



Jacksonville Arboretum & Botanical Gardens e-Newsletter

APRIL 2021 EDITION

New Summer Hours: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Growing For The Future

Kevin Blalock, President

Growing for the Future

This is a busy Spring for the Arboretum as we can see evidence of our lives and city returning to normal, and as our organization begins steps towards bringing this city an Arboretum and Botanical Gardens worthy of our size, culture and prosperity.



The last 12 months have been difficult for everyone, and when the arboretum re-opened in the spring last year, we realized how important we were to the community. We were quickly able to regain our momentum, and even bring back programs and events for education and art through the leadership of our Executive Director, Dana Doody. Dana has been with us a little over twelve months now, and we could not be more excited about what she has brought to the arboretum and where she is taking it. As you visit, or if you join us for one of our programs, you will notice Dana's fingerprints on everything we have accomplished in the last 12 months, including rescheduling A Brush with Nature (which achieved its most successful event yet), hiring new staff, and completing so many projects, such as rebuilding the Jones Creek bridge. Please reach out to Dana and thank her for everything she does – if you do you will find her enthusiasm for the arboretum contagious. We also strengthened our board with the addition of two new Directors this spring. As we grow, we need additional talent and expertise to help us navigate this growth and execute our plans. Susan Carr, PhD, has joined us and brings a wealth of nature and conservation experience to the board. Currently Program Manager for the North Florida Land Trust, Susan has spent her career in conservation and ecology, and has served as President of the Conservation Trust for Florida and on the Board of the Florida Native Plant Society. Susan's leadership skills in this space will be essential to our growth, while we also strive to conserve the natural environment of the arboretum. We also welcomed Dean Scott, Founder and President of R. Dean Scott Architecture, to the board in March. Dean has already contributed to our master planning process, and adds a skillset we have not had on this board and also is crucial to our growth. As we scale and add new infrastructure, we need that creative viewpoint and the ability to feasibly design the infrastructure we need, as well as the ability to effectively manage projects to completion. Welcome to Susan and Dean – we are all excited to work with you!

Why are we building this team and excited about Dana's leadership? As you heard from our Treasurer, John Burr, last month, we have embarked on a process to scale the organization and create a true botanical garden for Jacksonville that will provide our community another source of pride that we can all enjoy. Being outdoors in such a beautiful and relaxing space is so healthy, especially in our current environment. We aim to improve your experience with the arboretum and create more reasons for you to visit. On March 23rd and 24th, the board hosted our initial Master Planning meeting with the world-renowned team of Tres Fromme of 3. Fromme Design and Chris Barkley of HDLA. Thanks to many donors and volunteers, we spent nearly two full days brainstorming special attractions for our city and beginning to outline how the arboretum might be improved and augmented to support our mission. Our board, the design team, key volunteers, past board members, and representatives from the City's Parks

and Recreation Department joined forces to create an outline for our plans. Our vision is already coming together. We are at the early stages, but you can expect to see amazing new gardens and outstanding improvements to the arboretum and botanical gardens in the near future. We will continue to share our progress with you all, especially our members, as we build something special for our city.

[Click Here to Donate to the Delores Barr Weaver Challenge Grant](#)



A Note From The Director

Dana Doody, Executive Director



What can I say about volunteers that has not already been said? How about: *it is so important that we could not do it without you!*

I am deeply grateful for the volunteers who have been with the Jacksonville Arboretum and Botanical Gardens since the start and the ones who have just joined us last week. Whether you pull weeds, dig holes or grow green things, every one of you is important! As a matter of fact, you are so crucial to the growth and development of our mission to unite plants and people that we have hired someone whose main responsibility is to take care of you!

Welcome new staff member, Marti Schmidt, who has a varied background in education, volunteer coordination and a love of the outdoors. Over the next few months, she will be gathering all the volunteer information, reaching out and contacting you regarding all things Arboretum. This is yet another example of how the Arboretum is growing and we couldn't be happier about it. I, for one, am truly grateful for the help but am so happy to be able to give our vital volunteers the attention they deserve.



