

## UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE ARBORETUM

Oak Ridge, TN USDA Hardiness Zone 7a–6b

The UT Arboretum Society Holly Task Force continues to focus on care and maintenance of the existing Elmore Holly Collection with potential plans for expansion of the footprint in the future.

The winter of 2015 produced several snows and freezing rain events in January and February. The Arboretum was closed to visitors for several days due to official University of Tennessee Administration Closings associated with unsafe driving conditions. Unsafe foot travel and parking conditions contributed to the extended closing of the Arboretum for several days over this time as a result of extremely icy conditions. Although a wet spring supported plant growth at the Arboretum, it hampered construction activity on the new auditorium project. Normal summer rainfall, and above average wet fall conditions were noted for the Arboretum and surrounding geographical area.

The UT Arboretum Auditorium construction project was completed in August despite the winter/spring weather. The auditorium features nearly 2,000 square feet of open floor space, with a massive stone fireplace, and large Douglas fir roof beams, giving it a rustic park-like lodge ambiance. The building also has a small kitchen, restroom facilities, and an outdoor porch area. Electricity, wireless communications, whiteboard/projection screen, and parking accommodations for approximately 55 cars are available for meetings at the site.

The new building was introduced to the public and community through an Open House on September 22, and an Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce breakfast networking event on October 6, 2015. The building has since been used for several UT Institute of Agriculture internal meetings, UT Arboretum Society (UTAS) events, and for private rentals. Future programming for the building will be focused on research meetings and training events, UTAS event programming, community outreach, landscape demonstration plantings (which will include Holly specimens), UT Arboretum Society membership development, and revenue generating events for the UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center.

The Holly Task Force met on October, 10, 2015, for its annual Fall Holly Work Day providing opportunity for volunteers to plant 13 new holly cultivars. Hollies that were brought back from the Holly Society of America 2014 Annual Meeting at Rutgers and others donated by Vivian Abney East Fork Nursery were repotted last fall and overwintered in the arboretum greenhouse.

The work day, usually on the Saturday following the Annual Meeting, was scheduled earlier in the fall since the customary November date has proven to be too uncomfortable for outdoor activities. Although the Friday and Saturday rain was welcome, it dampened the number of volunteers available for the work day. However, thanks to Norm and Lee Ann Dobbs, Lucie Jones, Jim Mee, Fran Scheidt, Dennis and Jan Superczynski, Dr. Will Witte, and Arboretum Director Kevin Hoyt all the designated hollies were planted, mulched, and protected with deer fencing. Before the work day the Holly Task Force met with Director Hoyt to position plant locations where holes were subsequently augured by the arboretum staff before the work day. This helped tremendously to lessen the planting task and meet all objectives for our annual fall planting and maintenance of the Elmore Holly Collection.

Following the work day, a special celebration by the Oak Ridge Garden Club was held in the Elmore Holly Collection to recognize Sarah Aldridge, a longtime member of the Oak Ridge Garden Club. Sarah was recognized for her countless hours of dedication to the Oak Ridge community as four time President of the Oak Ridge Garden Club, a judge in wildflower competitions, and for decorating the entrance lobby of Oak Ridge Museum of Science and Energy. An *Ilex × attenuata* ‘Blazer’ holly was planted in the Elmore Holly Collection to honor Sarah for her years of service to the community. ‘Blazer’, acquired from Beaver Creek Nursery, is a female holly displaying bright red berries against its glossy dark green leaves. Director Kevin Hoyt, Holly Task Force members, family members, and friends, 36 in all, joined the celebration followed by a reception in the arboretum office.

On November 12, 2015, The Holly Task Force invited The Gardener’s Forum, a Knoxville group of men & women with the interest in gardening, conservation, beautification, and plant life to visit and explore the Elmore Holly Collection. Dr. Witte led the nine participants explaining the history and significance of the collection. The session concluded with planting *I. opaca* (American Holly) ‘Princeton Gold’ a female holly with dark green spiny leaves and vivid golden yellow berries that persist into the winter. This Holly was donated to the Elmore Holly Collection by Pleasant Run Nursery in Allentown, PA at the 2014 Holly Society Meeting at Rutgers University. You can’t miss it driving on the road to the Arboretum shelter on the left just as you pass the entrance to the holly collection.

The Task Force continues to focus on the following long-term goals:

- Replacing, moving and adding holly collection markers and labels to selected specimens, which may include enlarging and combining specimens into expanded mulched perimeter areas
- Securing funding to redesign and reprint the Elmore Holly Collection brochure
- Building a trail extension through the American Holly Collection from the Heath Cove Trail to the main access road with natural mulch materials
- Completing an onsite re-inspection and inventory of the collection, focusing on plant vigor, signage, labeling, spacing requirements, rouging out dead plants, and more
- Securing funding for the completion of the Harold Elmore Holly Collection stone entrance

Members of the Holly Task Force, a support team for the University of Tennessee Arboretum Society: Dennis Superczynski, Leader and Jan Superczynski; Carmen and Josie Gianforte; Fran Scheidt; Mike Stansberry; Dr. Will Witte.

The UT Arboretum Society and the UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center will continue to place an emphasis on outreach, programming and membership development during 2016. For more information on our programs and collections please visit the Arboretum webpage (<http://utarboretum.tennessee.edu/index.html>). For more information about the UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center please visit (<http://forestry.tennessee.edu/>).

Dennis Superczynski, UT Holly Task Force Chair

Kevin P. Hoyt, Director, Director, UT Forest Resources AgResearch and Education Center