

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Friends of the JC Raulston Arboretum

Newsletter

Winter 2026 – Vol. 29, No. 1



Greetings from the JCRA Director

We've hit an exciting milestone this year – the JC Raulston Arboretum is 50 years young! (I've become sensitive to the "o" word since crossing that 50 year mark myself some years ago.) The arboretum has been a part of NC State University for over a third of the University's existence.

We'll be celebrating our Golden Anniversary all year with a calendar full of events for our many supporters, members, stakeholders and the broader community. Look for opportunities to acquire hard-to-find JCRA introductions, reunite with old long-time friends and celebrate where we started and, more importantly, where we are going. We are entering this signature year after capping off an amazing one with revenues of over \$2 million, a renovated Lath House, research excursions to Vietnam, presentations in China, and improvements to the northeast quadrant of the arboretum including the Winter Garden.

The decade that began this millennium was focused on improving the infrastructure of the JCRA with the Ruby C. McSwain Education Center, Bobby G. Wilder Visitor Center, Asian Valley, Scree Garden, accessible pathways and more. The next decade focused on building collections and partnerships through international collaborations and the less glamorous task of setting us up for financial security. We've built our endowments to over \$4 million dollars with more than twice that amount in commitments of estate gifts. Our rentals program and mission-based special events have burgeoned. We are considered leaders in donor participation for NC State's annual Day of Giving and have more than doubled our membership numbers thanks to YOU.

I envision our coming decade focusing on sharing our knowledge with expanded education programs, strengthening research partnerships to help solve big problems and utilizing our expertise and international reputation to support and grow other gardens across the country and beyond. We already have an international symposium scheduled for 2028 and more collaborations to come including hosting 2 Croatian interns from the University of Zagreb this spring. Our mission to share our passion, our plants and our knowledge has never been more critical as we look to the future, and the JCRA has never been better positioned to lead the way.



Mark Weathington, Director

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Winter 2026 – Vol. 29, No. 1
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Cover: *Prunus mume* 'Big Joe' (photographed by Ira Tucker)

This flowering apricot is a white-flowered selection from local plantsman Tom Krenitsky, renowned for its large size, vigorous growth and fragrance. 'Big Joe' can start blooming as early as December with blooms produced over a long period of time in winter. Fallen petals give the appearance of confetti to the garden below.

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What's Growing On in the Lath House

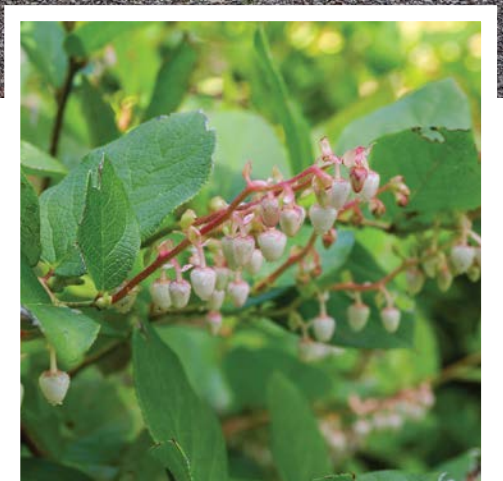
**Mark Weathington,
Director**

It seems like only yesterday we were christening the new Lath House, but somehow the dates on all those pictures say it was 2012. That sure doesn't seem possible to me, but based on the state of the roof by late 2024, it must be true. We had prepped the Lath House beds for the renovation by removing older specimens no longer needed, propagating or relocating others and leaving a few choice plants in place in order for construction to begin in January. As usual, delays of various sorts meant the lath was all removed during the hottest part of the summer (not something shade lovers really appreciate). A six month gestation period seemed long, but I still recall the two year gap in tear-down and rebuild with the last one, so we were flying by comparison.

We use the Lath House to test plants that we just aren't sure how they will perform in the tough conditions of central North Carolina: hot, humid summers, erratic rainfall patterns, relatively mild winters but often with yo-yoing temperatures. We have so many plants in the Lath House – almost 500 taxa currently planted there – and it gives us the opportunity to give them the TLC treatment before subjecting them to the real world.

Although people sometimes refer to the structure as a “shade house”, it performs quite differently than if it were covered with shade cloth. The north/south orientation of the lath means every plant will get full sun for about a third of the day and shade the other two-thirds. Plants which need sun to thrive get the light they need, but shade plants will also thrive without burning since the leaves go from full sun to shade back to full sun as the sun moves east to west. In addition to managing sunlight, the lath helps retain ambient heat when temperatures drop overnight in winter – we generally gain 3-6 degrees Fahrenheit. This unique environment allows us to do amazing things like grow *Acanthus sennii*, which grows on the rocky hillsides of Ethiopia, right next to a *Hydrangea macrophylla*, which generally prefers moisture and shade.

Speaking of drought tolerant plants growing with heavy drinkers, the soil in the Lath House is a rooftop mix designed for quick drainage and low compaction. Over the years, we have added some organic matter which helps retain a bit more water, but it is still quite



Gaultheria shallon



Helwingia japonica



Aucuba japonica 'Golden Dragon'



Illicium anisatum 'Hakko'



Daphne pseudomezereum 'Sanko Fu'

well-drained. This is one of the few areas where we have sprinklers set on a timer for regular watering during the summer. We are most interested in seeing whether these plants will survive – and perhaps even thrive – with some protection before testing them in the harsher open garden, where we want to learn whether they remain good garden plants without special conditions.

