

# FRIENDS OF THE MILTON GARDENS

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Dr. Mack Thetford, University of Florida, Associate Professor of Environmental Horticulture. Coordinator of the Milton Gardens

Dr. Jamie Gibson, University of Florida, Assistant Professor of Environmental Horticulture. Assistant Coordinator of the Milton Gardens.

Mrs. Amy Compton  
Pensacola Junior College  
Assistant Professor



## WHY THERE IS A RICHARD K. SCHOELLHORN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

One of the scholarships the Friends of the Milton Gardens organization supports is the Richard K. Schoellhorn Scholarship Fund for students studying in Environmental Horticulture programs at the Milton Campus of the University of Florida. Many of you met and got to know Dr. Schoellhorn when he was assigned as an instructor on the Milton Campus several years ago. But, for you who never met him, allow us to introduce you to him now. Even as a little boy, Rick found wonder in all living things. On his way home from school, he would pinch samples of leaves and hide them in his socks for later study! This was the beginning of his love of horticulture. His professional experiences with horticulture began in 1973 when he worked as a greens keeper for the Los Alamitos Naval Golf Course in Los Alamitos, California. In 1976, he worked as the lead retail salesman at the San Luis Nursery in San Luis Obispo, California, and in 1978 as

manager of the Lake Otis Nursery in Anchorage, Alaska. From 1979 to 1981, Rick worked as an installation supervisor for Plantscaping International in Denver, Colorado scheduling all installations, rental and replacements for over 180 landscape accounts. In 1981 and for the next 8 years, he became the owner of The Glass House Interior Landscapes in Fort Collins, Colorado designing, installing and maintaining indoor and outdoor plantings. At the same time, Rick decided to go to school and receive his B.S. in Floriculture from Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Moving to Florida, Rick pursued his M.S. degree in Environmental Horticulture, graduating from the University of Florida in 1992. By 1996, Rick earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Horticulture from the University of Florida and started his teaching career as an Assistant Professor of Environmental Horticulture. His area of specialization while assigned to the Milton Campus was in

greenhouse production and new crop introduction.



TINA TUTTLE EXTENDS A WELCOME AT THE KICKOFF MEETING OF FRIENDS OF THE MILTON GARDENS JANUARY 26, 2004

## WHY THERE IS A RICHARD K. SCHOELLHORN SCHOLARSHIP FUND CONTINUED

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As part of his desire to grow something new in Northwest Florida, he began work on what is now the Milton Gardens. Currently assigned to the Gainesville Campus, Dr. Schoellhorn works with the Florida Nursery Growers Association and other professional organizations in

Developing new flowering crops that can withstand the environmental conditions and thrive in the myriad regions of Florida. Dr. Schoellhorn has toured Indonesia and Mexico collecting orchids and tropical perennials. He is a member of the American Societies of Florists, the Perennial Plant Association, The Professional Plant Growers Association, The Florida State Horticulture

Society and the Florida Nursery Growers Association. Dr. Schoellhorn is married to Linda and they have one son. As a way to honor and remember the contributions Dr. Schoellhorn made to the Milton Campus, upon his departure in 2001 members of the Santa Rosa Master Gardeners and the Milton Garden Club began this scholarship in his name. Today the fund is just

under \$1000.00. It is a goal and desire of this organization to raise funds to endow this scholarship so it can be awarded to deserving UF students who study at the Milton Campus. All contributions are tax deductible and will receive state matching funds. Won't you please consider making a monetary donation in honor of, in memory of or as a gift to someone special.

By Tina Tuttle

## CHILDREN'S LOGO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

**At the Friends of the Milton Gardens' kickoff meeting held January 26,**



attendees were asked to vote on the five selected drawings submitted by Junior Gardeners for consideration as the logo to be used as part of the Friends of the Milton Gardens programs. The competition was tough but a water color painting of a flower and gardening tools created by 11-year-old **Megan Henry** of "N

Bloom Junior Garden Club was chosen. Megan will receive the prize of a \$25 cash award. (Does she know that an individual membership to the Friends of the Milton Gardens is just \$25?) Megan is in the sixth grade and attends Bellview Middle school. She has been a Junior Gardener for over 6 years and regularly

participates (and wins) in sponsored flower shows in both horticulture and design categories. Runners up in the logo contest included **Thomas Lewis, Torie Davis, and Britany Price**. All these selections will be further developed for use in the garden. Congratulations to all who participated. By Tina Tuttle



