

**1B-Arthur-2020-12**

## **Year 2020 Summary -The International Plant Propagators' Society-Southern Region of North America - (SRNA) Virtual Meetings<sup>©</sup>**

Brie Arthur

Brie Grows, B.A. Communications

7624 Troy Stone Drive, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526, USA

Email: [brienne.gluvna@gmail.com](mailto:brienne.gluvna@gmail.com)

*Keywords:* Annual Meeting, CoVid-19, North American Virtual Summit (NAVS), Southern Region of North America (SRNA), Parkerson Virtual Student Research Competition

### **SUMMARY**

Due to the pandemic, there was no annual meeting in 2020 of the IPPS- Southern Region of North America (SRNA). In place of the annual meeting, the SRNA successfully led, planned and executed the 3-day North American Virtual Summit (NAVS) during Oct 27-29, 2020. There was a total of a total of 947 attendees. There were three virtual presentations given by Drs. David Creech, Dennis Werner and Mike Dirr - as well as virtual nursery tours. Nine students competed in the Charlie Parkerson Virtual Student Research Competition. Three students delivered 20-min presentations and the remaining six students gave shorter, “oral poster “presentations. The SRNA remains in good financial condition thanks to the conscientious management of Sec-Tres, Donna Foster. Dr. Gary Knox received the Meadows Award and Dr. Dave Creech was recognized as a Fellow. The SRNA currently plans to hold the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting on Oct 23-26, 2021 in Mobile, Alabama.

### **PRESIDENT BRIE ARTHUR**

Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic there was no 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the IPPS- SRNA). At the June 2020 mid-year EC Board meeting - the difficult decision was made to cancel the 2020 annual meeting, planned for Tulsa. It also made sense to retain the same EC board and all committee assignments through 2021, since there was no annual meeting (Fig. 1).



Figure 1. President Brie Arthur (left) with Past-President Elliott Hallum (right).

### **NORTH AMERICAN VIRTUAL SUMMIT (NAVS)**

In place of the annual meeting, the SRNA successfully led, planned, and executed the 3-day North American Virtual Summit (NAVS) during Oct 27-29, 2020. Key players in organizing the Southern Region NAVS were SRNA President - Brie Arthur, Dr. Cheryl Boyer (hosted the Zoom conferencing from Kansas State University), Laura Barth (SR digital communications manager), Donna Foster (Sec-Tres) and Bobby Green, first Vice President. The NAVS committee included members from the Eastern and Western Regions, which also had their 2020 annual conferences cancelled. The format was 3 half-day virtual sessions, with each region scheduling their own programs, including educational speakers and nursery tours. There was great effort that went into the logistics and execution of the NAVS – which was a new first for the IPPS.

The NAVS was a great success. There were 902 people registered (it was at no cost this year), plus 45 panelists for a total of 947 attendees. Equally important, there were 343 non-IPPS members who attended (a chance to recruit new members) from 15 different countries.

For the SRNA virtual session, presentations given by Drs. David Creech, Dennis Werner and Mike Dirr.

### **TIPS AND TRICKS FOR PROPAGATING DIFFICULT TO ROOT SPECIES**

David Creech, Director SFA Gardens, Stephen F Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX (Fig. 2).

A lifetime of sticking a wide range of woody and herbaceous cuttings was condensed into twenty minutes. Every batch of cuttings is a brand-new story and a myriad of variables influence successful rooting. Time of year, hormone application (powder, solution, or gel), mist propagation, bottom heat, heated mist, substrate drainage, light (intensity and photoperiod) - and the character of each cutting is a determinant. For difficult to root species, the best propagators are constantly experimenting to find the exactly right timing and protocol that leads to successful rooting.

<http://www.ipps.org/proceedings-volume/North-American-Summit-2020/194#/video/6>



Figure 2. Dr. David Creech, Director Stephen F. Austin Gardens, Regent's Professor Emeritus, Stephen F Austin State University, Nacogdoches, TX.

### **DESIGNER GENES, DESIGNER REDBUDS: TWENTY YEARS OF *CERCIS* BREEDING**

Dr. Dennis Werner, J.C. Raulston Distinguished Professor Emeritus, JC Raulston Arboretum, North Carolina State University (Fig. 3.).

Werner summarized the accomplishments made at the North Carolina State University redbud breeding program during the past 20 years. He reviewed the most recent cultivar releases, and discussed the goals of the program moving forward. He also discussed some of the fascinating mutations in redbud, and how they interact biologically to allow for the creation of new and novel forms. Dr. Werner's redbud selections include: 'Ruby Falls', 'Merlot', 'Whitewater', 'Pink Pom Poms', Flame Thrower, and Golden Falls. His numerous cultivar releases in Buddleia have focused on sterility, compact growth habit, and expansion of the color palette. Dr. Werner's presentation was only available to the live audience.



