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PETERS

Forest Resources

To Protect and Preserve

With smart strategy and careful stewardship, PETERS Forest Resources helps landowners maximize their property's earning potential while preserving it for future generations

Those who own forested acreage in Louisiana have good reasons for doing so. Many owners feel that they hold a precious piece of their family history and desire to be responsible stewards of these open spaces. Land assets hold value and harbor resources, and when carefully conserved, a tract of land can represent a tremendous legacy to pass along to future generations. However, many folks with land assets to their name never harness the full financial potential of their undeveloped acreage. Many don't know how their land could be working for them, even if they never intend to sell.

Money Might Grow on Your Trees ...

Most landowners don't have time to devote to the kind of involved research required to maximize the income of their property. Some live nowhere near the land they own, which makes things still more complicated.

According to Warren Peters, co-owner and founder of PETERS Forest Resources in Baton Rouge, some of his clients are people like this. Peters explains that some of his clients own properties worth a million dollars or more but would never have known it had they never called his office. "[Land value] can reach one hundred thousand dollars very easily, or several million dollars. People don't necessarily see their property as that valuable," said Peters. "They may have a piece of land that's worth a lot of money, but they don't truly realize the value, probably because they don't plan on selling it."

From Acorn to Oak

Peters is an expert at utilizing land assets, brokering land, and managing the world of opportunities that lie hidden within those things. Forest management is his specialty, and he's been doing it all his life.

PETERS Forest Resources has operated in Baton Rouge for over twenty years, and between them, Peters and his team of six professional foresters and forest technicians have over seventy-five years of combined experience in forest management, and helping clients find ways to benefit from their land assets. Peters himself spent a happy childhood roaming his maternal grandparents' wooded property in St. Francisville with his father, who was also a forester, and thus brings to the business an appreciation of the balance between emotional connection and financial security that his clients are seeking to find. "You have to be honest with people—forest management is primarily timber harvest, and timber harvest is the process of cutting trees down. A lot of people are unsure about what it's going to look like when that's done," said Peters. "You reassure them that it's been cut once before,

and it will recover—nature is a powerful thing. And where aesthetic is major concern, we try to be lighter with what we're doing."

This Land Is Your Land

Peters added that timber harvesting is far from only service his company covers. "We have clients who are strictly into timber production," said Peters. "And we have a whole other group—people within an hour or two of Baton Rouge, who are primarily interested in using their land for recreation. So that's more "habitat management" than anything. We also broker land through National Land Realty."

When a new client calls, the first step is typically an in-person property visit, wherein Peters and his team walk the land to get a general sense of the property's potential. Every parcel is unique and every owner has their own goals. "We look at what types of timber they have, and we see if it's ready to be cut," said Peters. "A lot of times it's not ready to be cut, and we tell the owner that we should wait a little while."

From there Peters and his team can determine a client's options. Perhaps the goal will be to attract wildlife in order to establish a hunting lease, or to arrange an environmentally-friendly cull of timber to sell to a top-dollar buyer. If a client looking to establish a hunting lease doesn't live locally, PETERS will manage the entire process for them, from finding the lessor to maintaining the property throughout the year.

Woody Wisdom

While a landowner can, of course, do all this without a forest management service, it's difficult to do so as effectively, as when you have a team of experts at the helm. Peters notes that in every decision, his clients receive the benefits of his team's seventy-five years' experience in the industry. "We've made mistakes and we've learned from them," he said. "Our clients haven't seen the pitfalls and the mistakes that can happen. If they have a hundred acres, they may only cut timber once or twice in their lifetime. And even if you're only doing it two or three times in twenty years, whether it's timber harvesting or something else, you're better off hiring people with a lot of experience."

NATIONAL
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REALTY

For those looking to buy or sell land—or to maximize the benefit of land they already own—Peters and his team are ready to help. Call (225) 751-3553 to set up a land assessment, or visit peters-fr.com.



ESSAY

We Garden With Ghosts

MEMORIES OF ABSENT FRIENDS ENSCONCED IN FRISBEES, WIND CHIMES, AND MAIL-ORDER BICYCLES

Story and photos by Ed Cullen

In the zephyrs of spring, we garden with ghosts. Rejoicing in the warm air not yet filled with humidity and bugs, we celebrate being right here with people who aren't.

Cup of coffee in hand, plantspeople greet a new day standing before the memories of gardeners who gave the gift of information, plants, and the whirly-gig-doo-dads that make one smile when a breeze moves their

propellers, wind sails and chiming pipes. We grant space in our gardens to these gifts of friends because they keep absent people with us and because the gifts give joy without the need to water, prune, or weed.