She can be reached by email: martina.schmidt@jacksonvillearboretum.org or

the Arboretum phone number (904)318-4342.

Events to look forward to!

April 10 - 2nd Saturday

8 am – 12 pm: Earthworks Plant sale

8 am – 11 am: Get your hands dirty! Meet our horticulturist, Shayan Khatibi in the picnic area.

May 8 Discovering Nature Nearby presents a very special bird walk at the Arboretum!

10 am - Birding with Board President, Kevin Blalock and featuring Duval Audubon Society President, Carol Bailey-White. This event is for all ages and attendance is limited! \$5 per person

[Click Here to Purchase Tickets for Bird Walk](#)

May 15 & 16 - A Brush With Nature

9 am - 5 pm:

At this event, visitors enjoy the gardens while many of the region's finest Plein Air artists set up their easels to capture the essence of the Arboretum's beautiful settings and paint their favorite scenes from locations throughout the 120-acre site.

This special event includes food trucks, live music, children's activities and beautiful art. Bring your whole family out for this annual treasured event!

Volunteer! Event volunteer sign up for A Brush With Nature is starting now!

[Click here to Volunteer](#)



A BRUSH WITH NATURE

May 15th & 16th
9am to 5pm
A Plein Air Painting Event





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Ways To Give

Small but Mighty!

Our little donor box that sits so unassumingly at the entrance of our lovely Arboretum and Gardens is the impetus for so many projects!

The result of your contributions can be seen everywhere! The paved ADA path, the Palm Garden, the Raised Beds, and the new bridge on the Jones Creek Trail. And our future projects like the all-important rest rooms and the Botanical Gardens! And we the staff, would not be staff were it not for your giving!

Your donations are not just for the future of the Arboretum, they are for the now of the Arboretum. And we are grateful.

Volunteer Spotlight

Any day you happen by Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Unit Mayport ("the clinic") you will find sailors hard at work in the clinics, laboratory, and pharmacy. You might also catch sight of Leading Petty Officer Laboratory David Sisto asking folks who come by the lab "Hey we've got a workday at the Arboretum this weekend; you want to come help?" David's wife and kids love to visit the gardens and trails at the Arboretum and he wanted to find a way to give back. What better way than to lend us many a helping hand?

With David's prodding, sailors have been taking a Saturday break from keeping Naval Station Mayport fit and ready for deployment to help us haul, weed, mulch and more. David said there is a core group of ten who come to almost every workday. Folks are starting to hear all the great reports of fun and fulfillment and the ranks are growing; there were almost 20 at the last workday.

Interested in volunteering with us?
[Sign up today](#)



Plant Of The Month by Shayan Khatibi, Staff Horticulturist



An azalea native to the eastern United States, the pinxter azalea has an open growth habit with a stunning show of fragrant flowers which welcome spring in the southeast. A native to the East Coast, *Rhododendron canescens*, is well suited to mass plantings and accents well in a woodland setting. Choose a location with rich, moist, acidic soil and dappled light under tall trees. This azalea requires little to no pruning and has no major pest issues making it a no maintenance option which also attracts pollinators and hummingbirds. Plants bloom on old growth and should be pruned after spring flowering. Enjoy this plant at the arboretum on the live oak trail!

Sources:

<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FP/FP50400.pdf>

<https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/rhododendron-periclymenoides/>



Dog Days

Here is Fabulous Buddy and his human, Beth, enjoying the Arboretum!

Buddy's rescue birthday is July 28. He loves the Arboretum, but he loves to sing even more! His favorite song is Animals by Adam Levine. Say Hi! To Buddy and his human when you see them around the Arboretum!

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By becoming a member or donor, you're supporting the Arboretum's operations and improvements. All donations are tax-deductible. Details are available on our website.

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