

The Crosby Arboretum

Mississippi State University Extension Service

Quarterly News Journal

Fall 2020

34.4

A SPECIES BACK FROM NEAR EXTINCTION: INDIAN PINK

Indian pink, (*Spigelia marilandica*) a plant once collected to near extinction, is one of the most attractive native plants of the southeastern United States. This hardy, clump-forming perennial grows up to two feet in height. The dark green leaves with their distinctive vein pattern are paired opposite of each other on the stem, with the largest leaves on the mid-stem to upper reaches of the plant. The leaves are stalkless and tapered to a long point from a rounded base. They spiral on the stem to maximize the available area for photosynthesis. Each stem is terminated by a flower cluster arranged in a narrow, one-sided curving cluster. The flowers bloom in succession from the stem to the apex of the floral cluster. Indian pinks have brilliant red, tubular flowers with a star-like apex that is a startling yellow. Bloom time is from March through June. If pollinated, the flowers are replaced by a rounded, green capsule through the summer to early fall. These capsules open by a central suture, catapulting the seeds away from the parents. Seeds germinate in the spring, sending up their embryonic leaves once the roots have developed. Typically, these plants are found in moderately moist hardwood forests in Mississippi. They are found only in the eastern United States from Virginia to Oklahoma.

Incredibly, despite its extraordinary beauty, this plant is relatively unknown to most people. It is rarely offered for sale by native garden centers and never by the big-box stores. Those who are familiar with Indian pink take advantage of its shade tolerance to enhance their home landscapes. The popularity it has in the garden has allowed it to survive as a pass-along plant, with it being propagated by seeds or by root cuttings. The seeds can be gathered by enclosing the stem with the fruit in a cloth bag to catch the projectile seeds.



Indian pinks have brilliant red, tubular flowers with a star-like apex that is a startling yellow color. Photo courtesy of www.SoutheasternFlora.com.



*Indian Pink (*Spigelia marilandica*) is a highly attractive native perennial that blooms from March through June.*

Removing flowers will prolong the blooming season but remember to keep some intact to produce seed. To enhance germination, seeds should be stored in a small amount of soil a paper bag in the crisper drawer of a refrigerator during the winter months. In the spring, sow the seeds shallowly in 2-inch pots. Keep the plants in the pots until the plants are of a suitable size to plant (about 3 years). Indian pinks are wonderful for shade to partial shade gardens. They can be planted in full sun, but the foliage will turn yellow and the plants may be stunted and have a shorter flowering period.

As would be expected, the tubular, red flowers are hummingbird magnets. Planting in drifts is the best strategy to bring in the birds. Any pollinators that like tubular flowers will also be drawn to these plants; butterflies and long-tongued bees are regular visitors. Indian pinks are rarely foraged upon by insects or other wildlife, mostly because of the toxicity of the whole plant. White-tailed deer have been known to browse, but the toxins contained within the plant discourage heavy herbivory.

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Heather Sullivan is Heritage Botanist at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science in Jackson, MS.

Her field walks at the Arboretum provide our visitors the opportunity to learn more about Mississippi native plants from a highly knowledgeable expert in the field.





The Crosby Arboretum Mississippi State University

A regional arboretum representing the native flora of the Pearl River Drainage Basin in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Picayune, Mississippi, USA

Director's Notebook:

We are entering a very busy autumn, like none ever experienced before, as we respond to the ever-changing needs for operating a public garden with safe measures in place for our visitors. After reopening June 3, programs began again on August 29 with our botany / photo walk that was a welcome activity for the participants who learned about the native species in our exhibits, how to use them in their own landscapes, and how to photograph them. While this summer we had a chance to catch up on some unfinished projects, our focus was completing the two structures in the Gum Pond Educational Exhibit, the Rosen Pavilion and Mirror Perch Bridge. Another accomplishment this summer was possible because of the Arboretum's "Green Team" volunteers. The Green Team is largely made up of Pearl River County Master Gardeners, and through trial and error, these dedicated individuals have reached the point where they are applying their knowledge gained about growing native plant species successfully in our greenhouse and nursery areas. This not only allows more hard-to-find native plants to reach area gardens but supplements the Arboretum's operating budget. Finally, the social media and marketing talents of Nickie Smith continue to help us increase our reach into our community and the region.

- Patricia Drackett, Director

The Crosby Arboretum, MSU Extension Service



A Botany/Photography field walk was held in late August with Pat Drackett, photographer Diana Thornton (left), and State Botanist Heather Sullivan, who filmed the walk for the Mississippi Native Plant Society's 2020 Webinar Series. If you missed the walk, check out the video at <https://www.mississippinativeplantsociety.org/>.