Maybe, we channel someone who has gone to his or her rest or is taking a rest where old gardeners tend plants with their eyes through immovable windows of double-pane glass. There was an old man down the street known

to walkers and cyclists by his khaki shirt, trousers, brogans, and garden close to the sidewalk. A gardener keeps the memory of that plantsman in khaki with a pair of gate hinges made from the leather uppers of expired boots.

Leather hinges might evoke Robert Frost among the gardening literate. For the gardener in question, the hinges bring to mind his father-in-law's genius for repurposing. Once, arriving at the

old man's garden in the woods, the then-young gardener watched as his father-in-law approached a scarecrow fashioned from an old suit coat and trousers artfully draped over a fence post.

Clever, thought young dude, who gaped as the old man exchanged his office clothes for the scarecrow's clothing, picked up a hoe and began

(continued on page 42)

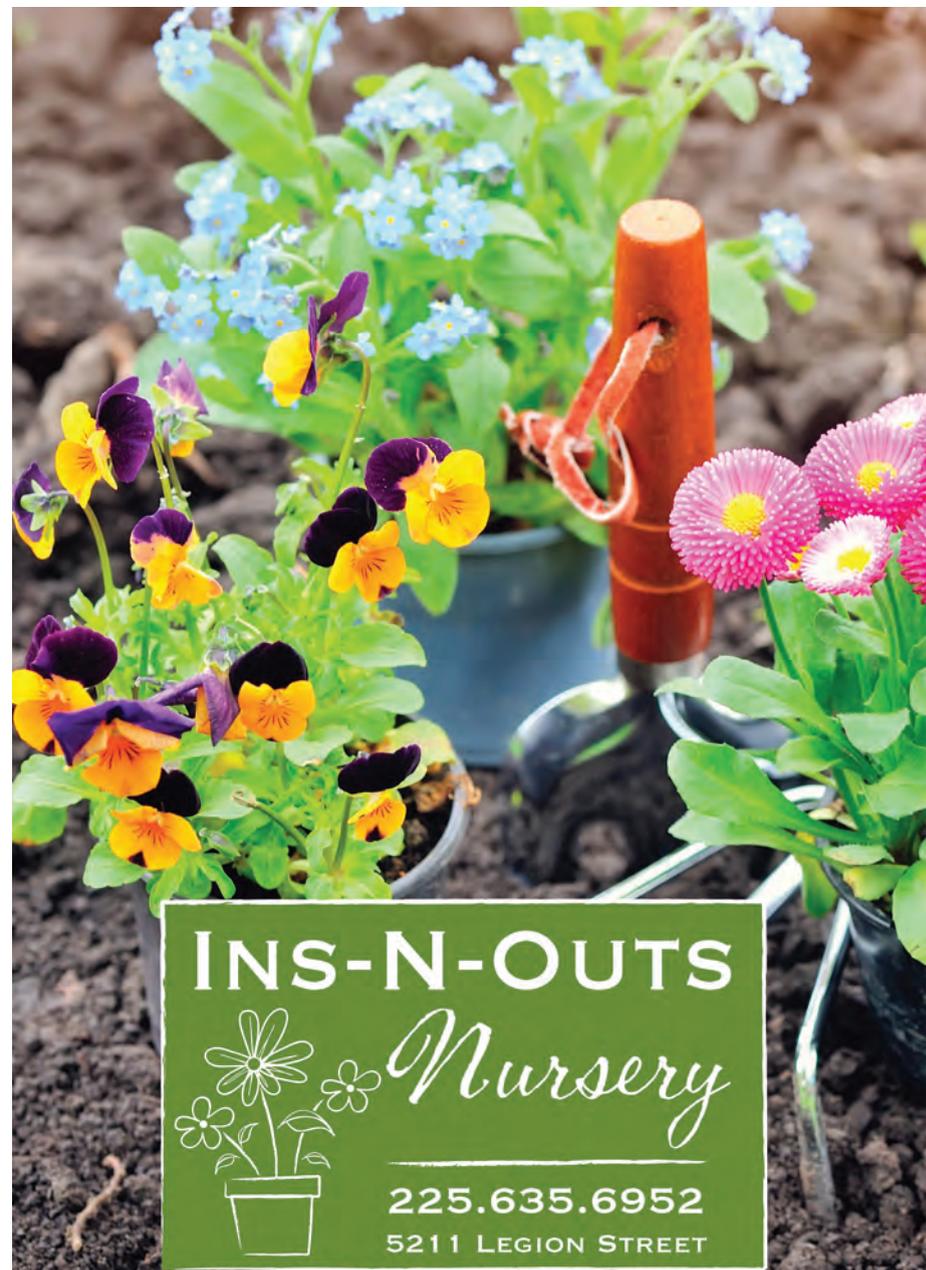


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Connect With Nature at Bluebonnet Swamp

It's easy to feel a little claustrophobic in the concrete jungle of Baton Rouge's metro area, but a walk in the forest isn't as far away as we might think—in fact, it's barely a skip away from Perkins Rowe.

