Collecting. Expedition. Adventure. Those words bring to mind scientists with overflowing packs hiking in wilderness in search of rare and elusive plant material. It conjures up the fear of snake bites, discomfort of soggy hiking shoes, and swarms of mosquitoes while pressing down plants to voucher for herbaria. Collecting also brings to mind the comraderie built when working in the field with colleagues, and the patient excitement of watching collected seed germinate while remembering the work that went into collecting it. All of this is part of what is called “wild collecting” or “plant collecting,” a strategy to preserve wild genotypes in ex situ collections in herbaria, botanic gardens, research centers and arboreta.

My last plant collecting expedition began early one morning in October of 2017. With full hiking pack in hand, I was at the foot of my driveway waiting to be picked up by Ethan Kauffman, Director of Horticulture of Stoneleigh: A Natural Garden; and Jess Slade, of the Morris Arboretum. We drove to North Carolina to join three other colleagues, Jenna Zukswert (Arnold Arboretum), Tom Clarke (Mt. Holyoke, and Polly Hill Arboretum), and Sean Halloran (Arnold Arboretum). Once together we embarked on an expedition to the Coastal Plains of North and South Carolina. We represented six institutions all looking to collect seed or cuttings from wild plant material that was on our “target taxa list.” This wild collected material would diversify the provenance of plants within our collections. The taxa list ranged from Pinus palustris, which enjoys periodic burns to stabilize its habitat in pine savannas, to the vine-like Pieris phillyreifolia, which clings only to Taxodium ascendens for support in cypress depressions.

It was in one of these cypress depressions that we enjoyed a bit of the “adventure” mentioned above. While collecting Hypericum sp., we noted large patches of plants that were pressed flat. Ethan, a native of the area, recognized these as alligator belly-rubs; he said nothing so as not to alarm us. As we wandered further...
The garden looks great this summer despite the punishing winter. Some plants sustained tip die-off and leaf lost (see ** below). The great news is that M. maudiae (Smiling Monkey Tree) flowered this spring, not only a first for us but also a first for a northern garden. It seems that winter would not yield to the wet spring, which is good news for all your new plants. Our Horticulture Manager Andrew Adams and the summer interns took advantage of the moist June to plant new accessions, particularly in the Townsend courtyard gardens and the Hydrangea Garden near the Fischer Greenhouse. Though still diminutive in stature, these plants can be found by any visitor who goes looking in the gardens this month. Also note the additions to the “yucca” and agave planting beds, which are in the Townsend courtyard near the stairs.

Visitors who use the south entrance along South College Avenue may notice a change. This past spring several plants were removed from the corner at the street entrance. The eliminations were guided by recommendations from UDBG’s Master Plan, with the intent to open a vista to Townsend Hall. Additional removals along the mound in the Clark Garden alleviated overcrowding of plants. We will complete an extensive addition of herbaceous interest at the edge of the mound along the College Avenue side. By introducing bold sweeps of color to enhance curb appeal, we hope to entice newcomers into the garden. With our master plan in place and the collections review completed this past year, our efforts to promote a more public face to UDBG are moving along.

This project will also welcome our visitors form the International Plant Propagators Society (IPPS). The Eastern Region of the IPPS will be meeting in Newark from September 23–26. This is an international group of nursery, greenhouse, landscape, and academic professionals who are keenly interested in promoting plants and, in particular, the propagation and production of plants. UDBG will host a reception for IPPS members in the garden. This is an excellent opportunity to show off the garden to an extremely knowledgeable group of plant experts, educating them about the unique opportunities that the UDBG has to offer. It is also an outstanding opportunity to forge new collaborations with professionals around the world.

UDBG’s summer internship program has dual benefits: it provides students valuable horticultural experience and is vital to UDBG’s functioning.

We are extremely grateful for the support of the Parvis Family Endowment, Plant Sale Patrons, and the many UD alums that chose to fund this invaluable student program. This summer, we welcome Amanda Balasus, Tessa Hayman, Joseph Orga, Justin Roure, and Joshua Zalewski.

Amanda Balasus is a senior in the Plant and Soil Science Department majoring in Plant Science. She is a transfer student from the Harford Community College and University of Maryland with a strong background and interest in nursery and landscape. She is the 2018 recipient of UDBG’s Outstanding Landscape Horticulture Student Award this spring and is the first recipient of the Parvis Endowed Summer Internship.

Tessa Hayman has a BS in Freshwater and Marine Biology from Gannon University. She continues her marine interest as a senior and double major in Wildlife Ecology & Conservation, here at UD. She excels in her academic work, frequenting the dean’s list.

She comes to the UDBG after an internship at Fisher’s Island Nature Conservancy last summer, where she worked managing local plant populations.

Joseph Orga, a senior in Energy and Environmental Policy in the College of Arts and Sciences, has explored the outdoors adventuring through the woods since he was a child. He is considering career paths with our national park system or in public horticulture. The internship is an opportunity for him to broaden his knowledge of the topics he is studying.