In September, several small programs were given in lieu of our big Bugfest event, including Extension Entomologist Dr. John Guyton, who streamed content from campus and Hancock County Extension Agent Dr. Christian Stephenson, shown giving his insect program.

EVENTS & MARKETING UPDATE

Now that our programs and events are up and running, fall and winter will be packed with activities for the entire family. We are creating a schedule that will have a program most weekends, and sometimes multiple ones! Children's crafts, Yoga on the Pavilion, native plant field walks, propagation seminars, and more! We're also planning on bringing back the 5K run during the winter of 2021. We are still practicing social distancing and masks are required for all programs for safety. Programs and events will be limited to a certain number, so you'll want to sign up early. The Pinecote Pavilion is now available for events during business hours at a discounted rate from evening rental rates. It's a great venue for luncheons, birthday parties, club meetings, showers...basically any gathering you're planning. Caterers are welcome and we have tables, chairs, and linens available for rent. Members will receive a 10% discount off the entire rental price!

As the volunteer coordinator, there aren't enough ways to show our Green Team volunteers proper gratitude. They have been working weekly to propagate, grow, and nurture a greenhouse full of plants for The Crosby Arboretum to sell in our perpetual plant sale and our bi-annual BIG native plant sale. Some have even brought species from their own gardens and landscapes to increase our selection. We would be lost without our volunteers and we appreciate every ounce of time, talent, and treasure that they give to The Crosby Arboretum.

In closing, I'd like to hear about programs that you would like to see happen at The Crosby Arboretum. We are open to suggestions and are always looking for fresh ideas. One way to get involved is to become a member and right now, annual memberships are half price. If you're already a member, encourage your family and friends to join. It's a great place to visit together, exploring the natural beauty of Mississippi.

- Nickie Smith, Event & Marketing Coordinator
The Crosby Arboretum, MSU Extension Service



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A regional arboretum representing the native flora of the Pearl River Drainage Basin in Mississippi and Louisiana.

Picayune, Mississippi, USA

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INDIAN PINK

The toxins in the plant are from an alkaloid, spigeline. All parts of the plant contain this alkaloid. As is the case with many poisonous plants, Indian pink toxins have been used medicinally. The Cherokees prepared a tea from the roots to treat worms and introduced the plant as a treatment for worms to the early colonists in the Southeast. A leaf tea was used to aid digestion in Appalachia. Root tea was also used to treat malaria. In 1763, Indian pink was acknowledged as a medicinal plant in medical journals. It is from this period to the 1900s that Indian pink gained celebrity. One physician described Indian pink in 1833 as extraordinary, as “few of the medicinal plants are possessed of great beauty.” Physicians experimented with it to treat a variety of illnesses. It was widely used and even available through pharmacies. This was the period that led to its near extinction. Some states, like Maryland, completely lost their populations through over-harvest, and it declined throughout its range in the Southeast. It continued to be used commercially until the 1900s but was discontinued for two reasons: some patients had severe reactions and deaths did result and other remedies became available. It is still used as a floral essence, in which it is reputed to give people focus during stressful circumstances. Indian pink belongs to the Logania Family, which includes *Strychnos*, from which strychnine and curare are derived.

Like many North American plants, Indian pink was taken back to Europe for landscape use. It was first used in English gardens in 1694. At this time, it was believed to be a type of honeysuckle. About 50 years later, Linnaeus assigned Indian pink to *Spigelia*, in honor of Adrian van der Spiegel, who is believed to be the first person to describe how to set up an herbarium.

Whenever someone sees this vibrant wildflower, one of the first questions they ask is “Why Indian ‘pink’?” ‘Pink’ is in reference to plants that were used in the treatment of intestinal worms. Another origin may be in reference to the scarlet coats worn by fox hunters, which are misleadingly called “pinks.” Other common names are pinkroot, wormgrass, Carolina pink, starbloom, *unsteetla* (Cherokee), and *mikaa* (Osage). Whatever you wish to call it, this is the plant that should be considered for any Mississippi garden.

- *Heather Sullivan, Heritage Botanist*
Mississippi Museum of Natural Science

WILDFLOWERS AT HILLSIDE BOG



Cirsium lecontei (left) is a rare species of thistle (Asteraceae) that grows in the drier longleaf pine areas of Hillside Bog Natural Area. Incredibly, some people, especially in Europe, go to the trouble of removing the spiny projections from thistle leaves and then eat the leaves in salads; however, it is true that commercial lettuce and endive are in the same plant family. *Helianthus radula* (right) is an unusual native sunflower that will bloom during the fall; mostly found in drier longleaf pine areas; very broad, coarse basal leaves; heads with flowers are all discs and no rays, so they appear to lack petals; disc flowers are blackish.

