

# Gifford Arboretum Newsletter

Spring 2002

Volume 1, Issue 1



## De Hull becomes Associate Director

De Armand L. Hull recently accepted the position as Associate Director of the Gifford Arboretum. "De", as he is known in the South Florida horticultural community, recently retired as a full professor in horticulture from the Dade County faculty of the University of Florida. De's background includes a Master's degree in Ornamental Horticulture and Botanical Garden Management from the Longwood Gardens Program at the University of Delaware. His Bachelor's degree is in Ornamental Horticulture from the University of Illinois.

De brings to the Gifford Arboretum his extensive background in horticultural program planning as an Extension Agent. A serious student of palms, De has helped introduce over two thousand species of palms into cultivation. He has worked in forty-three countries, including Central and South America, South Pacific, Southeast Asia, China, and Europe as a horticultural diagnostician.

## Aldridge Assistants Appointed

Graduate student Rachel King was appointed as the first Belton G. and Margaret T. Aldridge Horticultural Assistant in Fall 2001. This endowed assistantship supports a graduate student to curate the Arboretum. Rachel was formerly a Peace Corps volunteer on a project that developed the use of native species for tropical forestry. For her doctoral work, she is studying seed dispersal by



*Associate Director De Hull and Aldridge Curator Rachel King at the recent Ramble at Fairchild Tropical Garden.*

bats of a tropical timber tree in Amazonian Peru. Michelle Schroeder is the second Aldridge Assistant, appointed for the spring 2002 semester. She is interested in applying ecological principles to tropical agriculture. Michelle studies how mycorrhiza (mutualistic fungi in plant roots) affect competition among tropical plants in Costa Rica for her doctoral research. Derek Artz will be the Aldridge Assistant for a full year beginning in summer 2002. Derek has a Master's degree in plant biology, with interests ranging from water stress in crops to competition for pollinators between native and exotic plants. His doctoral research concerns pollination of a native milkweed in the Florida Everglades.



*Ryan Driscoll, the Gifford undergraduate assistant helps out at the Ramble.*

### Director:

Carol Horvitz, Ph.D.

### Associate Director:

De Armand Hull, M.S.

### Aldridge Curators:

Derek Artz, M.S.  
Rachel King  
Michelle Schroeder

### Head of the Friends of the Gifford Arboretum:

Kathy Gaubatz

### Committee:

Jon Bennett  
Mary Catherine Chesser  
Lundy Clarke  
John Cozza  
Jean Crawford  
Christine Dupuy  
Roberta Foote  
Martha Gifford Melahn  
Guillermo Goldstein, Ph.D.  
Tara Greaver  
Robert Kelley, Ph.D.  
Dana Krempels, Ph.D.  
Ronald Lange, M.A.  
Robert Parsley, ASLA  
Bill Richardson  
Summer Scobell, M.A.  
Sue Steinberg  
Christiane Tyson  
Alan Weber

### Advisory Board:

Taylor Alexander, Ph.D.  
Paul A. Cox, Ph.D.  
Seymour Goldweber, M.S.  
Richard Howard, Ph.D.  
Stanley Kiem  
David Lee, Ph.D.  
M. Jean Mustard, Ph.D.  
Douglas Parks, Arborist



## Dr. John C. Gifford

By Martha Gifford Melahn

I was 25, when in 1949 at 6 AM, I picked up *The Miami Herald* to read the shattering headline *JOHN GIFFORD IS DEAD*. Ours had been an odd father/daughter relationship, as he was sixty years old when I was born. In the Miami of pre-World War II, he was an important man, and I enjoyed prestige just for having been his daughter.

Dr. Gifford—as my mother always referred to him—was over six feet tall, slim and trim and noticeably broad-shouldered. He was a very colorful personality. He always had a pipe in hand and smelled sweetly of pipe tobacco. In the 25 years that I knew him, he never seemed to age. Mustachioed, bald even as a young man (due to a typhoid epidemic at Cornell where he was teaching), he always had something interesting to say. Conservation is a broad field. Importantly, he had a booming voice with which to broadcast his message that was unique at the time.