Figure. 3. Dr. Dennis Werner, JC Raulston Arboretum, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC

### **TOUR OF THE DIRR GARDEN AND PREMIER INTRODUCTIONS, INC.: BEST PERFORMERS AND THOSE TO COME**

Dr. Michael A. Dirr, President, Chestnut Oak Farm and partner in Premier Introductions, Inc., Athens, GA, (Fig. 4).

Legendary plantsman Michael Dirr shared his insights on new plants from his home garden and breeding facility, Premier Introductions, Inc. Dirr's Georgia Plant Introduction Program has introduced over 40 new cultivars into the nursery trades. He remains active in research and new plant development.

<http://www.ipps.org/proceedings-volume/North-American-Summit-2020/194#/video/7>



Figure 4. Dr. Michael A. Dirr, President, Chestnut Oak Farm and partner in Premier Introductions, Inc. Athens, GA

### **CHARLIE PARKERSON VIRTUAL STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION**

Prior to the NAVS, the Virtual Charlie Parkerson Student Research Competition was held via zoom (Fig. 5). There were nine students who participated in the Charlie Parkerson Virtual Student Research Competition. The competition was led by Chair, Mack Thetford, Cheryl Boyer, Jim Robbins and Brie Arthur. <http://www.ipps.org/proceedings-volume/North-American-Summit-2020/194#/video/10> There were 65 participants on the zoom. The top three student finalists in the competition gave 20-min oral presentations. The remaining six students gave shorter, ‘oral poster’ presentations via zoom. There were eight papers published from the student competition in the 2020 *IPPS Combined Proceedings*

The link for the presentations of the Charlie Parkerson Virtual Student Research Competition is

<http://www.ipps.org/proceedings-volume/North-American-Summit-2020/194#/video/11>

The three finalists in the order of their placement in the competition were:

- 1) S. Brooks Parrish, Renjuan Qian<sup>2</sup>, Sandra B. Wilson<sup>3</sup>, and Zhanao Deng 2020. **Morphological and Cytological Characterization of Six Porterweed (*Stachytarpheta* spp.) Selections.** University of Florida.
- 2) Yuvraj Khamare, S. Christopher Marble<sup>2</sup>, James E Altland<sup>3</sup> and Annette Chandler. 2020. **Influence of Substrate Stratification and Fertilizer Placement on Growth of Ligustrum (*Ligustrum japonicum*) and Germination and Biomass of Bittercress (*Cardamine flexuosa*) in Containers.** University of Florida.
- 3) Brian A. Schulker, Brian E. Jackson, and William C. Fonteno 2010. **Where Did the Water Go?** Department of Horticulture, North Carolina State University.

