

LSU HILLTOP ARBORETUM is a 14-acre museum of plants with an extensive collection of more than 150 species of southern native trees, shrubs and wildflowers. The property was originally purchased in 1926 by Emory Smith and his wife, Annette, as a working farm and country retreat.

Emory donated the property to LSU in 1981 so that "Hilltop" could become an arboretum of native plants, and to encourage its free use by both the University and general public. Visitors will find not only a place of learning, but a hidden sanctuary far removed from the pressures of life; a space of solace and contemplation.



Ravines



'Emory Smith' Magnolia (40' x 25' Average)
Magnolia grandiflora 'Emory Smith'
Native, evergreen tree that thrives in a loose, moist, fertile, and acid soil in full sunlight to partial shade. The 'Emory Smith' magnolia, a cultivar of the Southern Magnolia, is registered with the International Magnolia Society and named in honor of Hilltop's donor Emory Smith.



Starbush (8' x 6' Average)
Illicium floridanum
Native, evergreen shrub with upright oval to irregular form. It grows best in filtered sunlight under the canopy of high soaring shade trees. The shrub tolerates moist, slightly acidic soils, but performs best in sandy, well-drained soils. Dark maroon-red, star-shaped nodding flowers (1.5 inches wide) are a showstopper in early spring.



Florida Leucothoe (12' x 12' Average)
Leucothoe populifolia
Native, evergreen shrub that grows wide as it is tall with graceful arching branches. It is tolerant of a wide range of growing conditions from wet to dry soils. Narrow yellow-green leaves, and an abundance of white bell-shaped fragrant flowers along the stems, is a major feature in late spring or early summer.



Cathedral & Bamboo Walk



Gordonia (30' x 20' Average)
Gordonia lasianthus
Native, evergreen tree with upright, oval form with slow rate of growth. It grows in swampy, acid soils, in association with sweet bay and cypress trees. The white flowers are magnolia-like, a five-lobed fleshy cup with many yellow stamens. A close relative to *Franklinia alatamaha* (Franklinia), discovered by John Bartram in Georgia.



Spruce Pine (25' x 20' Average)
Pinus glabra
Native, evergreen tree, open, irregular form that resembles the canopy of an oak tree. The pine needles are twisted (2.5-3 inches long), and the small pine cones (2-3 inches long) are arranged in clusters of 2 to 3. The tree tolerates moist soil conditions better than most other pines. Fast growth rate in the first five years.



Longleaf Pine (60' x 30' Average)
Pinus palustris
Native, large evergreen tree with upright, oval form with horizontal branching, and clustered foliage. Thrives in deep, sandy soil with a low level of organic matter. Very slow rate of growth the first three to five years (grass stage), then fast. Needles eight to fifteen inches long. Pine cones are large, six to twelve inches long.



Pond Walk



Dwarf Palmetto (8' x 6' Average)
Sabal minor
Native, evergreen shrub with mounding form with stiff, upright leaves in several planes. It thrives in wet, swampy areas but grows very nicely in well-drained garden conditions. Best grown from seed or small containerized plants, very difficult to transplant. Great substitute for exotic split-leaf philodendron.



Yaupon Holly 'Scarlet's Peak' (20' x 3' Average)
Ilex vomitoria 'Scarlet's Peak'
Nativar (cultivar of a native species), evergreen tree with a very narrow upright growth habit. The tree makes a great vertical landscape or accent plant. It produces volumes of bright red berries that persist through the winter and attract birds. Does best in evenly moist, acidic soil, and is drought tolerant.



Titi (10 x 8' Average)
Cyrilla racemiflora
Native, semi-evergreen tree with a short trunk with broad-spreading, irregular branches. The canopy varies from dense to open depending on light and competition. Willow-like alternate leaves, clustered at the end of twigs. Axillary, racemes are slender, nodding in clusters four to six inches long. Creamy-white flowers bloom from May to June.



Cajun Prairie-Inspired Meadow

Louisiana once hosted a vast 2.5-million-acre "Cajun Prairie," now reduced to just 100 acres. Hilltop's 3-acre meadow celebrates this native landscape, supporting birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects with low-maintenance perennial grasses and flowers that bloom year after year.