One of the first groups we planted for trialing were some new selections of Pacific Northwest natives. In particular, I wanted to try the absolutely beautiful *Vaccinium ovatum* (California or evergreen huckleberry). This blueberry relative's new growth emerges screaming red before settling into deep green, and the plant bears clusters of small, urn-shaped, pink to white flowers in spring followed by small, tart, black berries. Another favorite that we have never tried ourselves is the ubiquitous PNW native *Gaultheria shallon* or salal. Between these two plants, we are growing both species and four cultivars. They'll likely crash and burn next summer, but hope springs eternal in a gardener.

Plenty of plants from our spring 2025 foray to the nurseries of Japan have already made their way to the Lath House including some of the various *Helwingia japonica* we purchased. A heavily splashed variegated form has been a quick grower, and I would venture to say that we will have it available in an auction before long and likely for sale sometime later. We also have a chartreuse-edged form that is female and will have black berries in the center of their leaves if a male is present for pollination. And yes, I know it technically is not formed in the center of the leaf, but I have limited space for a full explanation and lots of plants I'd like to discuss.

A plant that has been hanging around our nursery since the dark days of 2021 and is finally getting its moment in the sun is a mahonia that originated at Pan-Global Plants and is aptly named *Mahonia* 'Pan Demic'. This hybrid definitely has *M. leptodonta*, the eyelash mahonia, in its parentage, but we're hoping the flowers will give us a clue to who the other parent might be.

Another "new" plant is a sport of the Japanese classic *Aucuba japonica* 'Haku Ryu' or white dragon aucuba with contorted, white-variegated foliage. The JCRA-named sport, which has the same contorted foliage but with a softer, chartreuse-gold variegation, has been



christened 'Golden Dragon'. Even more exciting is *A. j.* 'Minuma-ogon' with gold stems and leaf edges and yellow flowers. As far as we are aware, it is the only Japanese aucuba without burgundy blooms.

A native that has been impressing us is the recently described, Deep South form of fothergilla – *Fothergilla milleri*. This may be the best fothergilla we've grown with better performance than both *F. major* and *F. gardenia* and their hybrids. The expected honey-scented bottlebrush flowers and spectacular fall color are present as well. The fothergilla was growing in the old Lath House. There were other specimens we let remain like the gorgeous *Daphniphyllum macropodum* 'Mountain Dove'. Another holdover that we quite like is one that is often overlooked – a *Phyllocladus alpinus* or mountain celery pine from our 2013 trip to New Zealand still growing in the southwest of the Lath House. In the wild, this species can grow to over 25 feet tall and has curious leaf-like structures called *phylloclades* that do indeed resemble celery leaflets. Ours, after over a decade, has achieved the towering stature of about 24 inches. It is one that will likely never survive the open garden here in North Carolina.



Daphniphyllum macropodum 'Mountain Dove'

There are too many cool new plants to adequately convey the diversity but a few I'll mention include a Japanese anise shrub with brilliant white new growth, *Illicium anisatum* 'Hakko'. Hakko can have multiple meanings in Japanese, but in this case it likely refers to "white light" rather than fermentation. There are several species, both identified and not, of *Rhododendron* sprinkled throughout along with ferns from our Vietnam trips.

I'll end with more variegated plants like *Leucothoe* 'Sparkle' with variable white-edged leaves that emerge hot pink. So far this has been stable without reversions, but we'll be keeping an eye on it. It has propagated well and is growing quickly, so it is another that you should see before too long. The last is the odd *Daphne pseudomezereum*, a plant which goes completely dormant in the summer and doesn't bother leafing out and flowering until winter. We have eight selections from Japan, scratch that, seven selections from Japan. Thanks to the theft of one of the new variegated forms, we had to move 'Sanko Fu' out of the Lath House for safekeeping, but the other green-leaved forms with different flower colors can still be seen.

The goal of the Lath House is to display exciting new plants to you and give them the best chance to grow and thrive. We think of it almost like a field nursery where young plants go in before being dug and planted elsewhere. The goal is always to work to get these plants into the hands of our community and, if deserving, into production with our green industry partners (so don't steal them). If you drop by and only have time for a quick visit, the Lath House is where you'll likely always come across something new and exciting.



It's All About the Plants - but Not JUST About the Plants

Mark Weathington,
Director

During the development of the JCRA's physical master plan, the mantra, "It's all about the plants," headed every document to keep the team focused on the mission of the JC Raulston Arboretum. Despite that sentiment being nearly two decades old, it still holds true for how we operate. Just because it is still apt, it doesn't mean there isn't more to why we search the world for plants.

Over the last few years I've written in these newsletters about collecting trips to Vietnam and Uruguay and about book chapters and talks on the role of botanic gardens in plant conservation and dissemination, but I usually focus on the fun part – the plants. In general with these trips, there is more on the docket than simply harvesting ripe seed. Collaborations with researchers here at NC State, other botanic gardens and international entities make these trips mutually beneficial to all concerned.

The JCRA expedition to Uruguay for instance led to the collection of numerous plants I have never seen in cultivation in the United States. The woody plants especially have been interesting and after one winter are showing more promise than I had hoped. We had already been collaborating with J. C. Raulston Distinguished Professor Tom Ranney and his team on a "Carolina Super Teas" project focused on the caffeine producing hollies from the Americas, our native yaupon holly (*Ilex vomitoria*) and yerba mate (*Ilex paraguariensis*). While plants labeled "yerba mate" can be acquired in the United States, we have found them all to be another U.S. holly, *Ilex cassine*.