## A DREAM DEVELOPS INTO THE MILTON GARDENS

BY SONYA ROBINSON

In the summer of 1997, four Master Gardeners (Mary Ann Frazier, Richard Cook, Dorothy Wallace and Sonya Robinson), Extension Agent, Dan Mullins, and Professor Rick Schoellhorn got together informally to dream about turning a large, unused piece of land behind

the PJC Campus into a Public Flower Garden. This garden was conceived to generate information on plants best suited to NW Florida, to introduce consumers and industry to new crops and evaluate their performance in our harsh temperatures and provide an

onsite classroom for the Horticulture students on Campus. After several more meetings, the plans were drawn and a Garden Committee Chairman was chosen. For one year, under the guidance of Jeanne Blage, thirty-three Santa Rosa County Master Gardeners cleared,

amended, planted, mulched and maintained the original 12,000 square feet of gardens. In the first year of work, Master Gardeners donated over 600 hours of volunteer time. The garden plan had 45 species of  
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## FACES OF THE GARDENS

### JAMES L. "JAMIE" GIBSON

The West Florida Research and Education Center welcomes Dr. James L. "Jamie" Gibson. Jamie has a 60/40 Teaching/Research appointment and comes to us from Maryland via North Carolina State University. He was born and raised in Southern Maryland, an area located on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay one hour southeast of Washington, D.C. Jamie's family introduced him to horticulture at an early age with tobacco and vegetable farming on his paternal side and ornamental horticulture on his maternal side. His great grandfather Dr. J.B.S. Norton was an experienced day-lily breeder and was the first state plant pathologist for the University of Maryland.

Jamie received his B.S. degree in Agriculture in 1996 from West Virginia University, Morgantown and later earned his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC in 2000 and 2003, respectively. There, under the di-



rection of Drs. Brian E. Whipker and Paul V. Nelson, he conducted research on various floriculture crops. His Ph.D. research investigated how fertilization affected shoot and root growth of cuttings from various vegetative annual stock plants. Jamie also developed cultural requirements for ornamental kales, mustards, and chards in the floriculture program at NCSU. His research pro-

gram in Florida will serve to develop production and management solutions for the ornamental plant industry. Jamie will be teaching Introduction to Nursery Management, Greenhouse and Nursery Crop Culture, Advanced Nursery Management, Principles of Irrigation and Water Quality in Horticulture, and Retail Management and

Marketing in Horticulture as well as working with undergraduate and graduate students to help coordinate activities of the WFREC Student Club. Along with fellow EH colleagues Mack Thetford and Bryan Unruh, Jamie will conduct ornamental plant trials at the research facility in Jay and the Milton Public Gardens. Jamie is hoping to collaborate with statewide faculty members as well.

Jamie's wife Suzi is a research assistant in the Fisheries Program at the University of West Florida. They have three pets, a yellow Labrador retriever named Maize and two cats, Minnie and Scooter.

woody trees and shrubs and decorative grasses in the central areas of the many beds surrounded by 90 species of annuals and perennials.

The Master Gardeners, Student Aide Kate Domrowski and Dr. Schoellhorn, developed, printed, laminated and labeled all plants in the garden and at the same time printed the

coordinated literature for the strolling public and guided tours. The first Open House was on July 16, 1998. At that time, Jeanne Blage turned over her shovel to Sonya Robinson.

More beds, plants and trials have been added over the years. Education has been shared in so many ways and with so

people from all over the world. Guided tours have been given on a weekly basis to youth and adults alike. The largest tour group at one time was 150 persons and each year the Middle School students from all surrounding schools attend over a period of a week. The annual Farm Tour begins and ends at the Gardens each

Year. After Dr. Schoellhorn returned to Gainesville, Sonya Robinson began the Friends of the Milton Gardens and was caretaker of the Gardens for a few months until Dr. Mack Thetford was able to take over. There have always been changes to the gardens. All changes are good for different reasons. Remember, a garden is never finished!