Divided into four areas (A–D) with mowed paths, visitors can explore a patchwork of native flowers and grasses. Hydric swales along the walkways provide drainage and habitat for wet-loving plants, while an earthen amphitheater in the northwest corner offers a perfect spot to relax, photograph, or picnic.

The meadow is allowed to bloom and go to seed, ensuring natural reseeding and a more resilient plant community, before being bush-hogged each winter. Controlled burning may also be used in the future to mimic natural prairie cycles and encourage healthy regrowth. Visit often to watch the meadow change with the seasons—and don't miss our spring and fall plant sales to take a piece of the prairie home!



Hodge Podge Nursery

After exploring the grounds, stop by the Hodge Podge Nursery for a wide selection of native, adapted, and pass-along plants—grown by our dedicated volunteers to support Hilltop. Many of the plants you see in the meadow are available here! Hilltop staff (daily, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.) and Hodge Podge volunteers (Wednesdays, 9 a.m.–noon) are happy to help you choose the perfect addition for your garden. Don't miss our spring and fall plant sales, continuing Emory Smith's tradition of growing plants for everyone to enjoy.





The Friends of Hilltop Arboretum is an independent non-profit organization that works in partnership with the LSU Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture to preserve, protect and enhance Hilltop to ensure it forever benefits the Greater Baton Rouge community. Established in 1982, with thoughtful guidance from founder and benefactor Emory Smith, its office was located on the site in 1991. Memberships from the Friends of Hilltop Arboretum make up about 20% of our annual operating budget. Memberships make it possible to further develop the site into a nationally recognized center for the study of native plants and landscape design. They also help us get kids outdoors, cultivate native trees and shrubs, and provide enriching educational opportunities for the entire community.

Annual Levels of Membership

If you enjoyed your time at Hilltop and would like to keep Emory's dream alive and enhance the site, please consider joining Friends of Hilltop at one of the following levels:

\$50 Azalea / \$35 Student

- Admission privileges and discounts at 380+ gardens throughout North America through American Horticultural Society Garden Network
- 10% Discount on plants at fall, spring, and year-end sales
- Reduced member rates for programs (including children’s camps) and events
- Admission to annual membership luncheon
- Email notices about programs and events

\$100 Dogwood

BEST VALUE

- All Benefits at the Above Level, plus:
- 10% Year-Round Discount on Plants at Hodge Podge Nursery
 - Free Hilltop T-Shirt (New Selection Each Year)
 - 10% Discount at Hilltop Gift Shop

\$250 Magnolia

- All Benefits at the Above Levels, plus:
- Margaret Stones Magnolia Print from Hilltop Gift Shop
 - Free Admission to Discover Nature Programs

\$500 Cypress

- All Benefits at the Above Levels, plus:
- 4 Nature-themed Pocket Guides from Hilltop Gift Shop
 - 2 Tickets to Hilltop Annual Symposium

\$1,000 Live Oak

- All Benefits at the Above Levels, plus:
- 1 Free Facility Rental, Room(s) of your Choice

Membership Form

Yes! I wish to become a member of the Friends of Hilltop Arboretum. Here is my annual membership contribution of:

Membership level (Choose One):

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$35 | <input type="checkbox"/> Magnolia | \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Azalea | \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Cypress | \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dogwood | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Live Oak | \$1,000 |

Membership & Payment Information

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Card # _____

Exp Date / CVV _____

Name on Card _____

Signature _____

Please send this completed form with either your credit card information or check made payable to: Friends of Hilltop Arboretum, P.O. Box 82608, Baton Rouge, LA 70884



LSU HILLTOP ARBORETUM

Grounds open to public to enjoy the landscape and unique plant collection.

Site

Open Daily
Dawn to Dusk
No Unauthorized Activities or Groups
Check website calendar for closures during private events.

Office

Tuesday-Friday
9am- 4:30pm

Inside

- Winter Plant Guide
- Self-Guided Tour Map
- Join Friends of Hilltop

Located at 11855 Highland Road
(Between Bluebonnet and Siegen)
P.O.Box 82608, Baton Rouge, 70884

Phone 225-767-6916
Web: www.lsu.edu/hilltop
Email: info@friendsofhilltop.org

Visit www.lsu.edu/hilltop for visitor rules, facility rental and professional photography fees, a complete list of activities, events, and programs.