



Chair Website – <http://EllisonChair.tamu.edu>

Introductory Comments

In this issue, our principal focus will be on Next Steps for the Chair, including my plans and the search for my successor. Additionally, we will provide an update on ongoing activities including entry-level worker training tools and

internships/experiential learning. Recent events involving Chair participation will also be covered. **Dr. Don Wilkerson**, our Extension State Floriculturist, will be highlighted in this issue.

Chair Activities and Progress

Since our last issue, I have participated in three major floricultural events. The **OFA Short Course**, held on July 8-11 in Columbus, Ohio, was once again a major success with broad national and international participation. OFA leaders are to be commended for continually improving each year this already superb event. The **Southwest Greenhouse Growers Conference** was held in Tyler, Texas on July 26-27. Tours were held on July 26 of several leading greenhouse and nursery operations in the area. Presentations on July 27 focused on subjects of high interest to the audience of 150+ producers. Dr. Don Wilkerson (highlighted herein) served as moderator for this event. Cherokee County, near Tyler, has the highest concentration of greenhouse/nursery production of any county in the nation. On August 18-20, the **Texas Nursery and Landscape Association (TNLA) EXPO** was held in San Antonio, Texas. This is a major TNLA event each year and features a very large

trade show along with many other pertinent associated meetings.

Good progress is being made on development of materials (CD and other media) that will be most useful for entry-level greenhouse worker training. There will be both Spanish and English versions of the materials. **Jack Weatherford**, President of Weatherford Farms and Greenhouse near Houston, Texas and a permanent member of our Chair Advisory Committee, has an active leadership role in this effort.

We also have a significant effort underway focusing on student internships and experiential learning in our Department of Horticultural Sciences. The high value of and great need for experiential learning is most evident and becoming more so each day. We held an internship workshop for employers this past March. We are endeavoring to strengthen our

already-strong internship program and provide other approaches to experiential learning including undergraduate research experiences, study abroad, and others. We hope to involve all of our students in some form of experiential learning and have broad statewide faculty participation.

Other areas of continuing focus include increased federal and industry funding for floriculture research and outreach programs, developing a Southwest Center of Excellence, and marketing the Department and the Chair.

Next Steps for the Chair

As indicated in our first newsletter in April 2005, my role as Inaugural Chairholder was to serve as an architect for the Chair, bringing academic and industry players together, working toward common goals to best meet industry and consumer needs. The top priority was to develop a model and vision/strategic plan for the Chair.

The Vision/Strategic Plan has been developed and put in place and early implementation is underway. The condensed Executive Summary of this document was presented in our last newsletter (June/July 2006). At this point, I believe it is time for us to move forward aggressively to hire the best possible person to be the Chairholder on a more permanent basis. Thus, I have announced my intention to retire from the Chair at the end of the year. I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve as the Inaugural Chairholder and hopefully I have made valuable contributions as the architect for the position, setting the stage appropriately for my successor to be highly successful. I will continue to move forward to address key activities and needs as identified earlier here, so that we do not lose momentum in the transition, and will work to assure a smooth transition to my successor.

A Search Committee is moving forward with 'deliberate haste' to identify our next Chairholder. The Position Description follows.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Professor and Ellison Endowed Chair in International Floriculture Department of Horticultural Sciences College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Texas A&M University

The Department of Horticultural Sciences at Texas A&M University announces the position of Professor and Ellison Endowed Chair in International Floriculture. The Chairholder is expected to provide critical leadership in floriculture and related areas exhibiting a level of academic excellence consistent with the expectations for endowed chairs at Texas A&M University. Funding from the Endowment can be used at the discretion of the Chairholder.

Background

The Department of Horticultural Sciences at Texas A&M University has several faculty in the area of floriculture and greenhouse crops on the College Station campus, as well as at several off-campus Research and Extension Centers across the state. Faculty in the Departments of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Microbiology, Biological and Agricultural Engineering, Soil and Crop Sciences, and Agricultural Economics are also engaged in floriculture-related programs. Texas ranks third nationally in the production and utilization of ornamental plants. The state's green industry trails only the animal industries in total agricultural value. Furthermore, the green industry is the fastest growing segment of Texas agriculture and is one of the state's largest employers.

Mission and Vision for Chair

The *Mission* of this Chair is to advance the health and vitality of the floriculture industry, on a national and international scope, through exemplary academic leadership, cutting edge applied research, innovative extension outreach programs, and by mentoring well-educated, impassioned leaders to support the future of floriculture. Our

Vision is to be, in five years, the premier floriculture program (Horticultural Sciences – TAMUS), as recognized by our peers and the industry we serve.

The role of the Chair should encompass the following and the Chairholder should:

1. Be an individual who has sufficient breadth and expertise in bringing faculty together working toward common goals, capturing synergy for the enhancement of the total program.
2. Be an individual who can facilitate strong, unified team efforts to obtain significantly increased sustainable program funding from all appropriate sources, including internal (state and federal) and external (grants and contracts from industry, state and federal agencies, and private endowments).
3. Be an individual who can work effectively with university leaders, industry leaders, fellow faculty members on a multidisciplinary basis, as well as state and national governmental leaders, determining priorities and acquiring funds necessary to address issues critical to the “green” industry.
4. Be an individual of sufficient national and international stature to bring high recognition to the TAMU floriculture program.
5. Be an individual who enjoys working with undergraduate and graduate students and is an effective teacher and mentor.
6. Be an effective communicator with all groups.
7. Have the ability to facilitate strong programs in one or more of the currently identified programmatic areas of emphasis including:
 - efficient production systems
 - environmental sustainability with focus on water
 - industry leadership development
 - marketing

Qualifications

Applicants must have a doctorate in horticulture or closely allied field of study. Interested applicants must clearly exhibit a strong history of leadership, collaboration, communication and creativity.

