LSU AgCenter Introduces New Trail System for Birding at Burden

Dr. Luke Laborde and Dr. Ashley Long

Located at 4560 Essen Lane in the heart of Baton Rouge, the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden and Windrush Gardens are part of a 440-acre “urban oasis” that hosts a variety of habitats and ecosystems that include a wide range of flora and fauna for visitors of all ages to enjoy. We are excited to announce the opening of a new trail system for bird-watching at Burden designed for both beginners and advanced bird enthusiasts. The Birding at Burden trail system consists of six loops that wind through Burden’s formal and informal gardens, grasslands, croplands, wetlands and forest. Five individual loops highlight the ecological diversity on the property and range in distance from 0.6 to 3.0 miles, or you can walk the Burden Loop, which incorporates sections of all five loops, to complete a 3.4-mile circuit.

Each loop is marked with guideposts that direct visitors along a combination of paved surfaces, natural earth, wood-chipped paths and a raised boardwalk. More than 320 species of birds have been recorded in and around Burden, including a variety of resident and migratory songbirds, woodpeckers, raptors, shorebirds, waterfowl and wading birds. For the advanced birder, lists of rare and occasional sightings on the property can be obtained from the National Audubon Society or eBird websites. Below, we detail highlights of each birding loop, and we invite you to join us in experiencing all the natural wonders that this urban hotspot has to offer!

Windrush Loop

Winding through Windrush Gardens, the Windrush Loop (0.7 miles) features live oaks, crape myrtles, towering pines, azaleas and camellias intermingled amidst a sequence of ponds and oxbows of the original Ward’s Creek. Landscaping and statuary introduced by Steele Burden add both beauty and an anticipation of new discoveries as you wander the Windrush Loop. Early birders might catch wood ducks, herons and egrets in the ponds. Also, watch for warblers and woodpeckers in the pines, and during summer be sure to check for Carolina wrens and eastern towhees in the understory. In addition, see if you can find the “rock” pigeons that are hiding out on the trail!

You must access the Windrush Loop and this birding kiosk through the LSU Rural Life Museum. A small admission fee applies to Windrush Gardens, but an annual pass is a great bargain for repeat visitors. Also, be sure to check out the new bird feeding station near the south wall of the museum!

Garden Loop

Perfect for beginning birders, the Garden Loop (0.6 miles) winds through the Children’s Garden, Pollinator Garden and Rose Garden and includes a bird feeding station and a birding kiosk. Live oaks, pines, crape myrtles, sycamores, camellias and a variety of flowers create a diverse birding habitat along the Garden Loop. It’s a great place to see ruby-throated hummingbirds, northern cardinals, northern mockingbirds, blue jays, house wrens and Carolina chickadees at close range.

(Continued on page 5)
Dear Friends,

Ah, the long, hot days of summer are lingering as you read this message. My lush spring garden is waning, and I am looking forward to fall plantings and some cooler (we hope!) weather.

We have an exciting event coming soon as our Wine & Roses substitute because we cannot yet be together. Chair Missy Jones and her capable committee will hold a raffle of 20 fun-filled garden baskets featuring flowers and plants from our gardens, as well as donated gifts and much more for your enjoyment. You will be pleasantly surprised at the range of basket items! This will run from September to November, with the drawings in November. Connect with us through DiscoverBurden.com to join in! We will also be emailing the information to all our members. This event should fill our coffers so that we can continue to support the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden.

Our mission has always been the support of the Botanic Gardens through education, fundraising and volunteerism. We will continue to provide this support as well as we can during these unsettling times.

We cannot have a fall season without Corn Maze on each Saturday in October. Jeff Kuehny and his staff will host this event, with the Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden providing volunteer support. Be on the lookout for more information as October draws near!

What is Christmas without poinsettias? It’s time to add the holiday spirit to your home with poinsettias from the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. Choose from 50 beautiful varieties that have been developed by breeders worldwide. A limited number of each variety will be available, so don’t miss out on your favorite poinsettias. The Poinsettia Show and Sale will be November 28 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens.