Finding the true yerba mate and collecting seed for research and potential breeding was obviously a first step in the process. Between the yerba mate and my interest in pineapple guava (*Feijoa sellowiana*) as a potential exotic farmer's market fruit for eastern North Carolina along with the wealth of unevaluated



Mark helping dig field rows at VIB.

plants with ornamental potential, it only made sense to make the journey south.

Vietnam has been a different experience entirely. We have made several trips to Vietnam with Scott McMahan and Tim Marchlik from the Atlanta Botanic Garden to assist with their collecting and conservation work in collaboration with the Vietnam Institute of Biology. Working with the exceptional field botanists at the VIB, the trips help fund their field work to study, document and conserve their endangered plants. In return, the researchers help us access their remote areas of study and procure the permits and phytosanitary certificates to collect and export any collections.

Of particular note is the magnolias being discovered regularly in the area. In just two trips with Scott and the VIB, up to five potentially new species were found. These magnolias tend to be quite isolated and in difficult to access locations making seed collection quite challenging. Traditional conservation work would entail multiple trips to each site to try to collect ripe seed (magnolia seed is recalcitrant meaning it cannot dry out or freeze). Growing the limited seed out until they flower (which can take up to 20 years for some species) and collecting the resulting seed to grow out and re-plant in the wild or distribute to botanical institutions for safe-keeping can also be time-consuming.

Scott however was a nurseryman, and nurseries must know how to produce



plants quickly. He realized he could grow out seedlings of other evergreen magnolias and plant them in field rows at the VIB's research station. The next step is to teach the Vietnamese botanical staff how to graft. They can collect scion wood from the remote magnolias, graft them on the rootstock, and grow them out. Grafted plants will flower much sooner, sometimes in the first or second year, and set seed. This seed can be planted out for conservation and later distribution, thus the entire process has been shortened potentially by a decade or more.

It's all about the plants of course, but projects like these fulfill our total mission to share our passion, our plants and our knowledge. Sharing is a two-way street, and we get as much or more out of these collaborations as our partners, just as we get as much as we give when sharing our passion with members and other collaborators.



A magnolia flower cut open showing the stamens.



Ilex paraguariensis



VIB scientist preparing herbarium specimens.



Garden Updates

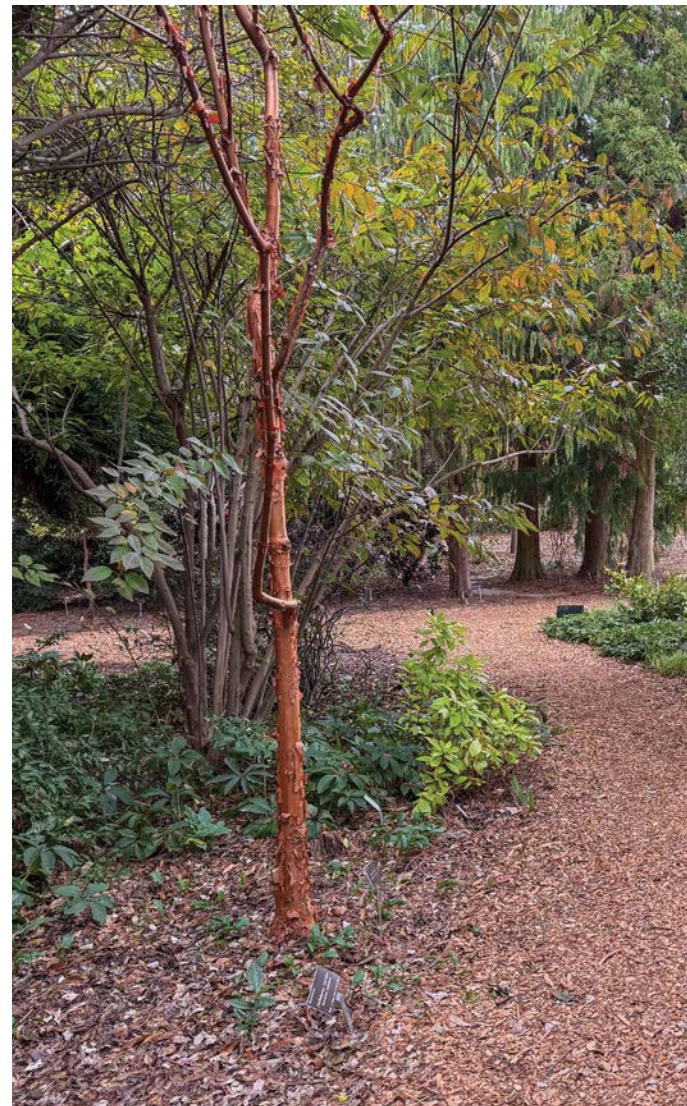
Greg Paige, Director of Horticulture

Our small but mighty garden here at the JC Raulston Arboretum continues to give us opportunities to adjust, evaluate and create new and better

spaces. However, sometimes we are victims of our own success – things grow extremely well here creating pressure on our already limited space! Add to that our desire to create new visitor experiences, to provide visitors with an abundance of opportunities to connect with the plants and to strengthen our community by pulling the NC State Horticulture faculty and students into the mix. With all that fuel plus a nursery neck-deep in diverse plants ripe for the picking, a healthy amount of staff enthusiasm, a new team member and a great group of interns and volunteers, we have been able to create some great additions to the garden this season.

In no particular order, let's begin with the addition of a new water feature in the Annabelle Lundy Fetterman White Garden – one of our most visited gardens in the arboretum and a favorite site for weddings and the like. In place of the static pool that was off to the side as you enter the garden, this new water feature fills the garden with the soothing sound of moving water and provides a stunning visual of motion and light reflection. It is also getting frequent use from our local avian partners, as they splash and bathe in the ripples. Many thanks to our friends at Springer Ponds for the creativity and installation!

