

# Deep South Garden Club, Inc. 2023 Convention Tri-Refresher - Wednesday, March 8, 2023

## “Experience the Senses on Tour”

Breakfast on your own.

7:15 am - 7:45 am Registration hotel lobby. Make sure you receive your snack bag!

7:45 am Load bus at Hilton New Orleans Airport. Bus will leave promptly at 8:00!!



### Experience 1 – A Swampland Journey

The participants will travel by large boat on a 2-mile cruise through the privately owned wildlife refuge in the Manchac Swamp. Attendees will see the primitive beauty of the moss-draped cypress trees and view up close the inhabitants of the swamp. They will experience the sweet smell of wild hibiscus rose marsh mallow plants. Topics covered will be the wildlife, foliage, local history, hurricane and wetland issues, and the Cajun culture. The Corp of Engineers is 2 years into a 5-year project of putting a new hurricane protection levee for the area and will be viewed on tour. It's purpose and the effect on the environment will be discussed. Our guide will be Captain Tom Billiot. He has been doing tours since 1989 and attended the “Cypress Academy” at Loyola University taught by Dr. Bob Thomas. This Academy focused on the diminishing wetlands of Louisiana. He has been on the Discovery Channel multiple times as well as National Geographic, PBS, and the local news. He is a Native American and member of the Houmas Indians, speaking French as well as English.



### Experience 2 – Destrehan Plantation

This stop will consist of 3 lectures:

1. “Indigo in Louisiana – Blue Gold”

Our speaker will be Brenda Benoit, Heritage Coordinator for Destrehan Plantation. She will delve into the history of *Indigofera Tinctoria* in Louisiana – it's planting, harvesting, and processing of the crop. Africans contributed to this process before they were enslaved in the colony of Louisiana. Two demonstrations will be presented. The first will explain the three-tier vat system used to break down the crop and the use of a drying house for the indigo cakes. The second will be the dye bath using powdered indigo. The talk will conclude with the growing of *Indigofera Tinctoria* today.

2. “Bousillage – The Insulation Used for Destrehan Plantation”

Bill Sherwood, bousillage demonstrator, will highlight how the indigenous tribes of Louisiana used and taught our ancestors the “bousillage method of insulation”. Included in the presentation will be how the natural resources of the area were used for building construction in the 1700's such as cypress trees, clay and Spanish moss, an explanation on how lye for plaster was derived without the benefit of limestone, and a demonstration on how to make bricks from these resources. The talk will conclude with what type of plant Spanish moss is, its history and uses in Louisiana.

3. “Plantation Landscapes and Gardens: For Purpose and Beauty”

Laurie Porter, President of St. Charles Parish Master Gardeners, will cover antique rose beds in the landscape, planting a shade garden in Louisiana’s climate, and the best herbs to grow in Louisiana. Highlighted will be the location of these gardens for landscaping value. The presentation will incorporate the history of antique roses in Louisiana, whether to prune or not, where to plant a shade garden, shade loving plants that thrive in Louisiana, and the do’s and don’ts of growing an herb garden in Louisiana climate.



**Lunch – Ormond Plantation**

Lunch that day will be at Ormond Plantation which provides a beautiful and peaceful setting amid live oaks and lush gardens. Ormond Plantation was completed in 1790, home to indigo and then to sugar cane crops. The house was built in the “Louisiana Colonial” style for plantations, which is modeled after the great sugar plantations of the West Indies. The two wings or garconnières, which give Ormond its distinctive look, are taller than the main building and of a design possibly from the Atlantic Seaboard influence. The home was often the scene for entertaining officials of the Louisiana and Spanish governments. The menu for that day is provided below. Your lunch choice will be taken when registering in the morning. **Please make sure you note any dietary restrictions on your registration form. The chef will try to accommodate special needs but cannot be guaranteed.**

**1. Chicken Romano**

Boneless baked chicken with crispy Romano cheese and herb breadcrumbs. Served with angel hair pasta in a creamy Alfredo sauce.

**2. Creole Stuffed Eggplant**

One half eggplant with shrimp, crabmeat, and Creole seasonings, topped with Romano herb breadcrumbs. Served with sauteed vegetables.

**3. Catfish Bucktown**

Farm raised catfish dusted in pecan flour, fried, and topped with shrimp in a Crystal meuniere. Served on a bed of herb rice.

All meals served with garden salad, white chocolate bread pudding, and drinks.



**Experience 3 – Save Our Lakes**

This presentation will be on the bus as we travel from Destrehan to Covington while crossing Lake Maurepas. Our speaker will be Kristi Trail, P.E., and Executive Director of the Pontchartrain Conservancy. Attendees will be enlightened on the issues concerning efforts to clean our waterways. Highlighted will be Lake Maurepas and Lake Pontchartrain (which are connected) and how these lakes were removed from the EPA’S Impaired Waterways list in 2006. Present water quality and methods for monitoring and testing will be discussed. This organization has worked to clean up eight other bodies of water from the Clean Water Act’s 303 (d) Impaired Water Bodies List. Also included in this presentation will be the New Canal Lighthouse and their “Seed Station” where they ask community members to help start native flowers and trees from seed. The planted seeds are raised at their nursery and will eventually be planted in the coastal marshes.



#### Experience 4 – A Native Garden Experience

Mark and Kit Grote are the owners of Hopewell Gardens of Covington, Louisiana. As gardeners, the Grotes have been mindful of their observations of English and European gardens, mixing structure with an undulating free-flow planting. Attendees will tour the beautiful gardens which have been in the family for four generations. The present owners began landscaping the garden in the late 80's with mostly native plants. Over the years they have added plants from other parts of the country. Some of the unusual ones are *Davidia involucrata* (Dove Tree), *Cryptomeria Black Dragon*, plus numerous *Cryptomeria* and grasses. The garden has a collection of several gingers and many other perennials. Over the years, they have added several maples and many varieties of bamboo. Two small ponds are located in the garden and scattered throughout the landscape are Mark's sculptures. Hurricane Katrina toppled over 100 trees offering more opportunities to expand their landscape. Hurricane Ida has opened up new possibilities for future plantings. There are several named gardens in their landscape including a woodland garden, zen garden, winter garden, studio garden and west garden to name a few.



#### Experience 5 – Growing Grapes in the Deep South

Our final stop will bring us to La Serendipity Vineyards and Mr. Langlinais, a self taught Vintner. For his presentation he will explain the types of grapes that they grow, where they originated, and the reason Louisiana cannot grow a wide variety of wine grapes. He will recount his annual duties as a Vintner from fertilization, weeding, trimming and tying vines, netting vines, to harvest. The wine making process will be discussed and attendees will view the small winery. Mr. Langlinais will also guide participants on a short walk into the vineyard to see the budbreak and possibly the beginnings of grapes. Afterwards, a small wine tasting will be offered with chacterie trays. The day will end with a quiet sunset drive across beautiful Lake Pontchartrain. Rest up for the Welcome Party scheduled for 7:00 pm at the hotel.

- **This tour requires that participants be ambulatory and prepared for moderate activity. We suggest comfortable walking shoes and, as always, prepare for inclement weather.**
- **We ask all participants to be loaded on the bus 5 minutes prior to departure, snack bag and water will be provided.**
- **Remember, if you are taking tour for credit, the lunch program on Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup> is a requirement.**