I recently had the occasion to view the various Youtube videos about the Botanic Gardens, the trails through the Burden Woods and the history of Burden Museum & Gardens. For the history alone, I recommend you watch “Burden Museum & Gardens: A Family Gift,” which brings one through time to this point where we have these glorious gardens and outdoor spaces for all to enjoy!

I hope to see you around the gardens.

Mary Tharp
A Serendipitous Moment

Dr. Jeff Kuehny, Director

The more thoughtful your work is today, the greater your reward will be tomorrow. Almost 10 years ago we began in earnest to update and upgrade the landscape at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. One of those areas is what we call the “triangle.” This landscape bed is at the end of the live oak alley that you drive through when you arrive at Burden. This landscaped bed, which I believe Steele Burden planted, had become overgrown and some of the woody specimens had outlived their natural beauty. While renovating the triangle, we unearthed a piece of petrified wood with a brass plaque on it. The plaque reads: “This plot of ground shall be known forever as The John Gray Field in grateful memory of Dr. Gray’s pioneering research in soybeans. March 28, 1895 – October 25, 1966.” This was a very nice recognition for someone that Steele Burden must have truly admired for the work he did in soybean breeding at Burden. However, I could find no history on this John Gray among the files at Burden, so we returned the plaque to the area where it was discovered, and it now sits in front of the sugar kettle in the triangle.

Mary Jane sent me a copy of an article from LSU Outlook titled “Unusual Tribute to the Late Dr. John Gray.” The article explains that Dr. Gray was a professor at LSU from 1929 to 1966. When Dr. Gray arrived in Louisiana there were only 4,500 acres of soybeans planted in the state and through the breeding efforts of John Gray, soybeans ranked as one of the top revenue-producing crops in Louisiana. Most people in the 1920s didn’t even believe the crop could be grown profitably this far south. But Dr. Gray, “through the sweat in the fields and the tedium in the laboratory, proved them wrong.”

Mary Jane remembers growing up hearing about how proud the entire family was of Uncle John. Her grandfather Bill and great uncle John were two of the six children of Ollie and Maggie Gray, who homesteaded in the Oklahoma Territory as part of the Land Run of 1889. John was the “scholarly one” with a dream to improve the livelihoods of farmers.

My family was also part of the Oklahoma Land Run. The visit by Mary Jane and her connection and story of her great uncle — for whom we have a plaque in the gardens at Burden recognizing the work he did at the Burden property for LSU and Louisiana farmers — was yet another serendipitous moment. This testament to thoughtful actions over the years helps provide a deeper understanding of the history of the Burden property and how it continues to provide relevance and importance to LSU faculty, staff and students, our community and farmers across Louisiana.
Green Stick Workshop: Demystifying Growing Orchids in the Baton Rouge Area

Kathy Conerly, President Baton Rouge Orchid Society

Have you ever bought or received an orchid plant in bloom, just to throw it away after it flowered because you didn't know what to do with it? Have you successfully grown orchids, but they never flowered again? Have you looked longingly at the graceful blooms in the displays, just to pass them up because you've been told that orchids are difficult to grow? Fear not. The Baton Rouge Orchid Society is here to assist.

There are thousands of species and hybrids of orchids, and many grow well in our humid subtropical climate. Many can be grown indoors — at home or at work. Many flourish outside from spring to fall. The key to successful culture and bloom, with any plant, is to match the type of orchids to your growing environment. Light, temperature, media, fertilization and even the type of container determine the success of ornamental plants, including orchids. Just like other plants, each type of orchid has its preferences. What are those preferences?

Four members of the Baton Rouge Orchid Society agreed to share some of their growing tips at a recent Green Stick workshop. Here is a synopsis of their presentations.