BREC's Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center is a hundred and three acres dedicated to wildlife, natural habitats, and immersive exhibits. Here, visitors can swap out the notorious and encompassing city noise of Bluebonnet Boulevard for a chorus of cicadas, hike through the shaded cypress-tupelo swamp by way of well-maintained boardwalks, and get a glimpse of the awe of nature—not to mention the possibility of a transformative experience. "Research has shown that moments of awe can change our perception of ourselves and the world we know," said Claire Coco, facility manager at Bluebonnet Swamp. "A flash of sunlight illuminating a fiery autumn leaf; a camouflaged moth revealing startling false eye markings on its scarlet underwings—endless possibilities of such things are always happening."

As a former bird research station under the umbrella of the Louisiana Bird Observatory, Bluebonnet Swamp remains an incredible place to spot both migratory and year-round birds in their habitats. Barred Owls and White Ibis are among the feathered flock commonly seen from the path here. One of the many birding-related opportunities at BSNC is the monthly Swamp Bird Walk, geared toward those interested in birding, takes visitors on a beautiful morning hike through the grounds led by a Baton Rouge Audubon Society member, who shares techniques and identification tips.

One particular bird at the Swamp has her own dedicated fan club. "Probably our most famous resident creature is Barbara the Barred Owl," said Coco, adding that Barbara even adorned a billboard at one point. "Each year, we anticipate news of nest-building, egg-laying, and sights of [her] fledglings."

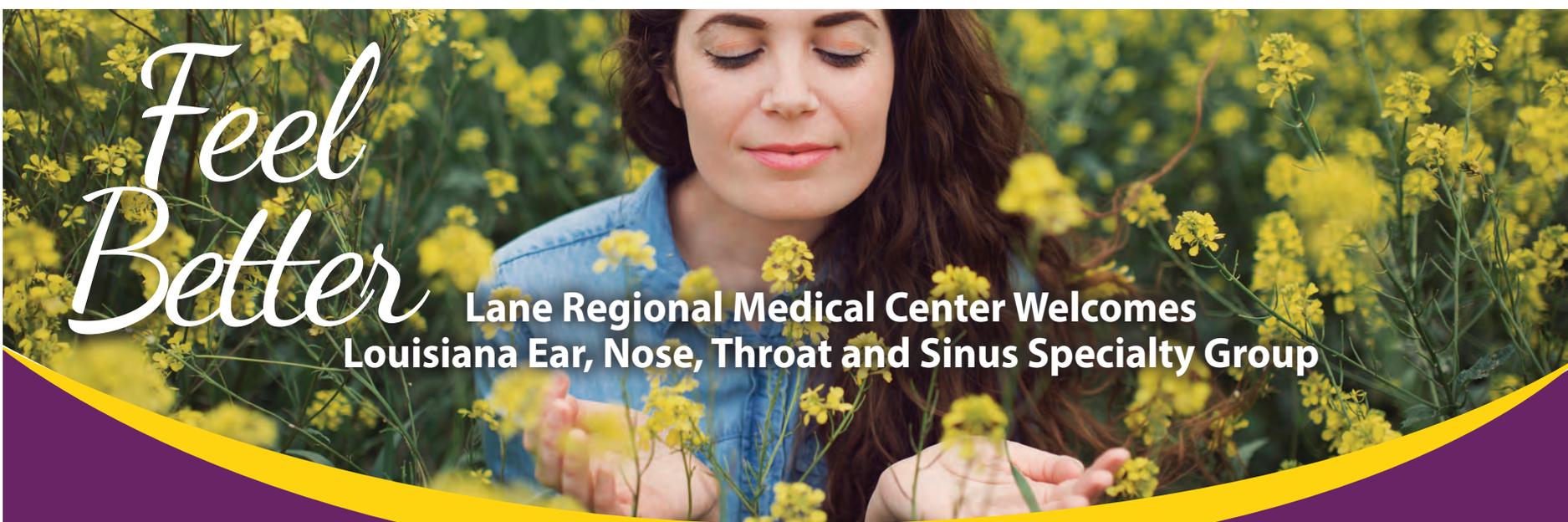
March at Bluebonnet Swamp means the annual geology-centric Rockin' at the Swamp event, where visitors and rock hounds can

do all manners of rock-related activities such as rock climbing, rock stacking, hunting for iron pyrite in a "gold mine," searching for fossils in a quarry full of them, and even making a pet rock to take home. "Parents have told us the event is a great bargain for a day-long family fun event," said Coco. "They like the educational booths, too, with hands-on learning opportunities for their children."