Application Submissions

Applications and/or requests for additional information should be submitted to:

David H. Byrne or Sam Cotner, Co-Chairs - Search Advisory Committee
Department of Horticultural Sciences
202 Horticulture/Forest Science Building
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas 77843-2133
d-byrne@tamu.edu 979-862-3072
s-cotner@tamu.edu 979-458-1510

Applications should include an application letter of no more than two pages, current vitae and the names and contact information for five references with at least two from the floriculture and greenhouse crops industries.

Review of applications will begin November 1, 2006 and continue until a qualified candidate is identified. The position is available January 1, 2007.

Floriculture Faculty Highlights

Our featured faculty member for this issue is **Dr. Don Wilkerson**, State Floriculturist with Texas Cooperative Extension, based here in College Station.



Don Wilkerson (left) receiving the prestigious TNLA Arp Award from Eddy Edmondson, TNLA President

In this role, he is often asked “just what is it you do?” Often Extension programs, events and activities operate under the radar. However, the GREEN industry is fortunate to have an excellent team of Extension Specialists supporting their efforts. Following is a brief description of some of the activities Don has been involved in this past year. They are listed on the basis of those key issues identified in the Strategic Plan for the Ellison Chair in International Floriculture.

Strategic Planning

Principal author of the TAMU-Horticulture/TNLA Strategic Partnership Plan which identifies strategies for addressing key GREEN Industry issues.

Also assisted in developing the strategic plans for the TAMU Department of Horticultural Sciences, TCE-Horticulture and the Ellison Chair in International Floriculture.

Education

Co-coordinator and educational partner for the Texas Master Certified Nursery Professional program, as well as the TCNP program.

Co-coordinator and educational partner for the TNLA Pre-EXPO Educational Seminar. This year’s program in San Antonio was attended by approximately 450 participants.

Co-coordinator and educational partner for the Southwest Greenhouse Growers Conference. This year’s program in Tyler was attended by approximately 150 participants.

Developed a series of six on-line training modules for commercial landscape professionals. Also developed a CD which provides an educational overview of floriculture crop production in Texas.

Developed a series of three on-line training modules focusing on environmental stewardship and the urban landscape. For more information see <http://earthkind.tamu.edu> .

Assisted in planning and participated in the Internship Workshop hosted by the Ellison Chair in International Floriculture.

Water & Water Conservation

Recently completed the first-ever survey to quantify the total volume of water used by Texas container nursery crop producers. This study also evaluated the state of water conservation and potential BMPs for increased savings. This project was funded through the Texas Water Development Board.

Educational partner and Co-PI for the Texas Urban Landscape Guide. This is a joint project which includes the Texas Water Development Board, TNLA and TCE. The Urban Landscape Guide will assist in providing educational information on water conservation in the urban landscape.

Currently coordinate Texas Cooperative Extension's statewide Earth Kind program which focuses on environmental stewardship and the urban landscape. This includes developing a web site, a series of 13 publications, on-line training modules and a monthly newsletter. For more information see <http://earthkind.tamu.edu> .

Marketing

Revised and updated the Earth Kind Rose web site to include press releases and write-ups on the 13 Earth Kind Rose selections. For more information see <http://earthkindroses.tamu.edu> .

Revised and updated the statewide TCE-Horticulture web site.

Assisted in developing marketing and promotional information for the TAMU-Horticulture teaching program. This includes posters, brochures, flyers and informational DVDs.

Other

Don has the opportunity to work with growers, wholesale suppliers, manufacturers, retailers and buyers on a day-to-day basis.

He also provides leadership for the TAMU Horticultural Gardens. This 20 acre, student managed and maintained facility provides unique hands-on experiences that greatly contribute to the "job-readiness" of these hard working students.

Upcoming Events

The second Lecture in our Distinguished Lecture Series on International Floriculture will be presented by **Ernesto Vélez Koppel** on October 11 at 3:00 p.m. on the Texas A&M University campus in College Station, Texas in the Horticulture/Forest Science Building. A reception will be held at 2:30 p.m. in the Horticulture/Forest Science Building atrium.

Ernesto is Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Association of Colombian Flower Growers and Exporters (ASOCOLFLORES) and a member of the Ellison Chair Advisory Committee. This Lecture is sponsored by the Ellison Chair in International Floriculture in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at Texas A&M University. Ernesto's presentation is entitled *FLORICULTURE IN COLOMBIA – A case of competitive entrepreneurship with social and environmental responsibility, in a country with difficult and changing conditions.*

Our Fall, 2006 **Ellison Chair Advisory Committee Meeting** will be held in College Station on October 12. This highly committed group of industry leaders is a major asset for the Chair.

Mission of the Ellison Chair

The mission of this Chair is to advance the health and vitality of the floriculture industry, on a national and international scope, through exemplary academic leadership, cutting-edge

applied research, innovative extension outreach programs, and by mentoring well-educated, impassioned leaders to support the future of floriculture.

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