Phalaenopsis — Hal Canning

*Phalaenopsis*, or “phals,” as they are commonly called, come in a variety of colors and patterns. They are known for being easy to grow indoors because they take some of the least amount of light to flourish and bloom in the home or office environment. An east-facing windowsill is a perfect environment, with filtered light and no direct sun. Temperatures should stay in the range of 60 to 85 degrees. The potting medium varies but the medium should be allowed to nearly dry out before watering. Test it by digging a finger into the media. Always water this beauty early in the day so that water doesn't accumulate in the top or crown of the plant. Most plants die because of overwatering and crown rot. Phals should be fertilized at one-quarter the strength of a complete fertilizer like 30-10-10 weekly during the growing season. Follow these guidelines and you’ll have lovely, long-lasting flower spikes all winter.

Dendrobium — Wesley Matthews

The most common *Dendrobium* found locally is the *Phalaenopsis* type, and it does well here. “Dens” need much more light than phals do, so place them in a lightly shaded south window or an east or west one. Again, do not give them direct sun, but provide very bright light. They grow best in 55 to 75 degrees, but many will stand higher temperatures. As a rule, *Dendrobiums* are grown in pots much smaller in proportion to their size. Using a larger pot may slow growth and prevent flowering. They prefer a well-drained media. They also prefer to nearly dry out between watering periods. Consequently, you may have to water dens more often than many other types of orchids. They do better when provided extra humidity and air circulation. That makes them easy to grow outdoors in dappled shade. *Dendrobiums* like to be fertilized with a complete fertilizer, like 20-20-20, at one-quarter strength weekly during the growing period. These graceful flower spikes can bloom two to three times a year for months at a time with the right care.

Vanda — Frank Zachariah

Plants in the *Vanda* genus are often bought in hanging containers or baskets, with their roots growing long and exposed. These beauties do well in a brightly lit window, similar to *Dendrobiums*, or under light shade outside from March to October. They grow best when their roots are allowed to dry out just a bit. It is very important to maintain high humidity and air flow both inside and out. Inside, *Vandas* must be watered or misted often, possibly even daily. Indoors, set them on a tray of pebbles partially filled with water to increase humidity and a fan to provide air movement. Outside, or in a greenhouse, the watering interval may be extended by a day or so as long as the humidity is 80%. They can tolerate temperatures from 55 to 95 degrees. *Vandas* prefer a weekly application of 20-20-20 fertilizer applied at full strength during the growing season.
Plants do not need to be repotted often, unless the media breaks down. Use a coarse fir bark and charcoal when it is needed, and your Vandas will thrive and bloom each year.

**Cattleya — Glen Gawarecki**

*Cattleyas* are grown for their many different colors, shapes, sizes and fragrances. They are usually found locally at the garden centers of big box stores as “bag babies” — seedlings a year or so from flowering. Their thickened stems, called pseudobulbs, are modified to store water. They prefer to grow in temperatures of 55 to 85 degrees but can tolerate lower temperatures for a short time and higher temperatures if air flow is increased. They also prefer bright light and do better when exposed to at least four to six hours of it. Inside, place plants in a lightly shaded south-facing window or in an east window with no direct sun to burn the leaves. Outside, they thrive in dappled light with about 50% shade and no direct sun. If the leaves are medium green and the pseudobulbs are upright, the light is sufficient. *Cattleyas* prefer to have their roots dry out between watering. Excessive watering can result in root rot. They like a well-drained airy mix and can be grown in netted pots, clay orchid pots or plastic pots. The interval between watering will depend on the type of pot, size of pot relative to the plant's size, temperature, air flow and type of media. The looser the mix and more open the pot, the happier the plant. However, more water is needed. Outside, plants flourish as mounts on bark and in very airy mixes, like three-quarters packing peanuts and one-quarter loose mix, or like cypress mulch and trimix (fir bark, charcoal, perlite). These long-lasting flowers come once or twice a year but are well worth the effort!

For more information on these and other types of orchids, join discussions on the Baton Rouge Orchid Society Facebook page. Email Info@BatonRougeOrchidSociety.org to join BROS or ask questions. See articles from the American Orchid Society on a variety of topics at www.aos.org.