As BREC's first habitat conservation-based park, Bluebonnet Swamp has served as the foundation for BREC's growing commitment to conservation for over twenty years. Coco has served as Bluebonnet Swamp's facility manager for eighteen years—long enough to see a few things, such as a bat visiting the Haunted Hike, armadillo quintuplets, and even a drunk raccoon. But Coco thinks there's something new to see outside every day. "I'd have to say that my favorite wildlife experience is my next one," said Coco.

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brec.org/index.cfm/park/BluebonnetSwamp
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CONTENT SPONSORED BY BREC

Open a Window to the Sky at BREC Highland Road Park Observatory

Few things in life put things in perspective quite like stargazing. Take time to gaze upward at Baton Rouge's state-of-the-art observatory at Highland Road Park, where the city lights are just far away enough to take in the finer points of the heavens above.

Several times a month—weather permitting, of course—BREC Highland Road Park Observatory hosts evening sky viewings at which visitors can view the sky through one or more of the facility's fifteen telescopes. Those who don't exactly know what they're looking at—and to be fair, that's a hard task because things are always moving around up there—will appreciate being guided around that particular night's sky. "It's almost like having a channel in the sky," said Chris Kersey, facility manager at HRPO. "There's something different up there every week. There's the standard stuff that you'll see every year, and then there's the special stuff, like fireballs."

HRPO's professional-grade twenty-inch telescope

has discovered over forty asteroids, and the fact that the observatory is open to the public makes it unique. "There are observatories all over the place, but not a lot of them accept public visitors," said Kersey. "This is something special that Baton Rouge has."

For the past twelve years, HRPO has participated in the massive worldwide celebration of International Astronomy Day—an event intended to foster a love of all things astronomy. The Observatory will take on a festival atmosphere from 3 pm—11 pm on May 11 with live DJ music, games and rides, food vendors, raffled prizes, and lots of excellent sky-related educational opportunities. "It's our biggest event of the year, we usually see between eight hundred and twelve hundred people at International Astronomy Day," said Kersey. "This year, we're raffling off an Orion eight-inch reflecting telescope, which is a pretty good one."

Though it's a lot of fun, looking through a telescope isn't the only thing that happens at HRPO. Year-round programming involves patrons in a wide variety of sky-related activities, such as weather forecasting and solar viewing via three different methods (one safely involves

a telescope). The Baton Rouge Astronomical Society hosts their open and free meetings at the Observatory, giving visitors of all ages a taste of the scientific side of this discipline. Children ages 8–12 will particularly enjoy HRPO's Science Academy every Saturday, where kids become astronomers who explore gravity, simple machines, stars, spacecraft, meteors, the Earth and the Moon, asteroids and comets, the electromagnetic spectrum, and the American space program. In addition, this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Apollo moon missions, and HRPO will have Apollo-related events scheduled between March and July.

Kersey said March is prime viewing time for the Beehive Cluster, which includes the constellations of Cancer and Leo, but there's always the possibility of seeing something wild in the sky. "I've seen five fireballs in the past fifteen years," he said. "They happen fairly frequently, you just have to go outside and look up. Every night is something special that will never come again."

Visit hrpo.lsu.edu for program info, calendars, and more.



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The Latest in Southern Gardening Trends for 2019

Preventing Ficus Murder and Finding Your Thriller

You might check out *Elle* magazine to discover neon colors and top-handle bags are hot this spring, and you tune in to *Fixer Upper's* Joanna Gaines to learn the latest uses of shiplap. So where do you turn for the hottest gardening trends for 2019? Your local certified nursery professionals at Louisiana Nursery have the scoop. "There's a lot of consistency in the South," said Louisiana Nursery owner, Mitch Mayes. "However, we always see unique trends that come and go, and spring 2019 is no different."

Finding Fiery Foliage

While the beauty of color and flowers will always remain popular, there's a growing desire for florae possessing a colorful pop that lasts past other plants' traditional blooming season. The solution and a big trend this spring are plants with bright, colorful and especially variegated foliage. The Lime Sizzler Fire Bush is a great example with variegated leaves featuring vivid yellows, golds and chartreuse, combined with red, tubular flowers that attract humming birds. The Kaleidoscope Abelia showcases golden yellow variegation on medium green

leaves along with brilliant red stems, while the Sunshine Ligustrum offers year-round pure golden foliage. All of these plants flourish in full sun making them perfect for Louisiana gardens.

Houseplants Are Hot, Hot, Hot!

