

# CULMination

The Official Publication of the Texas Bamboo Society,  
A Chapter of the American Bamboo Society,  
Vol. 14, Number 1, June, 2008  
<http://www.texasbamboosociety.org>



## Views from My Grove:

Like all organizations that are run by volunteers, TBS depends on many people to give of their time and talents on both a regular and irregular basis. My special thanks go to the Board of Directors and the officers for tending to the business of the organization. Everyone who attended the work days and other events put in a lot of public service hours, and we all had a good time. Thanks to all of you for your hard work and support of TBS this past year!

I am excited that TBS has a new newsletter editor. Harry Simmons has taken on the task with the energy that it needs. Be sure to read his profile in this edition, and look forward to regular issues of the TBS newsletter. Many TBS members have been busy and a few of their activities are included in this edition.

The big upcoming news is that the 16th Annual Texas Bamboo Festival will be here before we know it. Please volunteer some of your time as well as a plant or three to make this the wonderful festival we all anticipate it will be. The festival is the major fund raising event for TBS each year and we depend on the members for everything involved with it. Now is the time for everyone to go out and pot up some plants to donate to the TBS plant sale booth and the bamboo auction. If you already have plants in pots, please pick some good ones to donate and start pampering them. If you can let me know what you may be able to donate, it will help us plan.

Every year we have wonderful and informative presentations during the TBS Bamboo Festival. Robin McBride Scott gave a fantastic talk and demonstration at the annual ABS meeting last year in Philadelphia, and you won't want to miss her this year at our TBS festival in Austin, where she will speak and also conduct a hands-on workshop.

Two positions on the TBS Board of Directors (BOD) will need to be filled at the General Meeting of TBS members at this year's festival. Grady Mangum and I hold those positions now, and our terms will expire. If you would like to nominate yourself or other TBS members, please get in touch with me before the meeting so that a ballot of those running can be completed. Remember that the TBS BOD appoints all of the TBS officers after the general membership meeting, so if you are interested in serving, please let me know so that you will be considered.

Summer weather started here in Austin long before the summer solstice happened. We have already set records for lack of rainfall and for continuous days in the high 90s and 100s. Wherever you are, I hope your plants are not suffering too much!

Remember, everyone is welcome at all activities - I hope to see you soon!

Steve Muzos  
TBS President  
[gardentex@hotmail.com](mailto:gardentex@hotmail.com)

## Recent Activities Update

In the past few months several activities have been sponsored by TBS. The 3<sup>rd</sup> **Annual Porter Grove Grooming** was held in March. As in previous years, the clean-up occurred in the morning and poles and plants were distributed in the afternoon. Our hosts were as gracious as ever and invited us to return in the near future.

The **TBS Work Day at Chambers' Farm** was held on the last day of May. About 10 volunteers came to help dig plants for TBS. The Chamber's graciously donated several bamboos to be divided and prepared for auction at the upcoming festival in August. Digging was made easy by using a back-hoe (isn't that cheating?) a front-end loader and a bamboo "Slammer" to divide the large clumps.



**Jack Gilmore digging bamboo the easy way.**

Although the heavy equipment helped tremendously, there came a point, as always with bamboo, when the big machinery could do no more and everyone had to get their hands dirty. The clumps were divided into manageable divisions, topped, put into bags and pots, watered thoroughly and put in the shade. Hard to believe that so much work could be so much fun! One large clump was

left over for volunteers to tackle another day.



**Kinder Chambers moving a *B. multiplex*.**



**Grady Mangum ready to divide while Paul Busk waits for his turn.**

On June 7<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> the Buu Mon Temple held its **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Lotus and Bamboo Festival** in Port Arthur, Texas. We will have a more complete article in our next newsletter.

# 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Bamboo Festival 2008

## Robin McBride Scott

Our guest speaker, Robin McBride Scott, is an award winning artist who works in Traditional Woodland materials and native American Bamboo. She is the first place recipient of the American Bamboo Society Arts and Craft Award for 2007 for her work with basketry and canebrake (*Arundinaria gigantea*) bamboo. Robin is a consultant, presenter, and teacher of performing and visual Native arts. She is one of 6 artists in 2008 to receive a Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian Visiting Artist Fellowship. She is also a recipient of the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers "Artist of the Year" for 2005-2006.

