



Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens e-Newsletter December 2013



The Art of Nature People's Choice Award "Fairyville"

The Art of Nature

Our fifth anniversary event, The Art of Nature, celebrated on Saturday, November 9 was a resounding success with hundreds of visitors enjoying the special activities and exploring the Arboretum on a picture-perfect autumn day. The outdoor sculpture exhibit, presented in partnership with the Northeast Florida Sculptors' Group, was a unique feature of the event showcasing the creative efforts of over 25 artists with works around the Lake Loop and along Jones Creek Trail. One striking piece of clay and steel, titled "Pickerel Axes", is now a permanent amenity along the Lake Loop thanks to its donation by the artist, renowned local sculptor Nofa Dixon. Another piece, titled "Receptor", by local sculptor, Michael Cottrell, makes a bold statement in the parking area and will be on loan at the Arboretum for one year. If you missed the anniversary celebration, please come out to see these beautiful creations as well as a few made of natural materials that will remain on view until they decompose. You'll also want to see the unique sculpture along the Live Oak Trail - a turtle carved from a large camphor tree stump - created during the event by chainsaw artist, James Gandy.

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The sculpture exhibit was judged by local artist, Allison Watson, with the following awards being given:

Best of Show: "Receptor" by Michael Cottrell

Second Place: "Pickerel Axes" by Nofa Dixon

Third Place: "A Flight of Fronds" by Lad Hawkins.

The People's Choice Award: "Fairville" by Lynda Aycock, Kitty Corbin and Mindy Hawkins.

A big thank you to all the participants, sponsors, volunteers and visitors who made this a very special day in celebration of the Arboretum's five-year anniversary! We also thank AB Signs for donating the event signage. Please visit our Facebook page to view the photograph albums created by event photographer, Lindsay Hill, of A Step Through Time Photography.

What's New?

There is something new at the dock. Next time you are lake watching take a look at the new laminated guidebook. You will find 20 pages of photographs and information about the lake residents. Who eats who, who nests where, and where else they all live...it's all there for you to peruse. And you could be a big help to us if you read about and become familiar with the three snake species that commonly "hang-out" in the roots just to the left of the dock. There is an absolutely gorgeous copper and brown splotched Florida water snake (*Nerodia fasciata pictiventris*) as well as a rather threatening looking Florida brown water snake (*Nerodia taxispilota*). Florida brown water snakes have a large flattened head and thick body; they are often confused with cottonmouths. Please point other visitors to the guidebook if you overhear comments about the water moccasin at the dock.

There are also several pages about American alligators. They are an important part of the lake ecosystem and we are happy to have an alligator in our lake as long as it stays away from our visitors. Please read the pages about interactions of alligators and humans and remember that alligators eat fish and if we feed the fish at the dock then alligators will learn to follow.

What's Blooming?

Several visitors have asked about the awesome *Salvia* with hot pink flowers near the new overlook across from "stonehenge". We think it is *Salvia microphylla* or one of its numerous cultivars or hybrids. *Salvia microphylla* (Baby sage, Graham's sage, Blackcurrant sage) is a perennial shrub found in the wild in southeastern Arizona and the mountains of eastern, western, and southern Mexico. Numerous cultivars of this species have been brought into the horticultural trade in the past 25 years.

When crushed, the leaves have a strong mint-like fragrance. The English thought that it smelled like black currants, leading to the use of "Blackcurrant Sage" as their common name for the species. Along with its cultivars and hybrids, *S. microphylla* blooms heavily in late spring and again in autumn, with sporadic flowering year-round in mild conditions. The flowers are arranged in whorls, with a wide range of colors including magenta, red, pink, and rose. It sometimes spreads underground, producing dense patches.

New Playground for Fido

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While some finishing touches remain to be completed, the new dog park at Ed Austin Regional Park has opened. There is currently no fee for using the dog park and it features separate fenced facilities for large and small dogs. There, your dog can run free without violating City regulations.

As most of you know, the Arboretum allows dogs as long as they are kept on 8' leashes and on the trails. These and other rules posted on our website and at the Arboretum's entry kiosk, are for our visitors' safety and for the protection of the plants and their habitats. Many of our visitors enjoy walking their dogs along our trails and as long as the leash rule is respected, we welcome your pets. If your dog wants or needs to run free, please visit the dog park at Ed Austin Park.

Year-end Giving Campaign

The holiday and end-of-year giving season is upon us. As a 501(c)(3), not-for-profit organization, the Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens depends on our members and donors for the financial support to keep the Arboretum open for all to enjoy. Please consider the Arboretum in your seasonal giving with a tax-deductible donation this year. We have worked hard and achieved much over the past five years to further our mission of "cultivating a unique environment for recreation, education and inspiration."

While many organizations make a difference on a global or national level, Jacksonville Arboretum & Gardens, Inc. is making a difference at the local level. With the support of our members, donors and volunteers we have accomplished much this year, including two new trails, benches, educational signage, overlooks and a boardwalk to the National Champion Loblolly Tree. We also hosted several special events, including our third plein aire painting event, *A Brush with Nature*; our second *Step Out in Nature* Fun & Fitness Competition, member & volunteer Owl Prowls and our fifth anniversary celebration, *The Art of Nature*. We continued eradication of exotic invasives and began long-term upland restoration projects. We also continued our free monthly Fitness and Nature walks and provided outreach programs to various civic, social and educational organizations.

The Jacksonville Arboretum is a true jewel in the First Coast crown. Please help us continue to improve the grounds and offer great programs and events by making a tax-deductible year-end donation. Above all, plan on coming out to the Arboretum to see the results of your generosity. You may make your donation on-line, by clicking "Support Us" on the sidebar of our website - www.jacksonvillearboretum.org or by sending your check, payable to the Jacksonville Arboretum, to P.O. Box 5763, Jacksonville, Florida 32247.

Thank you for your support!

OUR MISSION

**Cultivating a unique environment for recreation,
education and inspiration.**