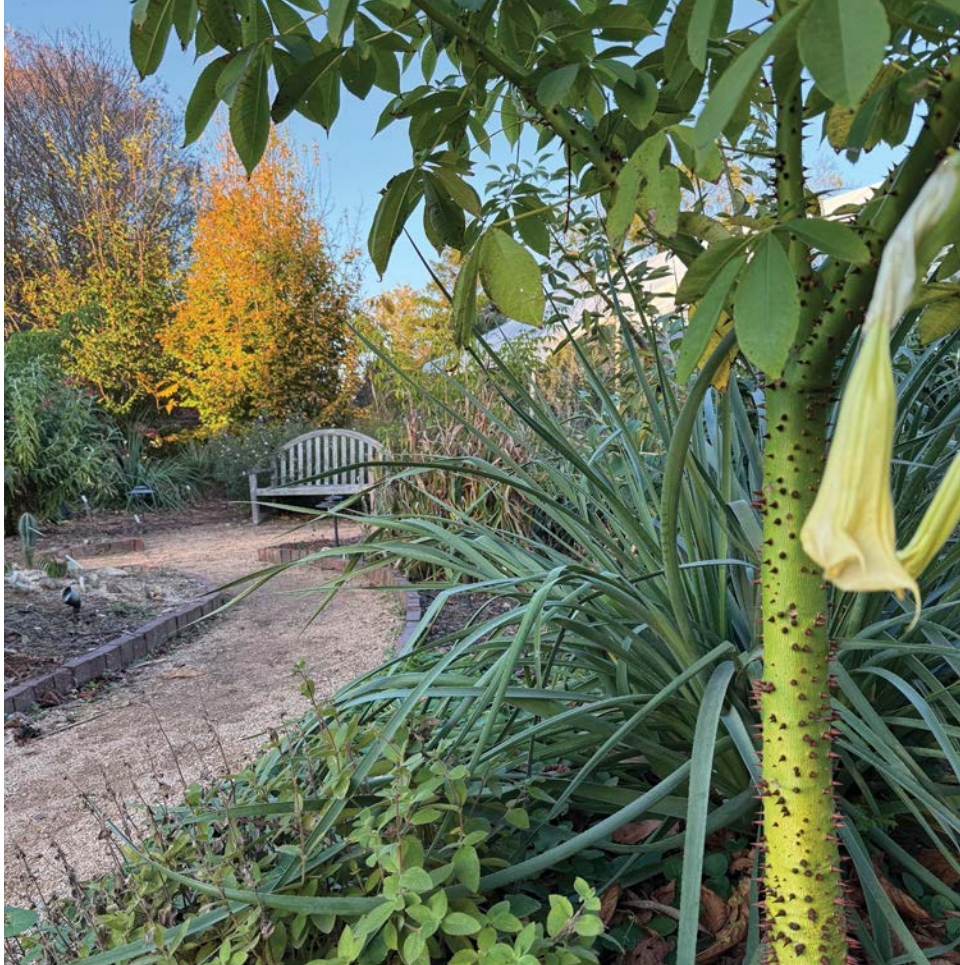
From the White Garden, let's stroll towards the Winter Garden. This summer, we began some much needed cleanup and path redefining with our amazing horticulture interns and stellar garden volunteers, all under the keen supervision of Evan Villani as he settles into his role as our newest



horticulturist. We removed some overgrown plant material, finally pulled the trigger on some much-needed pruning decisions and widened and woodchipped the paths throughout this area. This project completely recreated the space, improving the flow and more clearly defining its relationship to the adjoining gardens. This new space also became a featured addition to the most recent Moonlight in the Garden event and was popular among attendees.

From here, a short stroll south takes you to our former butterfly garden, newly reimagined this year as the 'South American Garden.' This little jewel nestled between the Great Lawn and the Glade was in desperate need of cleanup and provided the perfect opportunity to highlight some of the plants our director Mark Wethington collected from a recent expedition to Uruguay. A dedicated space for South American plants gives us the perfect location to see how these plants grow and perform in a true garden setting.

We hope you will find a time soon to come our way for a visit and enjoy some of these new additions and surround yourselves in the comfort of the garden.



White Garden Named for a Camellia Queen

We are pleased to announce that the White Garden has been named in memory of Annabelle Lundy Fetterman, thanks to the generosity of her daughter, Molly Held, and grandson, Kyle Held. From this day forward, this cherished space will be known as the Annabelle Lundy Fetterman White Garden, honoring Mrs. Fetterman's lifelong passion for horticulture, especially camellias, and her enduring support of the JCRA's educational mission.

A pioneering business leader and world-renowned camellia judge, Mrs. Fetterman's legacy in North Carolina spans decades. Her family's contributions to the JC Raulston Arboretum reflect a deep commitment to connecting people with plants and inspiring future generations, values that echo J. C. Raulston's founding vision.

Inspired by the White Garden at Sissinghurst Castle in England, this tranquil space invites reflection, celebration and connection. With its shaded paths, peaceful benches and iconic cedar arbors, it remains a favorite backdrop for weddings, family photos and quiet moments. Naming this garden in Annabelle's honor ensures her legacy will continue to blossom for years to come.



Sharing Our Passion

**Elizabeth Overcash,
Director of Education
and Public Engagement**

When Juniper Level Botanic Garden and the JC Raulston Arboretum began a formal collaboration in 2019, one of our first partner events was the Southeastern Plant Symposium.