# THE MILTON GARDENS: A HISTORY AND FUTURE OF TEACHING, RESEARCH AND DISPLAY BY DR. MACK THETFORD

The Milton Gardens, a combination of teaching, research and display gardens are part of the Milton Campus of the University of Florida and Pensacola Junior College, a joint use campus located in the heart of Santa Rosa County, Florida. The gardens began in 1997 with the development of the University of Florida, IFAS teaching programs established through the West Florida Research and Education Center the previous year. The gardens have been largely built and maintained by UF students, faculty, volunteers, and staff.

The initial garden designs were the inspiration of Dr. Rick Schoellhorn who served as Coordinator for the Milton Gardens from 1997 to 2001. Dr. Schoellhorn taught classes in Greenhouse production and plant identification and while at WFREC, developed a research program that focused on identification of tropical perennial crops that could overwinter in North Florida and also tolerate the intense periods of heat, drought, or summer rains for which the region is known. The initial garden design also incorporated many herbaceous and woody landscape plants introduced by Dr. Mack Thetford who since 1995 has used the Milton Gardens and the entire campus when teaching landscape design, plant identification, and landscape maintenance. Plant introductions to the campus and Milton Gar-

dens by Dr. Thetford continue to be influenced by his research program that has focused on invasive plants, nematode tolerance of landscape plants and propagation, production and landscape evaluation of native and ornamental plants. Each of the diverse teaching and research programs, activities and interests of the faculty have had an impact on the initial design, plant composition and subsequent changes of The Milton Gardens.

The Milton Gardens are located within a 3-acre area of the campus that was cleared for the construction of greenhouse, shade house and nursery production facilities for the new UF teaching program. After the construction of these permanent facilities, the first plant production classes and the Master Gardener's from Santa Rosa County contributed countless hours to plant and maintain the nearly 2 acres of trial and demonstration gardens. The Gardens have since become a destination within northwest Florida and a very popular location for many garden clubs, horticulture study groups, homeowners, visiting scientists and school classes to visit, study or photograph.

As the Milton Gardens and the WFREC programs have grown, management of the gardens has changed. Dr. Schoellhorn relocated to Gainesville in 2001 to take on statewide responsibilities within IFAS, and a new faculty

member, Dr. Jamie Gibson, joined WFREC in 2003.

Between 2001 and 2003, Dr. Thetford assumed responsibility for the Milton Gardens and set out on a plan to expand the scope and size of the gardens and implemented a new garden design. Over the past three years the original planting beds of the gardens have been redesigned to create many more paths and take advantage of the emerging structure created by the maturing woody plants that have been part of the gardens since 1997. In addition, the Milton Gardens have expanded to include a Children's Garden, an Ornamental Grass border, an Entry Garden, and a new area was thinned of many trees and native scrub between 2002 and 2003 to create what will in 2004 become the new shade garden.

The Milton Gardens have experience a great deal of growth and change over the past three years but this is only the beginning. None of this change would have been possible without the continued support of UF-IFAS, PJC, the nursery industry or the many volunteers from all over the panhandle who have contributed to the gardens. Our future holds much promise with the additional ideas and enthusiasm from Dr. "Jamie" James Gibson. Already he has made his mark on the Milton Gardens through his addition of a new crop for us - ornamental cabbage, kale, and other ornamental vegetables. Dr.

Gibson has also been instrumental in assisting Dr. Thetford and an even more enthusiastic group of volunteers in establishing the Friends of the Milton Gardens. The Friends of the Milton Gardens was an early dream of Sonya Robinson and Dr. Thetford who spent many hours in the Gardens discussing how such an organization could be formed and the benefits such an organization could provide the Milton Gardens and the gardening community. After an initial bumpy start we have all managed to make a successful start of the organization in 2003. With the support of the gardening community, The Friends of the Milton Gardens promises to be the driving force to help take the Milton Gardens from a collection of teaching, research and display gardens to a regional arboretum located within the Milton Campus of PJC and UF.

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This is the end of the first newsletter of "Friends of the Milton Gardens." Check us out again on website <http://wfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/wfrec/miltongardens..htm>

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**COME, JOIN WITH  
US TO MAKE IT  
HAPPEN!**