Plant descriptions by **Wayne Morris, Ph.D., Troy University**
Wayne holds a M.S. in botany from MSU, with graduate work under Dr. Sidney McDaniel at the Crosby Arboretum in 1986.

WHAT'S IN BLOOM – FALL SELECTIONS:

Honeycombhead, *Balduina uniflora*, yellow
Dense Blazing Star, *Liatris spicata*, purple
Boneset, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, white
Chaffhead, *Carphephorus pseudoliatris*, purple
American Crinum Lily, *Crinum americanum*, white
Deer's Tongue, *Carphephorus odoratissimus*, purple
Heath Aster, *Symphyotrichum pilosum*, white
Southern Blazing Star, *Liatris squarrulosa*, purple
Meadow Beauty, *Rhexia alifanus*, pinks
Pickerel Weed, *Pontederia cordata*, purple
Pinelands Hibiscus, *Hibiscus aculeatus*, white
St. John's Wort, *Hypericum brachyphyllum*, yellow
Swamp Sunflower, *Helianthus angustifolus*, yellows
Sugarcane Plumegrass, *Saccharum giganteum*, tan plumes

We have many volunteer opportunities at the Crosby Arboretum. No amount of time to give is too small, and we are sincerely grateful for any assistance!

GUM POND EXHIBIT CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS NEARING COMPLETION

Only a few touches remain on the two new structures in the Gum Pond Educational Exhibit. The bulkhead is finished for the overlook adjacent to the Rosen Memorial Pavilion, a gift to the Arboretum from the Rosen Family in memory of former Foundation board member Yvette Rosen. The small pavilion was designed by Robert Poore of Native Habitats, Inc. Across the pond from the Rosen Pavilion is Mirror Perch Bridge, a unique structure designed by MSU architecture professor Hans Herrmann, with design implementation assistance from his students. Terry Johnson led the bridge construction this summer, along with six MSU architecture and landscape architecture student interns, volunteer Frank Jackson, and others. The last sections of the gum pond loop trail are being built. Soon, visitors can make the complete journey around the pond. Two bridges at the south edge of the pond were replaced, and plans are being made for a dedication ceremony. We are truly looking forward to this exhibit reopening to the public!



Crosby Arboretum Memberships Make GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS!

Crosby Arboretum memberships include many benefits, including discounts on programs, free fish and turtle food, and special admission privileges and discounts at over 300 other public gardens through the **American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program** and more. Contact Sherri Lowe, membership coordinator at 601-799-2311 for information.

The News Journal is a quarterly publication of The Crosby Arboretum, Mississippi State University Extension Service. A news journal subscription is included with an annual membership to the Arboretum.

Please send correspondence to: pat.drackett@msstate.edu
 Patricia Drackett, Editor, The Crosby Arboretum
 P.O. Box 1639, Picayune, MS 39466

Mississippi State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, or veteran status.

Membership Application

All contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed. For more information call: (601) 799-2311 or print form online.

_____	Student (send copy of student ID)	\$ 20.00
_____	Individual	35.00
_____	Individual Senior (55+)	30.00
_____	Family	45.00
_____	Donor	100.00
_____	Patron	250.00+
_____	Benefactor	1,000.00
_____	Business/Club	
_____	Sweetgum	100.00
_____	Sassafras	250.00
_____	Live Oak	500.00
_____	Bigleaf Magnolia	1,000.00

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Renewing? Memberships are for one year.



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY-
EXTENSION

The Crosby Arboretum

Mississippi State University

P.O. Box 1639

Picayune, MS 39466-1639

Crosby Arboretum Program Schedule

October - November 2020

Fall Native Plant Sale

October 16 & 17 (Fri/Sat), 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

(Members enter each day at 9:00 a.m.)

Grab your cart and choose from an outstanding selection of woody native plants for fall planting projects, including many outstanding fall-blooming perennials grown here at the Arboretum. Knowledgeable staff, volunteers, and Pearl River County Master Gardeners will assist you with questions and provide advice on plants suited to your property's unique site conditions. **Free admission.** Use Service Road entrance.

FOREST BATHING WORKSHOP

Saturday, October 24, 9:00 a.m. to Noon

Come and explore the beneficial practice of forest bathing. Also known as *shinrin yoku*, forest bathing is the simple practice of mindfully taking in the forest atmosphere through the senses. Unlike a hike or field trip, forest bathing invites you to slow down and sense a relationship with the natural world, which can greatly improve health and well-being. Developed in Japan more than 40 years ago, forest bathing has become a vital element in preventative healthcare worldwide. Join Nature Connection Guide **Nadine Phillips** to learn about the origins and benefits of this practice and be guided through sensory and interactive exercises to help you build your own practice. Possible side effects are better health, happiness and a sense of calm. Limited to 12 persons. Reservations required. Members \$10; non-members \$15.