For those who recall the '70s and '80s, houseplants were like *Anchorman's* Ron Burgundy, "kind of a big deal." However, some, like the notoriously finicky Ficus Tree, were hard to keep alive. Many a poor soul who purchased a Ficus Tree slowly murdered it with some combination of too much or not enough water/sun. "Today, as growers have developed plants that are easier to maintain, indoor tropicals and houseplants are seeing a resurgence," explained Mayes. Areca Palms, Scheffleras, new varieties of Dracaenas (Corn Plant), Aglaonemas (Chinese Evergreen) and ZZ plants can all handle wider ranges of light requirement and their water needs are not as precise making them popular with everyone from old school gardeners to younger plant enthusiasts.

The Millennial Effect

Speaking of new plant enthusiasts,

Millennials are entering the market in droves. As this 25-to-30-something group begins decorating apartments or small houses, they are making a huge impact on gardening trends. Don't believe us? Millennials are why #Fiddleleaffig has over 133,000 Instagram posts. This age group uses houseplants to enliven small, stark apartments with unique decorative accents and to improve air quality within. Succulents have taken over as the "trendiest" plant amongst Millennials because they're hardy, low-maintenance and have a modern, angular look. Cocktail gardens supply fresh garnishes for drinks and flavorful add-ins for home-cooked meals. Many new gardeners in this demographic who possess a little more space are dabbling in the self-sustaining practices of planting edible gardens featuring fruits and vegetables like Satsuma, blueberries, tomatoes and peppers.

Containing Your Excitement

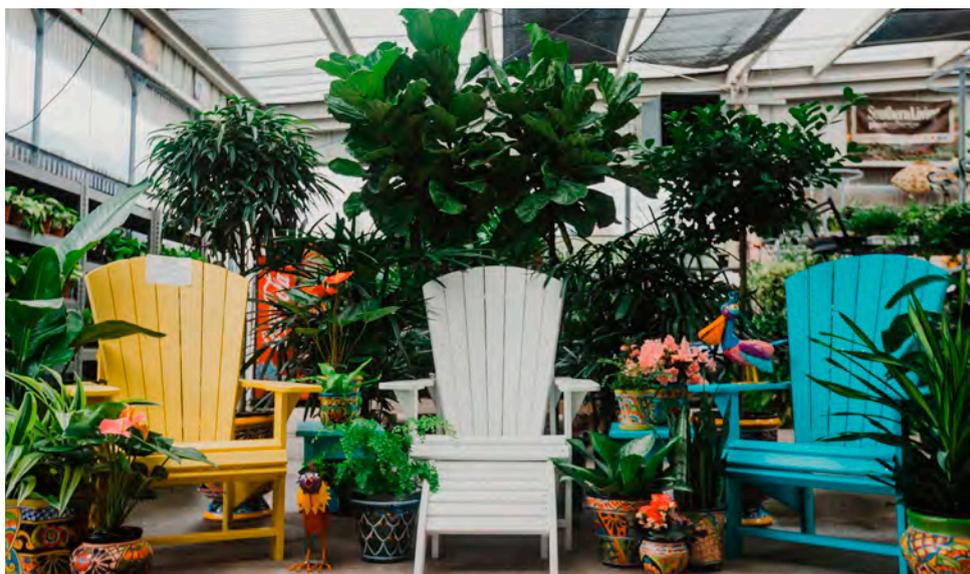
Finally, container gardening continues to be a very hot trend over the past few years. More than just sticking a few random plants in a pot, container garden

challenges you to fill a pot with the following plant combination: A Thriller, Filler and Spiller. The "Thriller" is your colorful mainstay and the primary focus of your container...think, Purple Fountain Grass—height is good. Add some Asparagus Fern for "Filler," then find a "Spiller" such as Wave Petunias or bright green Potato Vine, which will cascade over the side of the pot. "We have a wide variety of preassembled containers, or the staff can help you create your own," said Mayes. "It's important to get the right combination of plants that share similar water and light needs and will grow well together, so definitely ask for help if you're unsure."

So, whether it's the hottest new plants like this season's "Summer Crush" Endless Summer Hydrangeas arriving March/April, or the black "Raven" ZZ that's coming in 2020, trust Louisiana Nursery to have what's trending, backed by a team of certified nursery professionals who can answer all your questions and provide the advice you need to help your plants thrive. **Happy Growing!**



Can you spot the Thriller, Filler and Spiller?



