

# Garden Tours Preview for the 2016 Convention in Shreveport, Louisiana

## ~Story submitted by Bobbie Ann Hutchins

*Ron Killingsworth, my brother, and I are nicely on schedule with our plans for the 2016 convention in Shreveport. I wanted to give all the SLI members a sneak preview of the gardens we are scheduled to tour. We have two new gardens scheduled as well as some perennial favorites. One new garden is the R.W. Norton Art Gallery and Gardens in the heart of Shreveport. The next issue of the Fleur de Lis will highlight the other garden(s) we will be touring. Make plans to send in your registration early, so you will not miss these terrific garden tours. The R.W. Norton Art Gallery will be open and free to our members.*

### ***R. W. Norton Art Gallery and Garden - Shreveport, Louisiana***

When the R.W. Norton Foundation purchased the 47 acres of the garden in July of 1947, there was a tremendous amount of work to be done. Although it had a large number of beautiful trees, the undergrowth was so thick that it was impossible to make one's way through it. Mrs. Margaret Norton decided to plant 5 *Southern Indica* Azaleas. Over the years, this has grown to a collection of 10,000 azaleas! When they bloom, visitors to the garden are amazed by the colors. Over the last ten years, the gallery has added flowing streams, an extensive xeriscape experimental garden, a large ginger collection, a collection of camellias, and over 60 varieties of maple trees in our Maple Ridge Garden. Original sculptures accentuate each garden room. In front of the gallery are ancient live oaks, adding southern charm to our grounds. We are excited to have you visit our gardens and experience how nature can inspire the artist in us all.

~Micah Stewart , Director of Education, R.W. Norton Art Gallery

### ***Briarwood, The Caroline Dorman Nature Preserve - Saline, Louisiana***

Since SLI visited in 2012, there have been quite a few changes at Briarwood. We have opened the Charlotte Collins trail for cart travel, which will allow visitors to explore the southeastern part of the preserve. As you travel along that trail you will see one of the other new projects, the restored Johnson Pond, with waterfowl, and other wildlife coming to get a drink. On our western border, we have completed the restoration of the Reidhimer Pond. This pond dates to around 1850, when it was used as a mill pond for the Reidheimer community. Throughout the passing years, the main parts of the property have been maintained and improved. The Louisiana iris garden is in fine form and we hope it will be in bloom for your visit. We look forward to welcoming all of you to our beautiful preserve.

~Richard Johnson, Curator, Caroline Dorman Nature Preserve

### ***Plantation Point Nursery***

Many members will be familiar with our nursery and grounds, since we were on the tour for the 2012 and 2009 conventions. We have made some progress since 2012. The Moss Steps, which have been under construction for several years, have really progressed, and we hope to have them finished before the convention. Stan's tissue culture lab is set up in "The Gator", a former guest house. We have a hydroponics demonstration project in the big greenhouse. This will be the third year for our new greenhouse for growing tomatoes and other summer crops in winter. What fun it was to can tomatoes in January! Stan has constructed a Zen Garden, which is about ready for plants, and it should be finished by April. My bog garden, with bog plants from Briarwood, is planted. And, we have plans and windows for the "Orangerie" and "Olivirie" which should also be finished. The color beds of irises were completed last year, and the guest iris bed planted for the convention is looking good. We are hoping that the Mother Nature will be kind, and that the timing will be right for full bloom of the irises. We are looking forward to seeing all of your in our garden in April!

~Bobbie Ann Hutchins



*Norton Art Gallery*



*Briarwood*



*Plantation Point Nursery*