On Saturday, August 23 - Robin will do a presentation about her work with basketry and native American bamboo. On Sunday, Robin will conduct a workshop on Weaving a Cane Mat, using native American Bamboo that she has personally harvested, prepared and dyed. The workshop will be limited to 10 - 15 participants. Registration Info is posted at <http://www.bamboocentral.net/weavingworkshop.html>

## Additional Presentations: (times are not decided yet)

**"Landscaping with Running Bamboo"** - using running bamboo - in the landscape and elsewhere - and not to be afraid of it - Presentation by Steve Muzos.

**A Video Presentation about the works of Japanese Artist Tanaka Kyokusho** - produced by David Stewart- Tanaka Kyokusho, is a bamboo artist and a bamboo basket maker. The video is about

his work and shows how he makes the fine slivers of bamboo that he uses in his baskets.

## "Light Requirements of Bamboo"

A presentation on the light requirements of tropical species of bamboo and their photosynthetic curves, rates, saturation point and compensation point; presented by Harry Simmons.

If you would like to do a presentation - or there is a topic you would like discussed at the festival - please email Carole Meckes at: [www.bamboo@texas.net](mailto:www.bamboo@texas.net) . There is ample time to further develop and round out the program.

The festival will include a live plant auction on Saturday afternoon, a dinner by reservation on Saturday evening and two full days of bamboo activities with bamboo plants and crafts for sale and show.

## Vendors: To date - the following bamboo vendors have sent in their vendor registrations and are listed at <http://www.bamboocentral.net/16thfestival.html>

- \* [Spirit Mama](#) - Spun Bamboo Clothing (for adults and children).
- \* [Waterstones](#) - vases created from stone with bamboo accents.
- \* [RM-Collectibles.com](#) - Hand-Made Bamboo Crafts from Mt. Fuji, Japan.
- \* [Bamboo Branch](#) - Bamboo Beads & Jewelry, Poles, & Pieces.

If you would like to be a vendor please send in your vendor application as soon as possible and your name will then be added to the website list. Here is a link to the vendor application: <http://bamboo.home.texas.net/vendor2008.html>

If you would like to be a sponsor and send in

a financial contribution - your name will also be listed as a sponsor.

The 16th Annual Texas Bamboo Festival is sponsored by the [Texas Bamboo Society](#) (a chapter of the American Bamboo Society, a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization) and is the annual fund raiser for the society. Proceeds are used to provide research, information, education, assistance to public bamboo gardens, support for bamboo artists and to bring new varieties to the multi-state region represented by the Texas Bamboo Society.

## American Bamboo Society

### Update

The American Bamboo Society has had numerous announcements and changes since the last TBS newsletter. Here are some of the highlights. ABS announced the formation of its 11<sup>th</sup> (Mid-States) and 12<sup>th</sup> (Tierra Seca) chapters. As of October last year there were 1114 active members. The ABS website receives between 25,000 and 35,000 unique visitors each month and approximately 80,000 pages viewed each month. The Bamboo Source List was sent out in March and contains more than 450 bamboo species and variations.

The ABS announced that the 2008 ABS National Conference will be held at the San Francisco Zoo from November 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>. The ABS Board Meeting will occur on the 6<sup>th</sup> – all members are invited to attend. The conference will be held on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. On November 9<sup>th</sup> additional tours will be offered.

Currently the ABS is sponsoring an Arts and Craft competition. For more updates and information please see their website at [www.Americanbamboo.org](http://www.Americanbamboo.org).

## 2007 TBS Research Grant

One of the main objectives of the TBS has been to promote bamboo research in the field. For several years board members have considered fulfilling this objective by providing a research grant to an individual who is pursuing a degree at a college or university that would increase the understanding and overall information available pertaining to bamboo and its growth and use in Texas and surrounding areas.