To satisfy his mother he had studied medicine, but botany was the love of his life. His first German-speaking wife recognized this, and helped him attain a doctorate in economics in Germany, then the only place where forestry was taught. Having made his mark in the North by writing the first forestry textbook for American colleges and establishing the magazine *American Forests*, he turned southward to regain his health.

At the turn of the century, only a handful of people knew anything about tropical forestry. What he knew about tropical woods necessarily he taught himself. Not only that, but he had discovered that truisms of temperate regions simply did not hold water in the tropics. With the conservation of natural resources as a base, Gifford moved to tropical forestry, the embryo science of ecology, followed by tropical horticulture, and even to dabbling in plant introduction. He knew instinctively that DDT



*Dr. John C. Gifford contemplates potential uses of trees ca. 1940. Plant introduction to solve problems was a very progressive concept. That some introduced species could become invasive was as yet unknown.*

would be an utter disaster because it did not work with nature, which to him was the only way to work.

Gifford was essentially a builder, whether or not he was furthering a budding science, the University of Miami, several banking institutions, or housing, he was always stretching his base, expanding his beliefs. Five of his houses in Dade County, built with native materials with cross ventilation designed solely for the tropics, are today considered architecturally important, and Gifford was not an architect. He was a pioneer, writer, banker, lecturer, a Quaker, educator, an expert sailor, and world traveler, and the most modest of men. What I know about my father's personal history I learned from my mother. He never mentioned his first wife, a concert pianist. I never knew him to purchase anything more than a can of tobacco. Still, when I was a child he was a millionaire. He was a delightful storyteller, drawing people around him like the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Our conversations invariably revolved around food plants, ancient peoples, trade, man's abasement of the earth through pollution, the conservation of natural resources—never personal things, strange topics to address with a child, but his talk was always peppered with illustrations and anecdotes to make it palatable. Gifford truly devoted his life to the betterment of mankind, and his students loved him. Growing up under his roof was a great privilege, and today it is most gratifying to see that most of his ideas have been adopted by educated people or are common knowledge everywhere.

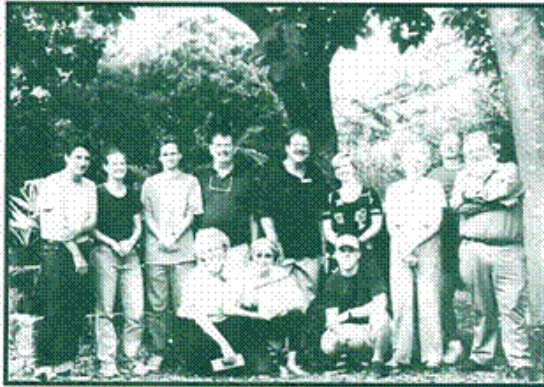


## Director's Notes

By Carol C. Horvitz, Ph.D.

**PEOPLE** — What a great time this is for the Gifford Committee! De Armand Hull, M.S., has joined the Arboretum Committee as the Associate Director of the Arboretum, bringing to us his wealth of experience in palms and extensive horticultural expertise on tropical ornamentals. De's enthusiasm is contagious and he has already started to build a network of interactions between the Arboretum and other plant-enthusiasts in South Florida and across the globe. In the fall of 2001, we were able to hire the first graduate student for the endowed Belton G. and Margaret T. Aldridge Horticultural Assistantship. This endowment supports a graduate student for 12 months a year. During its first two years, it will have funded three outstanding students at critical points of their graduate training, Rachel King, Michelle Schroeder and Derek Artz. Also this fall, Guillermo Goldstein, Ph.D., joined the Biology Department (and the Arboretum Committee) as the first Frank Smathers Professor of Tropical Tree Biology. He is a renowned tropical tree physiologist known globally for his work on water transport in trees.

**PLANTS** — This is also a great time for the collection and its curation! The New Checklist of Plants (2002) is ready to go to press. Authored by Rachel King (first Aldridge Assistant) and Ryan Driscoll (the Arboretum's undergraduate work-study student), this is the first update since 1998, and there have been so many changes! One change was the complete renovation of the pond and the surrounding plants in the Microbiome, a project jointly spearheaded by Christine Dupuy and Tara Greaver. The aquatics were funded by a grant from the FNGA (Florida Nurserymen and Grower's Association). A more recent change was the development of a new area, in which we planted several trees purchased by a special fund set up in memory of Alan Zame's mother. Alan Zame, Ph.D., is Chairman of the Math Department.



