were human! Barbara just doesn't stop. As head of Les Aimes de Jardin, she leads a very dedicated and hard working group of gardeners. On any Wednesday morning, you will likely catch her with Don Thibodeaux, Mike Ruth, Aline Creed, Jenny Sutcliffe, Francis Fontenot, Sarala Palliwath, Richard Babin, Tim Bourgeois, Joan Cox, and Linda Bush, along with others, working in one of the many Burden gardens. Under the direction of Wanda Ellis, they tackle the Rose Gardens, Windrush Gardens, Trees and Trails, plus any other area in need. They plant, pull up plants, prune, dead head, remove fruit from overburdened fruit trees, pull out vines and especially they weed.

Barbara loves the instant gratification of maintaining the beauty at Burden. After a morning of grooming beds, she looks back on what she and the group have accomplished and the improvements are quite apparent. For example, in May, they planted new annuals at the Burden entrance knowing that the beautiful plants would soon make a show stopping display for the gateway. For those who helped, instant pleasure and joy knowing all who pass this way will share that pleasure.

Being such a fun-loving person, Barbara's other joy in volunteering is the company of fellow gardeners. Justifiably bragging on these friends, she says "This is a great group who does not mind working hard to get the job done and sometimes it is very hard." She does not discount the hazards of the group's volunteer work, like poison ivy and the extreme heat at this time of year, but these folks love of gardening outweighs the discomforts – they just keep on going. "Burden has so much potential and so little help to develop this potential that whatever our group can do to assist in the growth and maintenance means a lot to us. More volunteers could accomplish more," she states.

Volunteers like Barbara make Burden a place for others to enjoy and there is no way BHS can thank her and the rest of Les Aimes enough for their dedication and hard work. There is room for more volunteers in the gardens, as well as other spots, to keep this great place going. The rewards are visible and the possibilities endless; we want your help and involvement. Please let us know your interest by mailing this form or by signing up on-line at our website, www.BurdenHorticultureSociety.com.

Volunteers Opportunities:






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| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical | <input type="checkbox"/> Speakers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Annual Events | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Coordination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reflections in the Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Database | <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical | <input type="checkbox"/> Trees and Trails, Maintenance and Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wine and Roses Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Trees and Trails, Docents |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Your Name and phone number:

Burden Center
4560 Essen Lane
Baton Rouge, LA 70809



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BHS Special Events 2010

August 14, 2010	Gingers and Sale
October 16 & 17, 2010	Corn Maze Pumpkin Patch
October 27, 2010	Wine and Roses