Tony Avent of JLBG and JCRA Director Mark Weathington had seen a decline in plant-focused conferences and wanted to create a truly plant-centric symposium. Envisioned to bring plant lovers together from all across the Southeast, the first symposium filled two days with presentations ranging from new plants to breeding efforts to how to get plants into the nurseries' pipelines quicker. Participants went home with volumes of new information on what was happening in the green industry, plants to lust after and new connections to keep in touch with and reach out to. They also got their hands on special and rare plants from the plant auction held in association with the event.

After the first year's success, the 2020 pandemic forced a reimagining of the symposium. Staff quickly pivoted to an online version of the symposium refusing to let a worldwide shutdown keep plant lovers from uniting. The shift actually allowed the symposium to bring some far-off plant lovers into the speaker's lineup, broadcasting from places like Hawaii, Utah and Washington. After another year online, the symposium returned in person, but using a hybrid format, so participants didn't have to be in Raleigh to participate – they could join from anywhere with internet access.

When asked about the symposium, Mark remembers the early days saying, "The Southeastern Plant Symposium started with our desire to bring the best plantspeople and the most passionate plant lovers together to talk plants." Now looking back at the past years' symposiums, he says it really is working that way, introducing him to new plantspeople from around the world as well as giving him a chance to reconnect with those he already knew but hasn't seen in quite some time. One of the symposium highlights is how there is dedicated time for everyone to interact with each other as well



Happy participants with their auction wins.



Students learning and building connections with industry professionals.



as the speakers during breaks, lunches and even while browsing all of the auction plants in the room, creating an incredible plant community. "It is one more way we are sharing our passion for plants," Mark says enthusiastically.

Not only did the Southeastern Plant Symposium bring together plant enthusiasts to talk plants, it also gives students an opportunity to be among these cutting-edge researchers, plant breeders, plant explorers and horticulturists. Starting in 2022, Ball Horticultural Company sponsored ten students to attend the symposium. With continued sponsorship support, students have been attending the symposium to learn about what's happening as well as have the opportunity to meet some of the most prominent horticulturists in the industry. In 2025, 29 students applied from 10 different colleges and universities, representing a wide range of interests from plant breeding to public horticulture to production. While only 10 scholarships were available to attend in person, we were able to share the symposium with all of them virtually so they could share in the knowledge.

Now in its 8th year, the Southeastern Plant Symposium continues its tradition of filling two days with nothing but plants. This year's symposium will bring together speakers from all around the world: Ron Gagliardo from Costa Rica, Kata Wallace from Austria and Johan Nilson from Sweden as well as horticulturist rock stars like Dan Hinkley, Steve Hootman, Ed Bowen, Andrea Sprott, Brian Keener, Alan Weakley, Kathleen Pryor and Steve Castorini. We can't wait to see these speakers all in the same venue as well as all of our fellow plant lovers!

The 2026 Southeastern Plant Symposium will be held Thursday, June 4 and Friday, June 5 at the Hilton Raleigh North Hills in Raleigh, North Carolina. Find out more at jcra.ncsu.edu/.

Sponsors Strengthen the Southeastern Plant Symposium

The vibrant history and success of the Southeastern Plant Symposium includes the generous support of industry sponsors. Sponsors recognize the importance of the missions of the JC Raulston Arboretum and Juniper Level Botanic Garden – fueling education and research that inspire the next generation of horticulturists. Education is the heart of the Southeastern Plant Symposium, and the event would not be possible without the generosity of our sponsors. Sponsors help us raise funds needed to bring speakers from across the globe to Raleigh, draw students from all over the Southeast to be among the best and fill the plates during meals and breaks to fuel the plant conversations.

Want to join us inspiring, educating and shaping the future of horticulture? Partner with us during this milestone year to help create a lasting impact and demonstrate your dedication to plan – and plant for a better world. Share this opportunity with someone you think is a good match, or explore sponsorship opportunities by contacting Amy Beitzel at amy_beitzel@ncsu.edu or 919-515-1680.