YOGA ON THE PINECOTE PAVILION

Saturday, October 24, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Join certified yoga instructor **James Sones** in the beautiful natural setting of Pinecote Pavilion for a gentle yoga class and short meditation sitting. Class limited to 15. Yoga mats provided, or, bring your own. Please arrive 10 minutes early. Reservations requested. Members free, non-members \$5.

FAMILY CRAFT WORKSHOP:

Painting Fairy Doors and Rocks!

Saturday, November 7, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Participants will paint a fairy door for their home garden in this fun family workshop led by **Sherri Lowe**. They will also paint fairy doors and themes on rocks, to remain at the Arboretum. All visitors will then find and relocate the rock doors on future visits. A special story will be read that reveals the purpose for creating the fairy doors. Limited to 12 persons. Registration required. As children must be accompanied by an adult, there is no minimum age requirement. Cost, \$6 for members' children and \$9 for non-members' children. Adult members, free admission; non-member adults, regular site admission.



Fairy door rocks painted by **Samantha Fabacher**, who will be assisting **Sherri Lowe** with the November 7 family craft workshop.

FALL BOTANY FIELD WALK

Saturday, November 7, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Enjoy a stroll through the Arboretum's educational exhibits and learn about the native plants you will see, and how to use them in your home landscape with Arboretum Director **Pat Drackett**. Reservations requested. Members free; Non-members \$5.

YOGA ON THE PINECOTE PAVILION

Saturday, November 21, 9:30 to 10:30 p.m.

Join certified yoga instructor **James Sones** in the beautiful natural setting of Pinecote Pavilion for a gentle yoga class and short meditation sitting. Class limited to 15. Yoga mats provided, or, bring your own. Please arrive 10 minutes early. Reservations requested. Members free, non-members \$5.

FAMILY CRAFT WORKSHOP:

Winter Wildlife Birdhouses & Feeders!

Saturday, November 21, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Prepare your garden for winter wildlife! Participants will have fun building and painting a bird house from a kit, and creating bird feeders with pinecones, peanut butter, and birdseed in this workshop led by **Sherri Lowe**. Limited to 12 persons. Registration required. As children must be accompanied by an adult, there is no minimum age requirement. Cost, \$7 for members' children; \$10 for non-members' children. Adult members, free; non-member adults, regular site admission.

Reservations: To sign up, call the Arboretum office at (601) 799-2311. **Physical Address:** 370 Ridge Road, Picayune, MS 39466. **Hours:** Wed-Sun, 9 AM – 5 PM.

Programs of Mississippi State University Extension Service are open to all people, without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, group affiliation or any other status protected by applicable law. Mississippi State is an equal opportunity institution. Questions about equal opportunity programs or compliance should be directed to the Office of Compliance and Integrity, 56 Morgan Ave., P.O. Box 6044, Mississippi State, MS 39762, (662) 325-5839

65th Edward C. Martin Jr. Landscape Design Symposium

October 21, 2020

You are invited to join a free online live Zoom Webinar

The 65th Edward C. Martin Jr. Landscape Design Symposium

Wednesday, October 21

9:00 a.m. to Noon

Hosted by Mississippi State University Extension
With three Extension speakers, presenting **landscape tips and techniques for you to improve your garden.**

9:00 a.m.

Dr. Eddie Smith, Extension Agent for Pearl River County: How to select plants that will attract birds and pollinators, and tips for preventing unwanted critters in the garden.

10:00 a.m.

Pat Drackett, Crosby Arboretum Director: Fundamentals you can use to pull together a stronger design for your landscape.

11:00 a.m.

Professor Bob Brzuszek, Mississippi State Landscape Architecture: How to work with stormwater, and how you can improve your soils.

After each presentation, there will be an opportunity to ask questions of the speaker.

There is no cost to attend this online workshop. To join, go to the Smart Landscapes Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/smartlandscapesmsu/> and scroll down to view the webinar post.

Select the link and enter the Zoom password 872509.

The MSU-ES Smart Landscapes Team:

		
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For more Smart Landscapes info and media, be sure to visit:



The Mississippi Smart Landscapes website:
<http://extension.msstate.edu/smartlandscapes>

Our Facebook page at:
<https://www.facebook.com/smartlandscapesmsu/>