*Birding at Burden*

(Continued from page 1)

**Trees and Trails Loop**

The forested Trees and Trails Loop (3.0 miles) includes the Mosaic Boardwalk at Black Swamp, Barton Arboretum and its pond, and a birder’s secret destination, the Burden brush pile! At Black Swamp, watch for prothonotary warblers in summer and yellow-rumped warblers in winter. Listen carefully for the call of red-shouldered hawks and the drumming of up to seven species of woodpeckers. The brush pile is active year-round but attracts a variety of migratory sparrows in winter.

**Grassland Loop**

Native grasslands, oak-lined roads and newly planted pines and hardwoods make the Grassland Loop (1.3 miles) the perfect habitat for insectivores, including Mississippi kites, loggerhead shrikes, eastern kingbirds, eastern bluebirds and blue-gray gnatcatchers. Catch multiple species of migrating sparrows and American pipits on this loop each winter. And when the sparrows arrive, you just might see a northern harrier on the prowl!

**AgCenter Loop**

Bird abundance on the AgCenter Loop (1.4 miles) is, at times, simply amazing! Watch for mourning doves, killdeer, Canada geese and cattle egrets on the plowed fields and for sandpipers and other shorebirds when the fields turn muddy. Also, be on the lookout for eastern bluebirds, mourning doves, northern mockingbirds, blue jays and orioles in the orchards. You’ll find buntings in summer and migrating sparrows in winter at the wood chip pile and neighboring forest perimeter. Also, be sure to check out the high line — you might see a red-tailed hawk on one of the poles. Consider wearing boots if you plan to hike the AgCenter loop, as portions are located off the paved road and wood-chipped paths.

**Burden Loop**

Combine your passions for birding fun and fitness on this 3-plus mile trail around the property, visiting each of the ecoregions described above. Better yet, bring a friend for a socially distanced birding experience at Burden. Keep an eye on the sky for multiple bird species that regularly overfly the property. If you are feeling bold, take small excursions off the main trail. You never know what new plants and animals you’ll find as you explore!

The Birding at Burden trail system can be accessed through the Ione Burden Conference Center or the LSU Rural Life Museum. Parking and restrooms are available at both locations, along with information kiosks, brochures with maps upon request and a log of recent observations. Bring along binoculars if you have them, but if you don’t have a pair, there are plenty of birds you can see at close range without them. For more information, visit our website at https://www.lsu.edu/botanic-gardens/research/birding.php. Consider sharing your experience with us on the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens social media pages. We’d love to hear about your adventures!
From the Ground Up to the Tree Tops

Introducing Burden’s Arborist on the Rise

Long time arborist Glen Wilson is retiring after many years of tending the urban forest known as Burden Woods. While we will miss Glen, we are fortunate to have D’Michael Lucas to carry on the important work of maintaining and enhancing this precious resource at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. Some of you may have met D’Michael on the trails in his earliest days at Burden. For those who may not venture as deep into the landscape, here is a bit about D’Michael in his own words:

Hi, my name is D’Michael Lucas. I am a 25-year-old graduate from Southern University and A&M College who grew up in the small town of New Roads in Pointe Coupee Parish. I majored in urban forestry to further my education toward becoming an arborist. During my time in college, I had several conversations with my adviser about my future and took an arboriculture class that he taught. It really piqued my interest in becoming an arborist. I started by going to a national conference with the MANRRS organization in North Carolina and met a recruiter from a tree company called Davey Tree. Davey Tree gave me my first summer internship in Chicago, Illinois.

After the internship I received the Davey Tree scholarship. That positive first impression and developing a relationship with the recruiter then led me to another internship closer to home in Houston, Texas. After that summer internship I was near graduation, which was followed by a job with a small tree company named Bofingers. It was through that experience and the help of a friend of mine that I made my way to Burden.