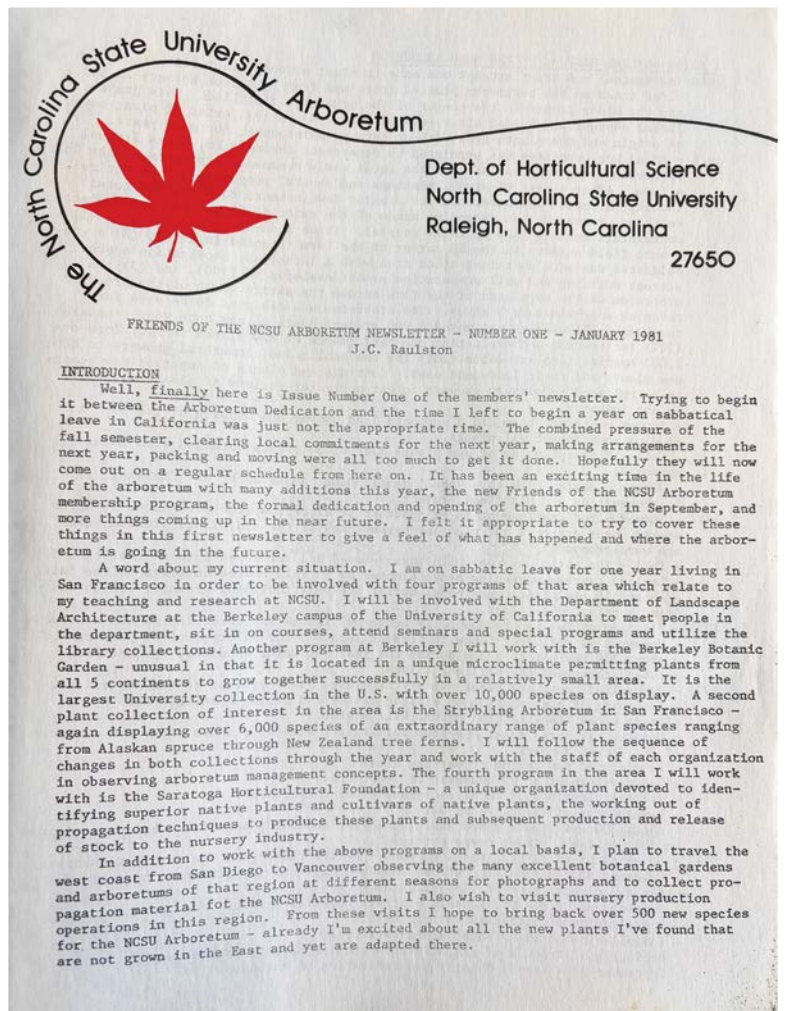
Growing Together

Kathryn Wall, Membership and Volunteer Manager

In the summer of 1980, the "Friends of the Arboretum" membership program began with big dreams and a lot of heart. Back in November 1980, J. C. Raulston proudly shared that the Friends group had already reached more than 50 members in just six months. He wrote that if the number grew to 200, the arboretum could support student interns to help care for the plantings, giving staff more time to focus on propagation, research and building new facilities. He even mused about keeping a list of those first members so one day we could look back and smile when membership climbed to 1,000 – whether in "1983? 87? 90?" as he joked in the note.

As a fun side note, many of those original members are still a part of our community today.

Reading those words today feels like opening a time capsule. The arboretum was fueled by optimism, volunteer muscle and a shared belief that something special was taking root. Looking around now, it's remarkable to see how the vision has unfolded. Membership has grown far beyond that early milestone, now reaching 2,795 households and flirting with 3,000! This is considered a very strong membership program for a free admission, university-based public garden. We have expanded into 10 acres of curated

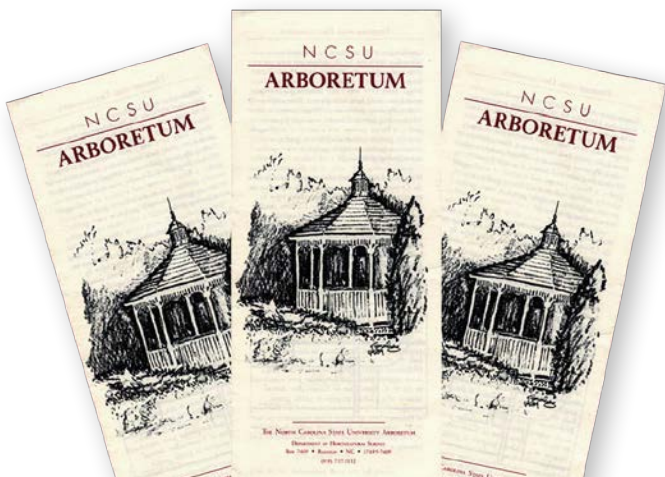


gardens, beloved collections, educational programs and events that welcome thousands of visitors each year.

But even with so many new faces, new programs and a much busier calendar, something essential has remained the same. Membership is still about community. It's about people who love plants, learning and the idea that a public garden should be a place where everyone can find beauty, knowledge and inspiration. That spirit hasn't changed. We make an appeal, ask for help and our community is right there to back us up.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we'd love to hear from the people who helped shape the arboretum's story. Maybe you remember early plant sales on the gravel, mornings spent volunteering, a class that changed how you garden or the first time you took home a plant you still grow today. Newer members have stories too — maybe a first visit that made the arboretum feel like “your place,” a favorite event, or a memory you always think of when you walk the paths.

If you'd like to share a memory, photo or moment, we would be delighted to hear it. Your stories will help us celebrate the past and carry the spirit of the arboretum forward — just as those first newsletters did at the very beginning. Thank you for being part of our history and part of the next chapter to come.



Were you a member in the early days?

Do you remember planting your first giveaway treasure or attending your first Moonlight in the Garden? We'd love to hear your story!

Tell us your story by scanning the QR code that will take you to a Google Form. Or send us an email at jcraprograms@ncsu.edu and include “JCRA Memories” in the subject line. If you are sending pictures, if possible include when the photo was taken and identify people in the photo.



The Japanese Garden in 1984.



Snapshot of the Annual Plant Distribution from 1991.



Planting the Geophyte Border in 2007.



In Our Golden Era

Elizabeth Overcash, Director of Education and Public Engagement

We are excited to celebrate our past, our present and our future throughout this coming year. We plan to start the year

off reminiscing about our humble roots, gaining perspective by remembering the stories and all the hard work that went into growing the JCRA into what it is today. As we move through the year, we will also celebrate what we are doing today and dream about what we have in store for the next 50 years.