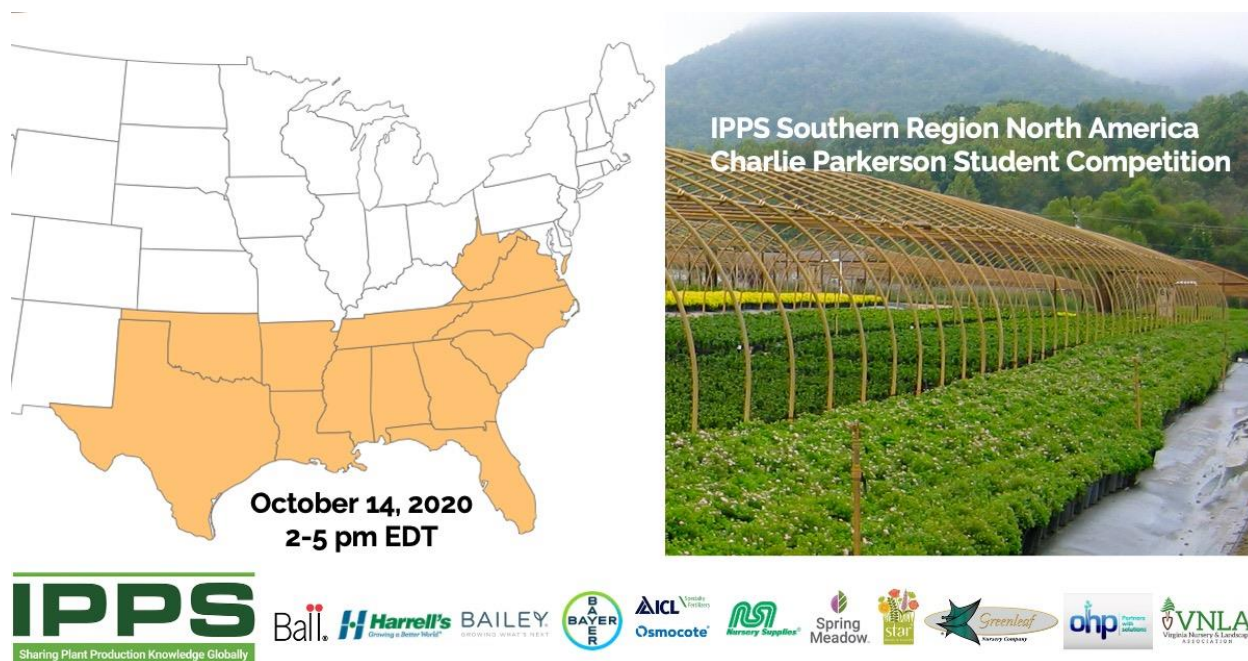


Figure 5. The Charlie Parkerson Student Competition and IPPS-SRNA sponsors.

#### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020 IPPS-SRNA

- There was also a virtual Question Box, moderated by Dr. Judson LeCompte. International Director, Tom Saunders, complemented LeCompte for the excellent, “very smooth” job he did in moderating the virtual Question Box. From Judson’s cool digs in Michigan, it was like an FDR fireside chat!

- Dr. Gary Knox of the University of Florida was recognized with the Meadows Award for 2020 (Fig 6.).



Figure 6. Dr. Gary Knox of the University of Florida, Meadows Awardee for 2020.

- Dr. David Creech of Stephen F. Austin University was recognized with the Fellows Award for 2020 (Fig. 7).



Figure 7. Dr. David Creech, Fellows Awardee for 2020.

- To honor Margie Jenkins, the “Margie Jenkins Student Conference Scholarship” is being established. There is a committee currently working on the details. This is in addition to the existing “Vivian Munday Student Mentor Conference Scholarship”.

#### **SRNA-IPPS BUSINESS UPDATE**

- The brand-refresh (name change) to “IPPS: International Plant Production Society” (rather than Propagators) was narrowly defeated: *63.6% in favor of the name change with a 2/3rds (67%) approval needed*. The SR considers the brand-refresh critical for being more inclusive in attracting new members, marketing, and garnering sponsorship to run the organization. At the Oct 2019 SR annual business meeting, there was a unanimous vote for the name change (60-0). Of the 77 SR members who recently voted in the International Web solicitation, 10 voted against it; this was the difference in the brand-



refresh not being approved. Of the 8 regions who voted: five of the eight voted by 2/3rds or more - for the name-change. New Zealand is the only region (48% members approved) – that does not have a majority in favor. It is strategically important that the IPPS move forward with the brand-refresh.

- The SR Education Endowment Fund administered by HRI had a balance of \$71,832 as of 2 November 2020. We are ahead of the initial \$60,000 goal, but want to continue building the Endowment more to support SRNA Educational programs: *Early-Career Propagator Exchange program, Parkerson Student Research competition, Vivian Munday Young Horticultural Professional Scholarship Work Program*, and help subsidize annual registration costs. Keven Gantt chairs the Endowment Fund, which was started four years ago with an anonymous \$20,000 contribution.
- The 2020 SRNA has 239 paid members and 28 student members for a total of 267 members; considering we did not have an annual meeting, the SRNA is holding its own with membership retention & growth. 2019: 245 paid + 18 student members; 2018: 258 paid members + 13 student members; 2017: 253 paid members; 2014: 225 paid members.
- President Brie Arthur has been chairing the combined monthly meetings of the membership committee and technical communications committee. They review content to include in the newsletter, creative strategies for gaining new membership, video content, etc. In the future the SRNA may hire a videographer to do 5-10 min segments of nurseries, garden centers, gardens for the SR-You-Tube channel. The EC is keen on using You-Tube videos to market the SRNA.
- The SRNA is in good financial shape, thanks to the conscientious management of Sec-Tres, Donna Foster, guidance of previous and current EC boards, and major efforts to garner industry sponsorship. Cancelling the 2020 planned annual meeting saved considerable hotel and meeting losses that would have occurred. As of 31 October, the SRNA balance was. \$195,882.
- As of 24 November 2020, the SRNA is still planning for the Oct 2021 Mobile Meeting to take place. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row, Program Chair Bobby Green is preparing with a slate of excellent, entertaining speakers for the Mobile conference!