In 2007, Justin Tanner became the first recipient of a TBS research grant. Justin is currently enrolled in the Master Degree – Horticultural Science program at Texas A&M University – Kingsville. Justin's research investigates the reaction of some species of bamboo to salinity in the soil. The potential for successfully using bamboo species in areas of high salinity, such as coastal regions and improperly used farm land, is great.

Justin is currently in northern California participating in a summer internship program. We look forward to hearing more about his fascinating research in our next newsletter.

## Bamboo Basics: Flowering

One of the most confusing and least understood aspects of bamboo is flowering. Like all flowering plants, bamboos are classified by the unique flowering structures of each species. However, bamboo classification has always been difficult

because of the long time intervals between flowering cycles.

Bamboos usually exhibit 1 of 3 flowering patterns. Some bamboo, like *Schizostachyum brachycladum*, flower continuously with no apparent harm to the plant. Others bamboo species have sporadic flowering in which a single culm or specimen will flower and die while the rest of the plants continue growing unaffected.

The third and most infamous type of flowering is called gregarious flowering. In gregarious flowering, all plants of a single species throughout the world flower and then die. The flowering doesn't happen every year but in cycles such as the 30 year cycle of *Melocanna baccifera* or the cycle of 130 years in *Phyllostachys bambusoides*.



**Flowers resulting from sporadic flowering in *Vietnamosasa ciliata*.**

Several problems are associated with gregarious flowering. As plants die, there is a loss in production of shoots and culms. The new seedlings take 3 -7 years to mature to a point that harvesting can resume, a time when no production or income is possible for bamboo farmers. Many farmers now plant several different species to prevent the loss of their entire crop.

Another problem that occurs is the loss of valuable cultivars. The new seeds contain a large amount of variation and may look

nothing like the parent plant. New and rare cultivars frequently are lost when flowering (and subsequent death) occurs.

A third problem that occurs is famine. As bamboos flower, large amounts of seeds are produced. Rats feast on the grain and multiply, reaching plague-like proportions. When the bamboos stop flowering, these rats then migrate to fields consuming vegetables, grains, grasses and anything else edible. In Northeast India, Bangladesh and Myanmar rat infestations resulting from the bamboo flowering causes famine responsible for thousands of deaths every three decades.

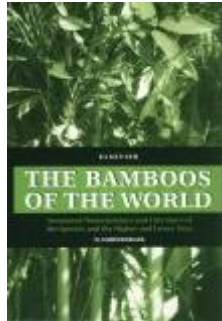
In South America these cycles also occur and are called "Ratadas." The rats also carry new and old diseases to susceptible populations. Although these cycles were reported in the 1600's by conquistadors to occur every thirty years, more current research shows the flowering and subsequent infestations occur more frequently.

Of course taxonomists are excited to see flowering because flowers offer the rare opportunity to clear up taxonomic confusion. It also offers a brief glimpse into the relationship between the flowering bamboo and the rest of the bamboo sub-family.

## Bamboo Book Review

Although there are many excellent books about bamboo and the various genera and species that are found world wide, there is one that is universally recognized as the final authority in the bamboo community. I am speaking of **The Bamboos of the World: Annotated Nomenclature and Literature of the Species and the Higher**

**and Lower Taxa**, by D. Ohrnberger and published by Elsevier in 1999. Don't let the name scare you away from this most fascinating book.



The book was the first modern attempt to bring all the literature that has been published on each tribe, genus and species together in a single book. It was the impetus for the modern taxonomic reclassification that has so many of us trying to keep up with the frequent changes. Mr. Ohrnberger states that the purpose of the book is mainly intended to be a reference work that provides citations and a bibliography for further study. However, he purposefully points out that the information is arranged in an easily understandable arrangement; useful to both botanists and the casual grower.

The book begins with placing bamboos in their proper order in the plant kingdom as a member of the grass family. He then explains how bamboos are classified and what criteria are necessary for placing each specimen into a genus and species. The next few pages list the natural distribution of bamboos, how many tribes, sub-tribes and genera exist (including the number of species in each) and their taxonomic rank.