We kicked off the celebration early by unveiling our 50th Anniversary t-shirt design just in time for Moonlight in the Garden last November. The retro-like design was created by the JCRA's digital media and design intern, Kevin Foster, who is a senior at NC State majoring in graphic and experience design. Kevin worked with the JCRA staff to create a t-shirt graphic that visually nodded back to the

retro feel of 1976 but still felt modern. Starting with the inspiration from old national parks and outdoor memorabilia, he wanted to emphasize the importance of outdoor spaces and the connection with plants and nature. The design grew organically, eventually ending up showcasing nine trees from the JCRA's plant collection. You'll notice in the design that a few are pushing the limits of their

box, playing on the shirt's tagline – "still growing outside the box" – acknowledging the JCRA's history. One of the challenges Kevin brilliantly overcame was taking

these complicated silhouettes and making them graphic representations that still represent the trees. We won't spoil the fun of guessing which tree is what, but we do have the answer key if you get stumped!

The t-shirt is just the start. We are planning so many fun and meaningful events and activities throughout 2026 to make sure everyone who's been connected with the JCRA over the years has plenty of reasons to come out and celebrate with us. We'll have





Friends of the Arboretum lectures and special CheQRboard tours in the garden, as well as a Backyard BBQ in May for the green industry and alumni, all with a fun 50th Anniversary twist. Most importantly, we'll have our Golden Gala on September 26, 2026, which promises to be filled with festivity, so mark your calendars!

We have a webpage dedicated to connecting you with all our celebrations: <https://go.ncsu.edu/jcragoldenanniversary>. Bookmark it and check in with us often so you don't miss out on any of our Golden celebrations!

Upcoming Events

February 12
FOA Lecture,
"Sliding Through
the Years"
Mark Weathington
6:30 pm


March 25
Day of Giving
(online programming)
10 am - 4:30 pm

April 9
FOA Lecture,
"Chlorophyll in
His Veins"
Bobby Ward
6:30 pm

April 25
Raulston
Blooms! and
Plant Sale
10 am - 3 pm

May 17
Industry BBQ
with the Green
Industry and
Alumni
5:30 pm

June 4-5
Southeastern
Plant Symposium
hosted with
Juniper Level
Botanic Garden


SAVE THE DATE!

Golden Gala

*A 50th Anniversary Celebration of the
JC Raulston Arboretum*

**SEPTEMBER 26
2026**



Throwback Lists

Dennis Carey, Curator and
Mark Weathington, Director

Every year, the JCRA acquires well over a thousand new taxa of plants to trial. In November, we had 1,136 new accessions for the year. They came from a variety of sources all over the world including nurseries, breeders, collectors and botanic gardens. They arrived on trucks, in trunks of cars and in seed envelopes. We end up killing quite a few, but as J. C. used to say, "If you aren't killing plants, you aren't stretching yourself as a gardener."

Occasionally, we like to channel the spirit of J. C.'s old newsletters and provide an abbreviated list of new collections with a few highlighted with more information. Here's the list from 2025:

Abies nebrodensis (Accession # 250103)

Endangered in its native Sicily with just 30 specimens left clinging to the cliffs of Mt. Scalone. We have high hopes for this rare conifer as an ornamental tree and are also helping to preserve it through ex-situ conservation.

Acca (Feijoa) sellowiana (gold edge) (Acc# 251073)

We can strike this off our life lust list

Acer buergerianum 'Hana chiru sato' (Acc# 250934)

Japanese maples get all the love, but it's hard to beat trident maples for toughness. This one leafs out almost solid white with green veins.

Acer paxii (Acc# 250919)

An evergreen maple from China with pink new growth and three-lobed leaves.

Aesculus wangii (Acc# 251365)

A very rare horse chestnut from a very restricted spot in Vietnam. We've killed it before and probably will again, but hope springs eternal.

Aucuba filicauda (Acc# 250768)

We finally acquired this rare aucuba from two sources this year – one from garden friend Bleddyn Wynn-Jones and this one from our spring '25 expedition, adding to our world class collection.

Bomarea bredemeyeriana BSWJ14706 (Acc# 250769)

One of several of these gorgeous vines which grow at high elevations in Central and South America we acquired this year. Other species have proved to be remarkably cold hardy for us.

Brassaiopsis sp. MWC25-039 (Acc# 251297)

Our Chinese collection of a fatsia relative but with viciously spiny stems. Another that we hope will be hardy for us.

Buxus stenophylla (Acc# 250516)

An exceptionally rare boxwood from south China.

Camellia drupifera (Acc# 250972)

A lovely soft pink-flowered camellia grown in China for the cooking oil pressed from its seed. It is quite disease resistant and while not very hardy may be good for breeding purposes.

***Cornus elliptica* 'Summer Splash'** (Acc# 250947)

A variegated and evergreen dogwood!

Cornus eydeana (Acc# 251090)

We've lost this exceptionally rare dogwood to a late spring frost before, but hope we can get it established this time.

***Halesia tetraptera* 'Silver Splash'** (Acc# 250956)

A splashed variegated form of our native Carolina silverbell.

Heptapleurum aff. brevipedicellatum NV067 (Acc# 251254)

A schefflera that has survived outdoors in Raleigh for eight years.

***Illicium anisatum* 'Fuji-no-Shirazuki'** (Acc# 250191)

This white margined form of Japanese anise makes a statement especially in a shady garden where it shines, and the deer pass it by for your hydrangeas.

Illicium tashiroi CWJ12468 (Acc# 250775)

A beautiful anise species from western Taiwan with snow white flower petals which pop against the dark green foliage.

***Myrica rubra* 'Yiping'** (Acc# 251128)

An edible bayberry relative. This is a female, so we'll need a male to pair with it (although it apparently sometimes fruits by itself).

Nothofagus obliqua (Acc# 250065)

There is every reason to believe that this Argentinian species of Roble oak (not a true oak) could be hardy in Raleigh except we've never been

successful with one. Hope springs eternal, etc. etc.

