Until recently, many of the unique plants in the AASU Arboretum have been displayed in much the same way common landscape plants might be used. Short growing shrubs were used as foundation plants, larger shrubs and small trees as screens and hedges, and annuals and perennials as flowering ornamental displays. The intent was to show how unusual plants could be incorporated into the landscape. Starting this spring, the Arboretum will enter a stage of its development that will utilize plant collections as a method (Continued on page 2)
NEW COLLECTIONS

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of displaying plants. Plants can be grouped together because of their botanical relationship to each other, appearance, or historical relationship to humans or each other. Collections based on botanical relationships might include only plants from one family, like Camellias or Hollies. Collections based on appearance might in- clude only plants with white flowers or fragrant flowers. An example of a collections based on history is an ethnobotanical garden or a collection of plants described by William Bartram, an early American botanist. Plant collections should have a definable purpose, which is usually educational or recreational and many times both. For example, the purpose of a Native Flora Garden may be to educate the viewer of the importance and variety of native plants. A Japanese Garden’s purpose may be to provide a quiet, peaceful area for contemplation. Plant collections are an important component of any arboretum and contribute to establishing an arboretum’s identity.

A few plant collections have already been established on campus. The Conifer Garden, located east of the Administration Building, contains over 50 varieties of conifers ranging from trees to ground covers. The Fern Collection, featured in the Winter 2003 issue of this newsletter, is located on the west side of Jenkins Hall. The White Garden, a collection of plants with white flowers or white variegated foliage, can be found behind the Administration Building. The recently completed Ginger Collection is located at the south end of Hawes Hall. Although most people think of the spice used in oriental food when they hear the word ginger, edible ginger is only one of about 1300 species of the very diverse Zingiberaceae family. The collection will focus on the following groups of gingers: Alpinia, Costus, Curcuma, Globba, Hedychium,

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NEW COLLECTIONS

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Kaempferia, and Zingiber.

Plans for an International Garden are being developed for the area between Solms and Hawes Halls. The design includes plazas representing the continents of Africa, Australia, South America, Europe, and Asia. Plants native to these continents will be established around each plaza.

A collection that has been planned for a long time is the Primitive Garden. This collection will be located on the southwest end of Jenkins Hall and will attempt to put into perspective the development of vascular plants from the earliest land plants to the first flowering plants. Interpretive displays explaining the progression from reproduction by spores to reproduction by flower will be included.

Some of the plants to be used are Selaginella, Lycopodium, Equisetum, ferns, cycads, Podocarpus, Ginkgo, Metasequoia, and Magnolia.

There are also plans for a Native Flora Garden. This collection, located behind University Hall, would include the freshwater wetland area behind Ashmore Hall. Beds containing native shrubs, trees, and herbaceous plants will be created behind University Hall. In addition, a boardwalk will be constructed through the wetland area and will connect Ashmore Hall and University Hall. Interpretive displays describing the importance of wetland habitats along with plant identification labels will be included.

The Ethnobotanical Collection will be a garden that presents plants used by native populations for food, fiber, medicine, and tools. Included will be displays outlining the major periods of human history in our area beginning with the Paleo-Indian period (9500 to 7900 B.C.), followed by the Archaic (8000 to 1000 B.C.), Woodland (100 B.C. to 1000 A.D.) and Mississippian period (A.D. 900 to 1700). Examples of agricultural developments during these periods will be included.

A Camellia Species Collection, developed near the fountain in the center of campus, will feature many of the other species of camellia besides Camellia japonica and Camellia sasanqua. Additional brick sidewalks and seating areas will be incorporated into this collection.

A Physic Garden, planned for the front of Ashmore Hall, will display plants used for medicinal purposes throughout human history. The collection will be divided into four time periods: the early Greek and Roman herbalist; the 16th and 17th centuries; the 18th and 19th centuries (including the influence of American herbalist); and the 20th and 21st centuries.

The hot, dry condition of Solms Hall will be the location of collection of plants with thorns. Included will be an interpretive display explaining some of the physiological advantages thorns have over non-thorny plants.

Iresine herbstii, also known as Chicken Gizzard. Monopsis unidentata ‘Bronze Beauty’ is a mat-forming, perennial groundcover with needle-like leaves. Growing only 3 inches tall, this evergreen member of the Lobi- liaeaceae family (sometimes listed in the Campanulaceae family) has unusual, bronze colored flowers. Iresine herbstii, a member of the Amaranthaceae family, is grown for its colorful foliage. It gets the common name of Chicken Gizzard because of the notch on the end of its leaves.

On the west side of Lane Library, there are six raised beds containing plants on trial. Some plants have so little information available about them that the only way to find out if they can be successfully grown in our climate is to try them. This is especially true of new cultivars and varieties. A couple of beds contain two lesser-known ornamentals, Monopsis unidentata ‘Bronze Beauty’ and Monopsis unidentata ‘Bronze Beauty’.
Two new species of plants belonging to the Bignoniaceae family were planted this spring in the AASU Arboretum. The first is called Yellow Bells, or Esperanza (Tecoma stans). Tecoma species are found throughout warmer regions of North and South America. This species has lightly fragrant, golden yellow, bell shaped flowers that attract hummingbirds and butterflies, and should develop into a semi deciduous shrub or small tree. Yellow Bells is extremely heat tolerant, should bloom from late spring until frost, will not be eaten by deer, and can be found on campus in front of Hawes Hall. Cape Honeysuckle (Tecomaria capensis) is another member of this family new to the Arboretum. Cape Honeysuckle is an evergreen, sprawling, vine-like shrub that produces clusters of brilliant red-orange to scarlet tubular flowers. It can reach 10 feet in height if pruned as a shrub or spread 25 feet if left to sprawl. Cape Honeysuckle is native to the Cape of Good Hope region of South Africa and can be found on campus in front of the Health Science Building. Both of these plants are related to another interesting member of the Bignoniaceae family growing in the Arboretum, Desert Willow (x Chitalpa tashkentensis). This small tree is an intergeneric cross between Catalpa (Catalpa bignoioides) and Desert Willow (Chilopsis linearis). The initial hybrids between Catalpa and Chilopsis were created in 1964 in Uzbekistan and introduced into the United States in 1977. Tashkentensis is the city in Uzbekistan where the hybrid was created. The Desert Willow is planted between Gamble Hall and the fountain.