



# SFA GARDENS

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

**AUGUST 2023**

Dear friends,

SFA Gardens, which spans 138 acres on the beautiful Stephen F. Austin State University campus, is home to a nationally recognized collection of diverse plants and materials. Established in 1985, SFA Gardens' legacy has been one of growth and adventure and has become a hub for educational and recreational opportunities for students, faculty, staff and community members.

We've maintained a great team — perhaps the best ever — to tend to the gardens. Maintenance in the gardens is up, and our trialing garden is showcasing all kinds of interesting plants for the future. However, evaluating herbaceous and woody plants remains our mantra, and that won't change.

The Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden has a fresh layer of mulch and will be ready for the color show this fall. The Pineywoods Native Plant Center's landscape is getting a much-needed update, and Hinds Park boasts a first-class muscadine collection. As for our projects, SFA Gardens' fruit work has expanded to include other alternative fruit opportunities like pineapple guava, oriental persimmon and jujube. We've also experienced success with kiwifruit — a first in Texas — which resulted in the first commercial plantings in the state. After seven years, we continue with an exciting project at Moody Gardens with plantings focused on finding, evaluating and promoting climate-resilient plants. We also have a new project geared toward finding new trees and shrubs for changing East Texas climates. While the future of SFA Gardens holds new and continued challenges, we will continue to be a unique garden in a special part of the piney woods.

While we are glad to move forward from the challenges of the past three years, there's no doubt we've lost some steam. COVID-19 slammed the door shut on the gardens in March 2020, which led to a reduction in income due to canceled plant sales and events. A downsized staff and a reduction of state salaries, operations and funding have also proved challenging. Additionally, we experienced drastic climate events, including record heat, drought, early and late freezes, and a record flood on May 11 that inundated Starr Avenue — something we've never seen before.

Despite these challenges, we are thrilled about SFA's affiliation with The University of Texas System and are pushing forward with new staff appointments and hope for new funding opportunities. We've also received a wonderful outpouring of support from the community of garden lovers in East Texas and beyond. The future for SFA Gardens is bright.

We are pleased to see an increase in visitation and will continue to serve our community. We encourage you to join SFA Gardens as a 2023-24 member. Your membership and support are vital to the health and well-being of the gardens. As a member, you will receive the benefits listed in the enclosed flyer and help support this wonderful garden adventure. Come grow with us, and let's keep planting!

**Sincerely,**

**John F. Anderson**  
*President*  
*SFA Gardens Advisory Board*

**Dr. David Creech**  
*Director*  
*SFA Gardens*



# Help grow the **SFA Gardens!**

## 2023-24 MEMBERSHIP FORM (Check one)

**\$25 Current SFA Faculty and Staff Membership:** Members receive the newsletter and two garden seminar discounts (use your SFA email when signing up.)

**\$50 Individual:** Members receive the newsletter and garden seminar discounts.

**\$100 Family:** Members receive the newsletter and garden seminar discounts for two members within household.

**\$250 Supporting Member:** Members receive the newsletter, garden seminar discounts, and admission to members-only fall and spring plant sale previews.

**\$500 Friend:** Members receive the newsletter, garden seminar discounts, admission to members-only fall and spring plant sale previews, and a behind-the-scenes tour of the nursery facility.

**\$1,500 Sponsor:** Members receive the newsletter, garden seminar discounts, admission to members-only fall and spring plant sale previews, a behind-the-scenes tour of the nursery facility, and a rare connoisseur plant of your choice from our inventory.

**\$2,500 Patron:** Members receive the newsletter, garden seminar discounts, admission to members-only fall and spring plant sale previews, a behind-the-scenes tour of the nursery facility, a rare connoisseur plant of your choice from our inventory, and an invitation to VIP events hosted by SFA Gardens.

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If you would like to give another amount, visit [sfasu.edu/sfagardens](https://sfasu.edu/sfagardens) and select the "Give" option under the "Support" tab.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## METHOD OF PAYMENT:

**Check:** Payable to SFASU

Return form with check to: SFA Gardens Membership P.O. Box 13000, SFA Station  
Nacogdoches, TX 75962

**Credit Card:** Visit [sfasu.edu/sfagardens](https://sfasu.edu/sfagardens) and select the "SFA Gardens Store" option under the "About" tab.