***Oxydendrum arboreum* 'Mike's Streamer'** (Acc# 250960)

A weeping (we think) form of this native tree. Pollinator friendly flowers and outstanding fall color, of course.

Parastyrax BSWJ15185 (Acc# 250777)

An unnamed new species related to snowbell.

Phoenix theophrastii* subsp. *golkoyana (Acc# 250057)

Hardest of the date palms, hope springing again.

***Rhododendron* 'Dark Lord'** (Acc# 250640)

Deep burgundy, almost waxy-textured flowers top this rhodie. We'll see if it holds up to the heat.

Schisandra grandiflora BSWJ2245 (Acc# 250780)

A stunning evergreen vine with large, white flowers followed by red fruit. We've been served schisandra wine in China and much prefer the vine and its fruit to stay in the garden.

***Stewartia pseudocamellia* 'Catawampus'** (Acc# 250964)

Yes, we got it for the name.

***Tsuga aff. dumosa* 'Clifford R. Parks'** (Acc# 250841)

A Himalayan hemlock named for the founder of Camellia Forest Nursery.



Cornus elliptica 'Summer Splash'



Above and right: New plants in the propagation and nursery areas..



What many people, even those who knew J. C., don't realize is that his love for lists extended beyond the plants he brought in each year. His yearly Christmas letter included lists of books he'd read, movies he'd seen, museums he'd visited and so on. Again, as we enter our 50th year, here is another list that might interest you.

Mail order nurseries we love:

(in alphabetical order and by no means a comprehensive list)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Arrowhead Alpines | Hengduan Mountains Biotechnology |
| Brent & Becky's Bulbs | High Country Gardens |
| Broken Arrow Nursery | Keeping it Green Nursery |
| Brushwood Nursery | Mr. Maple |
| Camellia Forest Nursery | Nurseries Caroliniana |
| Cistus Design Nursery | One Green World |
| Conifer Kingdom | Pine Knot Farms |
| Dancing Oaks Nursery | Plant Delights Nursery |
| Far Reaches | Rare Palm Seeds |
| ForestFarm | Rhododendron Species Botanical |
| Garden Treasures | Garden |
| Gossler Farms | Woodlander's |
| Handy Nursery Company | |

Sharing Our Passion and Our Plants

We like to share our plants with the green industry and the public in order to promote great plants from obscurity to fame. This year we distributed over 5,700 plants to the public in our annual Friends of the Arboretum plant distribution. It takes days to set it all up, but the plants are snapped up in just a few minutes by JCRA Members. Most people who participated left with at least 10 plants apiece.

We had a similar giveaway for botanic gardens as well, including some of our Uruguay collections such as *Bignonia callistegioides*, *Blepharocalyx salicifolius* and *Senegalia bonariensis* along with around 40 others.

We also shared seed collected here at the JCRA with other botanic gardens via our index seminum (seed list). In 2025, we had over 310 taxa of seed in the catalog. We shipped out 1,185 packets of seed to gardens in 19 states and 19 countries.

More seed was distributed to JCRA Members via our Member Seed Distribution (MSD) event. In 2025, we packed 2,815 packets of seed to send to over 500 people.



A Special Thank You - Just for JC Raulston Arboretum Members

Your membership keeps the JCRA free and open year-round. As a thank-you, local businesses that support our gardens offer special discounts and perks to JCRA Members – just a little something extra shared among friends.

How to Enjoy These Offers

- Be a current JCRA Member
- Show your membership card or mention your membership
- Thank these businesses for supporting the JC Raulston Arboretum



Big Bloomers
Flower Farm & Garden Shops

10% of regularly priced plant material if paid by cash check or debit



15% discount on Campbell Road Nursery grown plants
(Sale items excluded)



20% off total purchase
(Offer not valid on gift card purchases or consignment items. Cannot be combined with any other offer.)



10% off total purchase
(Offer not valid on gift card purchases or consignment items.). Cannot be combined with other offers.



12% off entire purchase



10% off regular priced plants at physical location
(Not available for web orders/Cannot be combined with any other discounts)



Free but limited diagnosis based on images sent to HistoricTreeCare@gmail.com
(See more benefits online)



10% off all regular-price plants and products



10% off hand-cast concrete art pieces and hypertufa troughs



Free tree & shrub health assessment
(up to 1 hour, \$200 value)
Free hardback copy of 'From Wasteland to Wonder'
(one per household)



10% off regularly priced plants



10% off regularly priced plants



10% off plants and pottery



10% off all stone creations

Scan QR code for full details, addresses and current exclusions, or visit go.ncsu.edu/jcra_benefit_providers



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JC RAULSTON ARBORETUM 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Join the JC Raulston Arboretum for a year-long celebration of its past, present and future.

Golden Gala SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

We're planning for events throughout the year that highlight our history, current endeavors and plans for the future.

Stay tuned for new events and announcements.



SCAN FOR
MORE INFO!



WINTER SYMPOSIUM GARDENING WITH GUSTO

FEBRUARY 21, 9 AM - 12:30 PM

Infuse Your Passion Into the Garden and Let it Grow

Gardening with Gusto, the Winter Symposium, is designed to stoke the fires of curiosity, creativity and love for plants during the cold months, so you can head into spring inspired and energized.

SPEAKERS

DR. ANNE SPAFFORD
Professor and Head, Department of Landscape Architecture, Mississippi State University

DAN BENARCIK
Horticulturist, Chanticleer

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MORE INFO!



Registration open now!



Attend in person or online