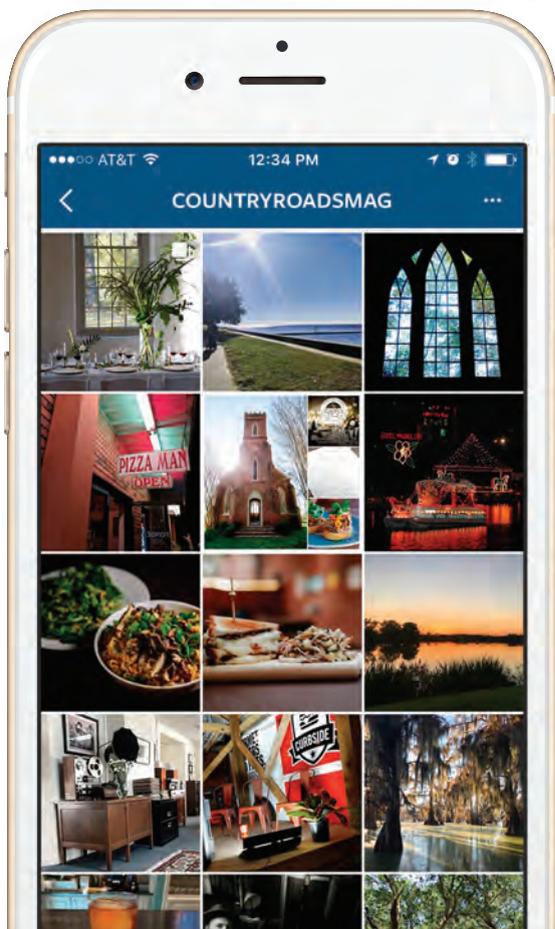
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Voodoo queen wards off cataracts with sunglasses.

Ghosts continued...

cultivating a row of cow peas.

A sudden rattle stirs the gardener from reverie to see a pinwheel spinning madly in the wind. Useless, perhaps? Waste of good money? Why, a potted rosemary might enjoy that space. Rosemary resides in some other part of the garden and doesn't make its presence known with startling clatter. To be sure, the rosemary announces itself with a clean, good smell. But the gardener must brush against it. The pinwheel tells him from afar that the wind is blowing from the southwest.

A wind chime, the gift of a woman named Merle, requires a stiffer breeze to make its fire gong clamor. Merle's chime says the wind has shifted a few points since the pinwheel's report.

Look around: There are the strung-together, leftover nuts and washers from the day a young friend and his wife dropped by to assemble a mail order bicycle. "I could have done that," the gardener admits, "but I wouldn't have the memory of Nathan and Caroline working together in the sunshine." They did their work quickly. When they left with a handshake and a hug, no one's fingers were bleeding.

More: A toy aircraft carrier turned into a thyme and mint planter; a concrete frog in the pose of Rodin's

"The Thinker"; a man's head from a block of wood, drawer pull nose and castoff sunglasses; a Virgin Mary statue facing the exact spot a neighbor named Rosemae used to pass in her big, white car on the way to early morning mass at St. Aloysius.

There is the mobile of found iron and discarded Frisbee hanging from a tree limb near the street that says, "No Pool," a statement to dog walkers that the gardener keeps his own fertilizer schedule.

These *objets d'art* and less, things impaled on sticks or rods or hanging from tree limbs by baling wire, fishing line or twine invite questions which provide the kindling for conversation and, did we say this before, require nothing from us but notice.

Would we remember absent friends and fellow gardeners without this, let's say it, junk? We would. Would we hear the voices of these ghosts in the wind's clatter and bong? We would not. ❁

Ed Cullen's wry observations on life in South Louisiana will be familiar to readers of The Advocate, where he worked for forty years. Letter in a Woodpile, a collection of his newspaper and radio essays, was published in 2006.

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MARCH 30, 2019
History and Architecture Tour
10:00am

Home and Garden Tour Uptown
1 to 4pm

MARCH 31, 2019
History and Architecture Tour
10:00am

Antoine's Luncheon
11:00am

Courtyard and French Quarter
Home Tour
1 to 4pm

APRIL 6, 2018
Queen's Promenade in
Jackson Square
11:30am

A Night in Old
New Orleans Parade
4:30pm

APRIL 7, 2018
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French Quarter
1 to 4pm

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CONTENT SPONSORED BY BOB'S TREE PRESERVATION

Bob's Tree Preservation: Caring for Giants

(and Planting the Next Generation)



Back in 1800, when Lafayette founder Jean Mouton donated a tract of land to the Catholic Church for a cathedral, there was already a huge live oak tree flourishing on the property. Two hundred and nineteen years later, the tree known as the St. John Cathedral Oak still stands. Vast and venerable, its gnarled, massive trunk supports limbs believed to weigh as much as seventy tons apiece and a canopy that spreads more than 210 feet around the base. One of the largest live oaks in the United States, the St. John Oak is a living giant that has survived all the lightning storms, hurricanes, heat waves, and waves of progress that the Louisiana Gulf Coast and its inhabitants have thrown at it over the centuries.