From page 32 until the end of the book Ohrnberger systematically lists every species known to man including species details such as pseudonyms, when they were discovered, size, range, habitat,

distribution, distinguishing characteristics and local and horticultural use. At a listed retail price for the hardback version of \$300, this book is definitely not in the price range of most casual bamboo enthusiasts. However, for positively identifying an unknown species or finding out little-known facts about your favorite bamboo, this book is a must. Fortunately many public libraries and universities have this book and let you check it out or browse for free.

## Member Profile

My name is Harry Simmons and I am the newest officer of the Texas Bamboo Society. I have been a member of TBS for almost 10 years. I am also a lifetime member of the ABS.

My first memories of bamboo came from when I was just six years old. I remember playing in clumps of bamboo that my grandfather had started 30 years before from culms he had brought back from World War II. The clumps were huge with thick, green culms surrounding the perimeter. The inside, however, was full of hundreds of dead and rotting culms where the original culms had died many years before. After many hours of pulling out dead culms and cleaning the centers, the clumps were finally ready. The middle of the clumps were natural forts and the hundreds of old, dead culms provided a limitless supply of ladders, weapons, rafts and a myriad of inspirations for many, otherwise hot and boring summer days.

As I grew up, I forgot about the clumps of bamboo hidden on my grandparents' property. When I qualified for the pole vaulting event on my Jr. High track team, my father presented me with a 12 foot pole cut from the very same clumps which had

been my summer saviors so many years ago. I practiced a lot but was never really any good, no fault of my bamboo practice pole. In high school I became fascinated with plants and realized I wanted to study horticulture. I remember how excited I was when my mother planted the first *Bambusa multiplex* in our neighborhood in 1984.

In 1987, I went to college and studied horticulture. Four years later while playing rugby for my university, I broke my neck. Recognizing that the physical requirements necessary to most aspects of horticulture were now no longer within my reach (literally), I decided to change course.

I graduated in 1995 and went to law school at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas. While in Austin, I discovered the Texas Bamboo Society and rediscovered my excitement and fondness for bamboo. What was even more exciting to me was the discovery of people with this same fondness and excitement. After several years of soul searching, I decided to return to my first love, horticulture and more specifically, bamboo.

From June, 2004 until May, 2008 I studied Tropical Horticulture at Kasetsart University in Bangkok, Thailand. My thesis focused on evaluating horticultural quality and light requirements of 7 genera and 20 species of bamboo. While there I was able to travel to China on 2 bamboo study tours and visit several botanical gardens and herbariums in 6 different countries as part of my research. I saw many rare and beautiful species that I would not otherwise have had a chance to see.

Now that I have returned to Texas, I am anxious to contribute to TBS and to the share with others the incredible qualities and characteristics of this amazing plant.



**Harry Simmons admiring *D. giganteus* in Chiang Mai, Thailand 2006.**

## Upcoming Events

Here is a list of upcoming bamboo-related events:

July 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>. SEC-ABS 2nd Annual Bamboo Festival, Asheville Arboretum, North Carolina.

July 26<sup>th</sup>. 10 am – 1 pm Grove Grooming – Taniguchi Japanese Garden. Meeting 1:00 pm, Zilker Gardens (inside air conditioned garden center). Come and help label the postcards to be mailed for the upcoming festival, Zilker Botanical Garden. Preview DVD presentation.

Aug. 16<sup>th</sup>. Zilker Festival planning and meeting. 10:00 am – 1:00 pm at the Taniguchi bamboo grove. Zilker Gardens, Austin, Texas.

Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup> -24<sup>th</sup>. The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Texas Bamboo Festival 2008. Zilker Gardens, Austin, Texas.

Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> -16<sup>th</sup>. BOTA Ecuador Tour. Contact [www.bota.org](http://www.bota.org) for more details.

Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>. Zilker Grove grooming and meeting. 10:00 am – 1:00 pm, Taniguchi bamboo grove, Zilker Gardens, Austin, Texas.

Oct. Possible Porter bamboo grove grooming (date and time to be announced).

Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup>. ABS Annual Meeting and Conference. San Francisco Zoo, San Francisco, CA.

## Objectives of the TBS

TBS currently is involved in several projects that help promote our objectives as described in our current charter, which are;

1. To provide a source of information on the identification, propagation, utilization, culture, and appreciation of bamboos.
2. To promote the utilization of a group of desirable species by development of stocks of plants for introduction to the general public.
3. To support bamboo research in the field and to establish whatever facilities deemed necessary to carry out the research projects approved by the directors.

The annual Texas Bamboo Festival, of which this year will be our 16<sup>th</sup>, was designed to fulfill these objectives. Free literature is available for members and nonmembers alike. Free lectures are presented covering both the basics and the complicated aspects of this amazing plant.

Opportunities abound for questions concerning plants and products that do well in our area. Vendors provide a wide variety of plants, crafts, books, products and more to tempt even the most tight-fisted Scrooge.

The money collected each year through membership dues and proceeds from the festival goes toward the expenses incurred during the year and the promotion of “bamboo research in the field” the 3<sup>rd</sup> objective of the society. (See report on the 2007 TBS Research Grant). Selby Clark, our CFO/Treasurer reports a total of \$16,887.00 in funds currently in the society’s account. The funds collected this August will allow our chapter to continue funding important research pertaining to bamboo in Texas. Let’s all pitch in and make this the best TBS festival ever!

## TBS Officers

### Board Members

Jim Bussey, Grady Mangum, Steve Muzos, John Nelson and Kaylen Savioe

### Corporate Officers

President: Steve Muzos;  
Vice President: Kinder Chambers;  
CFO / Treasurer: Selby Clark;  
Secretary: Tony Poncik

### Other Positions:

Membership: Selby Clark;  
Newsletter Editor: Harry Simmons;  
Stewardship Program: Steve Muzos;  
Web Master: Bob Clune.

### Representatives

Austin Area Garden Council: Carole Meckes.

## Annual Texas Bamboo Festival

**Coordinator:** Carole Meckes

**\*Special note: Two board member positions will be up for renewal in August, 2008.**

**For contact information, see the TBS website at;**

<http://www.texasbamboosociety.org>

## TBS Membership

The members of TBS are a diverse group. The membership includes politicians, artists, doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, students, professional growers and backyard gardeners, to name a few. Current membership stands at 141 members which makes our chapter one of the largest in the ABS. While most of our members are from Texas (123), membership also includes 18 members from other states including Arkansas, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

Membership indeed has its privileges. By joining the ABS and TBS you will receive the following benefits:

- Email updates about upcoming events.
- Quarterly issues of **CULMination**: The Official Publication of the TBS.
- 6 issues of **BAMBOO:The Magazine of the American Bamboo Society**;
- The annual edition of **ABS Journal: Bamboo Science and Culture**;
- The **ABS Species Source List**;
- The annual **ABS Membership Directory**.

While in the past annual ABS and TBS memberships expired each calendar year, now you can join and/renew at anytime. There are several options for joining or renewing your ABS and TBS memberships.

1) You can join the good old-fashion way by sending a completed application form and \$40 to:

American Bamboo Society  
315 South Coast Highway 101, Suite U  
PMB 212  
Encinitas, CA 92024-3555

You may pick-up the forms at any monthly meeting or at our annual festival in August.

2) An online form can be printed and mailed in with a check made out to ABS. For more details go to;

<http://www.texasbamboosociety.org/pdf/TBSmembershipform.pdf>

3) If you want to renew online and pay by PayPal, you are now able to do so from the ABS website.

<http://www.americanbamboo.org/GeneralInfo/pages/ABSOnlineMembership.html>.

## Final Word

**CULMination** is produced for and by the members of TBS. To truly be a TBS newsletter, member participation is needed. If any member has articles to submit, ideas, research or recommendations that they would like to include, please contact me at; [www.bambooresearch.com](http://www.bambooresearch.com). Make sure you put "TBS newsletter" in the subject box or else it may be sent to my junk mail folder. I hope to hear from many of you soon.

Harry Simmons, Newsletter Editor