Justin Roure is a junior in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation in the Department of Entomology/Ecology. While Justin’s primary interest is wildlife ecology, he realizes it is essential to understand and manage plants in an ecosystem as they provide the shelter and food for many animals.

Joshua Zalewski, a junior double majoring in Plant Science and Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, has a cumulative 4.0 GPA. His experience includes native plant population management, nursery and vegetable production, and landscape management. His goal is a career in botany and plant conservation, and become immersed in the world of plants that he endeavors to preserve.
During the unrelentingly hot and humid summer days at the UDBG, the trial plots bloom ceaselessly, barely registering the heat. Bursting with an array of bright colors, rare annuals, and just-released, award-winning plants, the Trial Garden peaks during the hottest time of the year. Each summer, All-America Selection plants are evaluated biweekly by an intern or staff member. Every award-winning plant is ranked on a scale of 0-5. Because the Trial Garden is never watered or fertilized (except for two weeks after planting), the plants with the highest scores are desirable for a low-maintenance landscape. Below is a list of several of the stunning plants in last summer’s Trial Garden.

Our highest scoring flowering plant in the Trial Gardens with a score of 4.9, was *Impatiens ×walleriana Bounce™ Pink Flame*. This plant was closely followed by *Impatiens ×walleriana SunPatiens® Spreading Shell Pink* with a score of 4.8. Both plants exhibited excellent resistance to rain, drought, sun, and heat; they bloomed throughout the entire summer. Both impatiens have pleasingly neat mounds of glossy green foliage topped with large yet delicate blooms. SunPatiens® Spreading Shell Pink has light pink flowers with a hint of peach coloring, and Bounce™ Pink Flame displays bold fuchsia blooms. These continuously flowering plants are perfect for the low-maintenance landscape.

A very different but equally beautiful plant, *Salvia ×farinacea Rockin’™ Playin’ the Blues* also scored a 4.8 for its all-season blooms and shiny green foliage. Its long spikes of radiant, midnight blue flowers are held above its foliage on long stems. A fast grower, Rockin’™ Playin’ the Blues can climb to of 2 to 4 feet in one season. If you site this plant correctly, it will likely overwinter because it is hardy to zone 7. Pollinators adore this plant!

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For an easy and impressive annual display, look no further than canna! With their broad, upright, tropical-looking leaves, canna are equally stunning without their flowers. However, the *Canna Toucan* series bloomed in the trial beds all summer in shades of scarlet, yellow, coral, dark orange, and rose! Our top-performing canna with a score of 4.7 was *Canna Toucan® Scarlet*, showcasing brilliant red flowers and deep purple-green foliage. Canna lends a tropical paradise air to a garden and looks fabulous when paired with other bright-colored annuals.

Another impressively resilient plant in the Trial Garden last year was *Celosia argentea ‘Asian Garden’* which scored a 4.7. Celosia are known for their bright, textural blooms, which can be used in both dried and cut flower arrangements. ‘Asian Garden’ has flowers that become progressively two-toned as the season advances and the flowers develop. By September, the deep pink flowers develop into pale pink spikes tipped in fuchsia. Its unusual blooms are a stunning contrast to other annuals, especially plants in the aster family.

The Trial Garden frequently features several perennial plants; last year the spectacular *Gaura lindheimeri ‘Sparkle White’* stole the show. With its dainty white flowers sprinkled across a neat mound of dark green foliage, ‘Sparkle White’ is sure to be a winner. The flowers have four pointed petals and stamens and pistils, which extend gracefully outwards. Held on long, thin stems, the flowers nod in the slightest breeze. A fabulous plant for its fine texture and unique appearance, *Gaura lindheimeri ‘Sparkle White’* scored a 4.6 in our evaluations this year.

Be sure to visit this year’s trial plots to see all the new plants in this colorful garden!
UDBG Gifts July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018

We gratefully acknowledge the following people who support UDBG throughout the year.

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*Deceased
Endowment
UDBG’s endowment ensures long-term support of the gardens and plant collection.

$2,000
John Frett

Unrestricted Gifts
UD Botanic Gardens gratefully acknowledges gifts that support maintenance of the gardens and plant collections.

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Caroline Golt
Peg and Steve Castorani
Joseph and JoAnne Townsend

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David and Lydia Boyer
Delaware Nursery & Landscape Association
Mark Rieger

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Gifts in Tribute
In Honor of John Frett
Garden Club of Wilmington

In Memory of Marie Broski
Teresa M. Perkins

In Memory of Peter Lindtner
Roseann Harkins

Gifts of books, plants, ornamental pots, services, and supplies were received from the following:
Bartlett Tree Experts
Claudia Bradley
Phoebe Craven
Melinda Zoehrer and Rick Darke
Marty duPont
Melissa Lafferty
Robert E. Lyons
Kate Murray
Kris Qualls
Angie Dunson and Mike Riska
Liz Sharp

In Memory of William Roger Hudson, Sr.
Bryan Hudson

L-R: Cynthia Morgan, Joanne Hadley, Keith Robertshaw, Melinda Zoehrer, Jody Jones, Greta Hansen, and Jerry Farmer Photo: Valann Budischak
into the cypress depression, water rushed in over the top of my muck boots. We laughed as I emptied half a gallon of muck from my turned-over boot. It was then that Ethan said, “Guys, I don’t think we’re alone.” He had caught a glimpse of a gator! It was all I could do to stay calm, finish collecting the seed we were there for, and get back to dry land with my soggy boots. That was enough “adventure” for one day!