"It's so massive; it's estimated to be more than 450 years old," noted Frank Thibodeaux of Bob's Tree Preservation.

"Supposedly, there is a *Harper's Weekly* pencil drawing of the Union army camped beneath this oak during the Acadiana campaign."

After almost twenty years spent caring for the St. John Cathedral Oak, Thibodeaux knows this tree well. "The muscling in the trunk is the tree's

response to hundreds of years of wind storms i.e. hurricanes," he explained. "So much torque is produced by those winds, the tree responds by growing layers of wood cells in reaction."

But even giants need a helping hand sometimes; and when Thibodeaux first encountered the St. John Oak in the early nineties, the tree was in decline. "At various times, people had planted different plants beneath it," he explained. "They put in plants they thought looked nice, but they weren't compatible. We took it all out, then went back with a forest floor environment that mimics what the tree would have been surrounded by in its natural habitat. Now the only landscape plants beneath the tree are ferns, and the ground is mulched with native live oak mulch created from local tree trimmings."

After decades spent caring for the live oaks of Louisiana, this is what the folks at Bob's Tree Preservation have learned.

"Today, what we really manage is the forest floor," explained Frank, who holds a master's degree in

urban forestry. "That's what we focus on." Littered with leaves and bark and other organic materials that decompose and provide sustenance, a natural forest floor provides all the building blocks required to keep the soil beneath it—and the trees that live in that soil—healthy.

"But when we rake up all the organic material that falls and dispose of it, that starts a cycle of starvation. That's why we have trees that fall down in windstorms. And old trees that begin to die prematurely. In many cases the biggest problem that we find in the urban forest is that the trees have depleted the soil quality and we have to put organic matter back." Then there are the chemicals.

"Gardening today has become a band-aid society," Thibodeaux said, explaining that generations of removing all that naturally occurring organic material, then using chemical fertilizers to try to replace the nutrients, has

created a cycle of chemical dependence. "We've lost nature's connection," he

said. Bob's is on an organic crusade to reconnect. Today, the tree preservation business Robert "Bob" Thibodeaux founded in Church Point forty years ago cares for several thousand high-value heritage live oaks throughout Louisiana and along the Gulf Coast. And they do it with an entirely natural approach. "We test the soil and come up with different organic solutions to restore the soil biology," Frank Thibodeaux explained. First and foremost of these is mulch. When Bob's prunes or removes trees, they bring mobile wood recycling equipment to turn chip cuttings into valuable mulch that can be utilized on site. Using Louisiana products, such as fish oil, molasses, and compost, the company creates its own organic fertilizers for use when soil amendment is called for. "The goal is to approximate as closely as possible the conditions that existed in nature before we disturbed it," Frank said.

Because more often than not, the key to having healthy trees (and other plants) really comes down to one thing: healthy soil. If you can get the soil biologically active, then sustain it through organic landscape management, the trees will take care of the rest.

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Go to Grow

GARDENING SHOWS AROUND IN LOUISIANA THIS SPRING

MAR 8th
CENTRAL REGION SPRING
GARDEN SEMINAR & EXPO*Alexandria, Louisiana*

Whether you're gifted with a green thumb or greener than the greenery you're trying to keep green, the Central Region Spring Garden Seminar and Expo has something to offer for your spring garden. Held at the Louisiana State Evacuation Shelter near Alexandria, the expo will feature gardening tips, plant selections, and a host of educational sessions. Visitors will have the opportunity to meet with exhibitors, network with garden club and plant society members, and view garden products, services, and accessories on display from participating vendors.

8:30 am–1 pm. For more information, contact Sara Shields at srshields@agcenter.lsu.edu or at (225) 638-5533. ❁

MAR 9th
BATON ROUGE
SPRING GARDEN SHOW*Madisonville, Louisiana*

This weekend, the floor of John M. Parker Coliseum at LSU will be transformed into a fascinating world of plants and gardens with the Baton Rouge Spring Garden Show and Arts & Crafts Fair returns for a seventeenth year. The show includes numerous vendors selling a tremendous variety of plants and yard, garden, and patio related merchandise. A number of arts and crafts vendors will also have products for sale. 9 am–4 pm each day for the garden show. Contact Carol Johnson at cljohnson@agcenter.lsu.edu or (225) 578-1813 for details. ❁