I have worked with LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden for almost a year now and the experience has been amazing. I am learning more and more every day. I am responsible for maintaining and developing the Burden trails and the forest. My plan for the trails is to develop the forest by planting more trees to keep the trails aesthetically pleasing for the public because it is a nature experience for most people. The forest had some serious damage from a hurricane years ago, so now it is in its developing stage. By having Arbor Day tree planting activities every year, the reforesting process has been advancing.

As John Hough says, “What a pleasure it is to volunteer with Trail Masters when this young man is leading the way!” Come join the fun and enjoy the natural beauty on the trails of Burden Woods thanks to our new arborist, D’Michael Lucas.

We would like to welcome D’Michael Lucas, the new assistant arborist at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. D’Michael is a graduate from the Southern University Urban Forestry program and previously worked for Bofingers Tree Service in Baton Rouge.

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Meet Our Summer Interns

The LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden was very fortunate to have Dr. Jeffrey Beasley, assistant professor in the LSU College of Agriculture, help provide funding and resources to support a summer internship program. We received many good applications, and five outstanding students with different backgrounds and areas of study were selected. The students worked with the Botanic Gardens staff in different parts of the Botanic Gardens throughout the summer. This exposure helped them learn about research and education as well as the importance of public engagement. Meet each one of the students and learn about their experience below:

Carina Etgen is a sophomore studying agricultural and extension education. Carina worked on two projects: an irrigation study with coleus plants and rose trial programs in the Rose Garden. Although Carina enjoys research, she admits that the internship has taught her that she prefers the indoor laboratory to the outdoor laboratory.

Carlos X Torres de Janon is working on his master’s degree in landscape architecture. It was Carlos’ desire to gain real world experience in landscape maintenance so that he would better understand how to design a sustainable landscape. Using what he learned, Carlos redesigned part of the landscape at the LSU AgCenter LaHouse Home and Landscape Resource Center on the LSU campus. His favorite quote is from Bill Nye “The Science Guy,” who said, “Everyone that you will ever meet knows something you don’t.”

Jacob Quigley is a senior in the LSU School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences. His interest is in soil science, and his project involved determining the amount of pesticide runoff that can occur from home lawns with different percentages of grass coverage. Jacob and Carlos especially enjoyed learning to use heavy equipment, such as the tractors and skid steers, while assisting with resurfacing the trails in the Burden Woods. One of their favorites places to work, however, was in Windrush Gardens.

William Gaspard is a senior studying agricultural and extension education. William worked with Becky White and Sarah Rayner developing a new educational program called Burden Buddies. This program is part of a partnership with the Junior League of Baton Rouge that will be used in the family activity center at Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Hospital. William also worked with the other interns to develop “how to” extension videos. William will continue working with Becky and Sarah on the Burden Buddies program this fall.

Elizabeth Sicard will be graduating with a bachelor’s degree in natural resources ecology and management. Elizabeth has worked on research projects in Antarctica and South Africa. She assisted Dr. Beasley and the student interns on three different research projects. Upon graduating she plans to work for the National Parks Service as a forest ranger and ecologist. She also plays the clarinet in the Golden Band from Tigerland, officially known as the LSU Tiger Marching Band, so keep an eye out for her at halftime of football games.
Wine and Roses: A Remote Raffle Affair

We have added a special twist to the annual Wine and Roses fundraiser — a virtual raffle. The Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden have designed 20 themed baskets. Each basket has two wine glasses, a bottle of wine and a bouquet of roses. In addition, each basket will include a variety of items to go with its theme, such as a birding basket, Louisiana artist basket, a picnic at Burden basket and a wellness basket, just to name a few. You can purchase raffle tickets by visiting the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens website, lsuagcenter.com/botanicgardens. The website includes a photo and a description of each basket. Ticket prices start at $25 for one ticket, 15 for $200 and 30 for $300. Don't miss this opportunity to sit back, sip some wine and support the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens.