Alligators aside, the plants and habitats are the primary focus of any wild collecting trip, but the cultural scenery and the comradery formed with colleagues are a wonderful part of the experience. Guided by local experts like Ethan, Dr. Richard Porcher, and Andy Walker we were introduced to plants beyond our taxa list, specific details about habitats, and learned about plants and each other through our field work.

I brought back 22 collections to University of Delaware Botanic Gardens. From those we have had 13 collections germinate and have two more collections to sow. Each of these collections has a lot of data associated with it; name, associated taxa, habitat description, collectors, and GPS coordinates to name a few. This associated data is housed in our database and adds scientific value to this plant material. Wild collected material is prioritized within most collections, including the gardens. Through this expedition we added to the UDBG not only specimens, but wild collected accessions that are preserved in ex situ collections. In addition to collecting, expedition and adventure, I now can claim camaraderie and conservation to my list of experiences. Thank you to each of my colleagues and to Dr. John Frett for supporting me on this exceptional educational expedition!

KEITH ROBERTSHAW, VOLUNTEER PROFILE
RACHEL HUTCHINS, UDBG ANNUAL INTERN 2017-2018

Tell me about your experience volunteering at the University of Delaware Botanic Gardens (UDBG).
I have worked the plant sales at UDBG for the last 10 years and assisted the staff with individual projects such as plant identification for labeling purposes and fixing accession labels to trees. I would come to the fall and spring sales each year to see which plants I could add to my collection of woodies. I picked up a lot of information from the experts and wanted to share this knowledge with others. I like encouraging people to try growing plants they haven’t grown before such as camellias.

What type of Camellia would you recommend for our new growers? Camellia ‘Snow Flurry’ is a great plant for beginners. It’s part of the winter series. Growing to six feet, this camellia’s bloom are multi-petalled with gorgeous white flowers.

What sparked your interest in volunteering and where else do you volunteer? Volunteering is a way to gain and give knowledge; it’s also a way for people to work together on a project to accomplish a common goal. As I obtain knowledge about plant material, I feel more comfortable sharing it with others. I have been taking classes at Longwood Gardens for more than 3 years and at other organizations such as Mt. Cuba. I also volunteer at Scott Arboretum and Tyler Arboretum in addition to UDBG. I am working toward my certificate in Ornamental Horticulture and I hope to take part in Delaware County’s Master Gardener Program in 2019.

Tell me more about your volunteer duties. What do you enjoy about these tasks?
I enjoy being outdoors, physically exerting myself, working with people, observing plants, and asking questions. I consider myself a jack-of-all-trades and a master of none. I am willing to do anything to help in the gardens.

What are you most passionate about in life?
I am passionate about gardening, athletics, and traveling. I have been a women’s soccer coach for eighteen years and have traveled to all 50 states and eighty countries.

Tell me something people might not know about you.
I specialize in hardy camellias and have 39 different hardy camellia cultivars in my collection. I also have a small greenhouse where I keep another 20 plants for winter flowers. My wife loves when I go out to the greenhouse in the snow and return with a basket of beautiful flowers to float in a dish on our dining room table.

What piece of advice would you offer to people interested in volunteering at UDBG?
You will enjoy volunteering at UDBG if you are passionate about gardening, working hard, and getting your hands dirty. The UDBG has a great staff and the other volunteers are very knowledgeable. It’s fun.

Coastal Southeast Plant Collecting Expedition
Continued from pg. 1
ART IN THE GARDEN

Each spring, sculpture students from the Department of fine Arts and Visual Communications install art in the botanic gardens. The event is organized by Art Professor David Meyer, where he heads the Sculpture Area in the Department of Art and Design, and longtime UDBG Friends Member and PLSC staff member Caroline Golt. Judges awarded Best of Show, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places, and Honorable Mentions.

Clockwise from left: Honorary Mention Erin Erskine’s Geode, Best of Show, Andrew Gayda’s Infatuation, 2nd prize, Alicia Ferrara’s Metallic Fungus, Honorary Mention Lauren Alexander’s Just Be, 1st prize, Taylor Schomp’s Unshaped Shapes, 3rd prize, Jeff Kim’s Third Eye. All images: David Meyer

Support UD Botanic Gardens

Your support helps the advancement, improvement, and success of the UD Botanic Gardens. Your gift enables the gardens to expand as an outdoor classroom, an experiential laboratory, and a research center.