*photo by David Janos, Ph.D.*

*At the Gifford Arboretum Picnic and Plant Sale, 2001. Left to right front row: Carol Horvitz, Kathy Gaubatz, and Derek Artz. Second row: John Cozza, Rachel King, Ron Lange, De Hull, Steve Stearn (President of the International Palm Society of South Florida), Summer Scobell, Martha Gifford Melahn, Jon Bennett and Robert Kelley.*

The math faculty made generous donations to this fund to purchase trees for the Gifford, including species in the Sterculiaceae, the Bombacaceae, the Dilleniaceae and the Malpigiaceae. A "chocolate tree" (*Theobroma cacao*), another important species of the Sterculiaceae family, was donated by Chris Tyson. This specimen was grown by Chris from a seed that she had collected on the Gifford Arboretum Golden Anniversary Trip to Costa Rica in 1997. In addition to a thorough updating of the list of plants of the Gifford Arboretum and the Taylor Alexander Microbiome, the new Checklist will also list plants in the Florida Key's Satellite Arboretum, the new Palmetum, and the Flowering Tree Collection on other parts of the University of Miami campus. Bird and butterfly checklists of the Arboretum and Microbiome will also appear.

**EVENTS** — Fall of 2001 was shadowed by the events of September 11. Like so many, we turned to nature for solace and continued promoting knowledge about tropical plants, co-hosting with the Native Plant Society and others, the "Secret lives of butterflies" lecture (by Marc Minno, Ph.D.) at Fairchild Tropical Garden in October. Then in November, we had our display and plant sale at our booth at the Ramble (at Fairchild Tropical Garden, Nov 10, 11). Our main fall event was our own Gifford Arboretum Picnic and Plant Sale (Nov 18), this year co-sponsored by the International Palm



Society of Florida, who provided a delicious barbecue and ran a palm auction, featuring beautiful rare species, such as the endangered *Kentiopsis* from New Caledonia. De Hull presented a lecture featuring tips for growing palms in South Florida. There were special tours of the Arboretum run by grad students John Cozza (Maytag Fellow) and Summer Scobell (MacLamore Fellow) and a tour of UM's new Palmetum by De Hull. Over 120 people attended our Picnic on a beautiful fall day, and everyone went home with new knowledge and/or a palm!

**FUTURE**— In 2002, we look forward to celebrating tropical trees in many ways: lectures, plant sales, festivals and workshops. We also hope

to develop our virtual guided tour of the Arboretum on the web. We hope to see you at these events!



*Summer and John lead a tour.*

## New Membership Levels

The Gifford Arboretum introduces new membership levels. Until now, membership in the Arboretum has been totally free. Members have been receiving invitations to our events, updates on our activities, free admission to our events and events that we co-sponsor (with the Native Plant Society and the Kampong, for example). To help defray the cost of mailing and to support our programs, we will now be asking members to pay an annual fee. We introduce special benefits to donors at higher levels.

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|-------------------|---------|---------------------------------|
| • student friends | \$ 5    | newsletter and discounts        |
| • friends         | \$ 25   | newsletter and discounts        |
| • supporters      | \$ 100  | all above plus t-shirt          |
| • donors          | \$1,000 | all above plus special luncheon |

## Save the Dates

### February 9

-- The David Fairchild Medal for Plant Exploration Award Ceremony at 6:30 pm at the Kampong (see enclosed letter).

### March 7

-- The 2002 Gifford Arboretum Lecture, "Zamias and chiguas in Colombia: a tale of exploration, the forest, the people and the war," by **Alvaro Calonje, M.S.**, at 7 pm at the Cox Science Building.



## John C. Gifford Arboretum

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*The Gifford Arboretum of the University of Miami is a collection of living tropical and subtropical trees. Our goal is to promote knowledge about tropical trees, both native and from around the world.*