MAR 9th
MADISONVILLE GARDEN CLUB
GARDEN SHOW*Madisonville, Louisiana*

The arrival of spring isn't the only thing gardeners have to look forward to this month. The annual Madisonville Garden Club Garden Show will be held on the banks of the Tchefuncte River at Madisonville Town Hall. The garden show features over twenty-five vendors selling everything needed to fill a perfect Southern garden. Come enjoy the spring weather and shop for shrubs, perennials, annuals, trees and many other gardening products to enhance your outdoor space. Master gardeners will be available to answer questions concerning your landscape, plants, soil, and more. 8 am–4 pm. facebook.com/madisonvillegardenclub. ❁

MAR 15th - MAR 16th
NORTHSORE GARDEN SHOW*Covington, Louisiana*

Lots to see, do, and learn at the Northshore Garden Show, held at Covington's St. Tammany Fairgrounds. Organized by the LSU AgCenter and Master Gardeners of St. Tammany Parish, exhibitors and experts will be on hand to address all those gardening woes, and there'll be children's activities, a plant health clinic, and demos, as well as plant material and garden supplies for sale. 9 am–4 pm both days. \$5 adults; under 18 free; police, fire & EMT free. (985) 875-2635. ❁

MAR 15th - MAR 17th
NEW ORLEANS
HOME & GARDEN SHOW*New Orleans, Louisiana*

The Mercedes-Benz Superdome will be the setting for the annual New Orleans Home & Garden Show, the largest consumer home show in the Southeastern United States. The show aims to bring an unparalleled variety of home-related services and products under one gigantic roof with everything needed for home remodeling, outdoor living, decorating, and landscaping. Noon–7 pm Friday; 10 am–7 pm Saturday; 10 am–6 pm Sunday. \$15; \$10 for military personnel. neworleanshomedshows.com. ❁

MAR 22nd - MAR 23rd
SOUTHWEST LA GARDEN
CONFERENCE & EXPO*Lake Charles, Louisiana*

The twentieth annual Southwest Louisiana Garden Conference and Expo will be held at the Burton Coliseum this year, and will feature gardening, flowers, trees, shrubs, garden accessories, books, demos, educational lectures, and more. Exhibitors and vendors will be available to assist with plant and garden needs. 9 am–5 pm. \$3; free for children younger than 12. For more information contact Robert Turley at (337) 721-4080. ❁

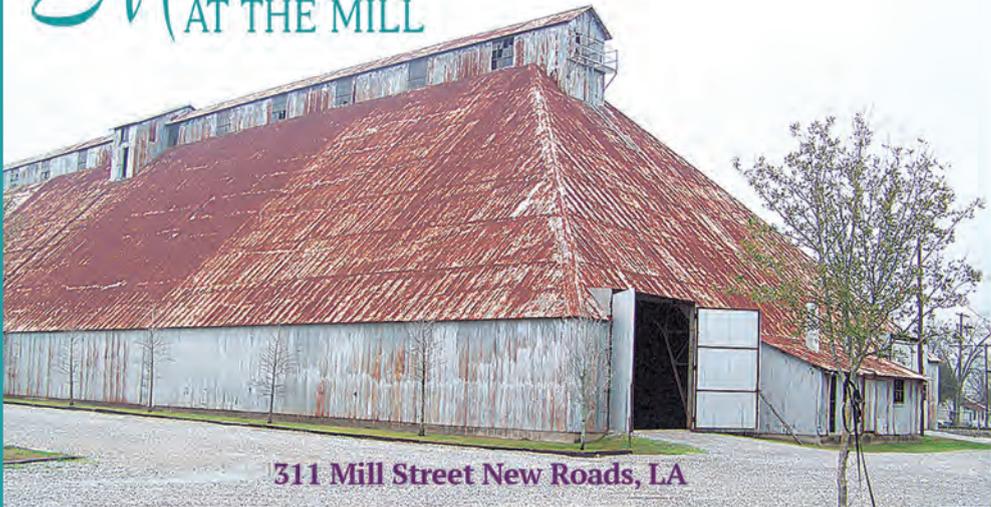
MAR 29th
NORTHEAST LA SPRING
PLANT SALE*West Monroe, Louisiana*

In West Monroe, northeast Louisiana gardeners will gather for their Eleventh Annual Spring Plant Sale at the Pavilion at Seventh Square. The sale will feature vegetables and herbs, houseplants, tropical, flowing vines, butterfly garden plants, and many more. Master Gardeners will be available to assist visitors in plant selection and to answer questions. 9 am–3 pm. Preview sale Friday from noon–6 pm. nwlamg.weebly.com. ❁



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8TH ANNUAL Market AT THE MILL



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Saturday, April 13 • 10am - 5pm
Sunday, April 14 • 11am - 4pm

Children's Art Classes: Saturday • 11am - 2pm
Pictures with Easter Bunny: Saturday • 10am-2pm • \$5

\$10 Admission (good for all 3 days)

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Amanda Shaw & the Cute Guys March 23, 2019

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