Guided Birding at Burden Basket

Family Photography Basket: Featuring Kaela Rodehorst

LSU AgCenter Poinsettia Basket

Bleed Purple and Gold Basket
Book Lover’s Basket

Culinary Creator Basket

Art Collector’s Dream: Robert Rucker
Watercolor Painting
POINSETTIA
Show & Sale

November 28 | 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens

What is Christmas without poinsettias! Time to add the holiday spirit to your home with poinsettias from the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden. Choose from 50 beautiful varieties that have been developed by breeders worldwide. A limited number of each variety will be available, so don’t miss out on your favorite poinsettias.

Corn Maze 2020
Harvest Some Happiness

The annual Corn Maze has been reimagined for guests to “harvest some happiness” in the fields at the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden every Saturday in October. For your safety and ease of access to the maze, the required advance-purchase tickets are available online at https://bontempstix.com. Participants must purchase tickets in advance for two-hour sessions beginning at 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. each Saturday.

Upon entry to the maze you can become king of the hay mountain and then buzz through the maze like a bee to the sunflower fields. Visit the antique tractors before you test your ability to make it through the hay bale obstacle course. Harvest more happiness from the pumpkin patch by selecting the perfect pumpkin to take home and decorate. Then go on a rock hunt to find a curious creature to take home. Take a hayride to the orchard to pick satsumas and then visit Sweetie the alpaca, Boston the potbellied pig and all the farm animals at the Bayou Goula Farm petting zoo. Picnic on the treats from local food vendors under the shade of the pecan grove while you rest up for your journey home.
EVERY SATURDAY IN OCTOBER
Advanced tickets required for scheduled two-hour experiences.
Available at BonTempStix.com

Morning
10 a.m.-Noon

Midday
12:30-2:30 p.m.

Afternoon
3-5 p.m.

LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens
Due to COVID-19 and state mandate, masks must be worn in any area where social distancing is not possible.

Harvest some happiness!
Take a crazy, lazy stroll through the corn maze. Pick-a-Pumpkin in the Pumpkin Patch. Join the Rock Rascal Rock Hunt. Climb Hay Mountain. Take a hayride. Pick satsumas. Soak up some sunshine in the sunflower field. Feed the farm animals and more.
**Please check our website for up-to-date information on these events.**

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<td><strong>Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31</strong></td>
<td>10 a.m.-Noon; 12:30-2:30 p.m.; 3-5 p.m. <strong>Corn Maze at Burden</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 3</td>
<td>8 a.m.- 5 p.m. <strong>Harvest Days at LSU Rural Life Museum</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>Noon-1 p.m. <strong>Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens at Burden</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td>5:30-7:00 p.m. <strong>Forest Bathing in the Burden Woods</strong></td>
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<td>Oct. 25</td>
<td>3-6 p.m. <strong>Haints, Haunts, and Halloween</strong></td>
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<td>Noon-1 p.m. <strong>Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens</strong></td>
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<td>Nov. 6 Nov. 7</td>
<td>4:00-5:30 p.m. 7:00-8:30 a.m. <strong>Forest Bathing in the Burden Woods</strong></td>
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<td>Nov. 14</td>
<td>8 a.m.-Noon <strong>Greenstick Workshop</strong></td>
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<td>Nov. 28</td>
<td>8 a.m.-2:00 p.m. <strong>Poinsettia Show and Sale</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 4 Dec. 5</td>
<td>4:00-5:30 p.m. 7:00-8:30 a.m. <strong>Forest Bathing in the Burden Woods</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 6</td>
<td>10 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. <strong>LSU Rural Life Christmas</strong></td>
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<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>Noon-1 p.m. <strong>Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens</strong></td>
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<td>Dec. 24, 25; Jan. 1</td>
<td>Closed <strong>Burden Museum &amp; Gardens Holidays</strong></td>
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<td>Jan. 4</td>
<td>Noon-1 p.m. <strong>Friends of LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens</strong></td>
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<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td>9 a.m.-1 p.m. <strong>Arbor Day at Burden</strong></td>
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