



Botanic Gardens
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE &
NATURAL RESOURCES



STAFF AND ADVISORY BOARD

STAFF *part time

*Claudia Bradley, *Nursery Coordinator*

Claudia has a long association with the University of Delaware, having graduated from the Animal Sciences Department in 1981. Prior to her position at the UD Botanic Gardens, Claudia worked for seven years as a gardener in the Fischer Greenhouses at the College of Agriculture & Natural Resources. In addition to working at UDBG's nursery, Claudia owns and manages Monarch Design, a landscape design and maintenance business. Claudia has also completed the Certificate of Merit in Ornamental Horticulture at Longwood Gardens.

*Valann Budischak, *Volunteer & Education Coordinator*

Valann is the Volunteer and Education Coordinator at the UDBG. She also wears two other professional hats: As the Executive Director of the Delaware & Nursery Landscape Assoc. and as a UD Extension Agent. Previously, Valann worked for 14 years for Black & Decker in New York and Philadelphia, first as a Sales Representative and then as Regional Account Manager. She has worked in numerous professional capacities as project administrator for Delaware Livable Lawns, Plants for a Livable Delaware and Enhancing Delaware Highways. She also serves on the board of the Urban Community Forestry Council, the Governor's Water Supply Coordinating Council, and Bright Spot Ventures.

Dr. John Frett, *Director*

Dr. Frett earned his PhD from the University of Georgia, where Dr. Michael Dirr served as his advisor. He then joined the faculty at Texas A&M University. In 1986 he joined the faculty at UD, where he teaches many plant and botany courses, including *Woody Landscape Plants* and *Indigenous Woody Flora of the Eastern U.S.* As the Director of the Botanic Gardens, he has developed an extensive collection of woody plants. While Dr. Frett never met a plant he didn't like, he has a particular fondness for and specialties in magnolia, holly (*Ilex*), oak (*Quercus*), maple (*Acer*), viburnum, and false indigo (*Baptisia*). Dr. Frett taught continuing education classes at Longwood Gardens for 20+ years and lectures in the mid-Atlantic.

*Donna Gerst, *Publicity & Plant Sale Assistant*

Donna received her BS in Horticulture from Pennsylvania State University and an MS in Public Horticulture Administration from UD's Longwood Graduate Program. At UDBG, she assists with the plant sale logistics, public relations, and special projects. Prior to UD, she worked at a variety of paid and volunteer positions at diverse organizations, include Delaware Center for Horticulture, Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens in Houston, YWCA of Orange County New York, Downing Park Planning Committee in New York, and others, focusing on strategic planning, board governance, public relations, and branding. She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Costa Rica for 3 ½ years.

Anna Bower, *Curatorial Graduate Teaching Assistant*

Anna Bower is a MS Student and Teaching Assistant in the Plant & Soil Sciences department at UD under Dr. John Frett and does curatorial work at UDBG. Previously, she worked as a Natural Areas Intern at the Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania and as a Nursery Management Intern at Longwood Gardens, where she gained knowledge and experience in woody plants. While at the Morris Arboretum, she did an intern project called 'Rain Garden Rejuvenation at Bloomfield Farm.' Anna received her B.S. in Environmental Science from Willamette University in Salem Oregon in 2012 and did a Study Abroad in Perth, Australia in 2011.

*Melinda Zoehrer, *Assistant Director*

Melinda received her BS in Environmental & Systematic Biology at California Polytechnic University. She interned and worked at the Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden in Seattle, Washington and Rhody Ridge Arboretum in Bothell, Washington before starting the Longwood Graduate Program. After graduation in 1991, she became Horticulturist at the Delaware Center for Horticulture. She has Certificates from the Delaware Association of Nonprofit Agencies' *Leadership Program* and the University of Washington's *Fundraising Management Program*. Melinda served on the Boards of Goodstay Gardens in Wilmington and the London Britain Township Land Trust. Since 2006, Melinda has been at UDBG, where she is involved in the garden's management, maintenance, and planning.

ADVISORY BOARD

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Melinda Zoehrer, *UDBG Assistant Director*