Commuters driving down Abercorn Street have watched the campus of Armstrong Atlantic State University expand. They’ve seen the Science Center and Compass Point dormitory complex spring up. They’ve observed new parking lots spread across the north side of the campus and the university boundaries expand southward to include the former Publix Shopping Center.

However, Armstrong has also been growing in ways not visible from Savannah’s central corridor. Since 2001, when President Tom Jones designated the campus as an arboretum, Armstrong’s grounds crew have dedicated themselves in nurturing campus plant life.

On Monday, November 7, as part of the university’s celebration of International Week, Armstrong opened its most recent floral collection, the International Garden, located in the 37,500 square foot area between Solms and Hawes Halls.

Featuring plants indigenous to five continents—Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe and South America—the International Garden serves as an outdoor gathering place for students, faculty and staff as well as an educational resource for the community.

“There are 105 species of plants in there right now,” said Philip Schretter, AASU’s Grounds Superintendent. “Within the past two months I’ve had 12 to 15 different groups on campus and given tours—garden clubs, middle school groups, just visitors to campus here for other functions.”

During the opening ceremony, aptly themed “Watch Us Grow,” Jones presented Schretter with a certificate honoring his hard work in bringing the International Garden to fruition.

Jones also joined Brian Foster, President of the Armstrong Foundation Board of Trustees, in presenting an award to Tom Coghill, Savannah President.
of Wachovia Bank. Coghill accepted the award on behalf of the Mary Allen Lindsey Branan Foundation, which contributed the grant making possible the garden’s design and development.

“AASU’s campus has become a beautiful destination point,” Jones said, “not only for students, faculty and staff but for visitors as well. Today’s dedication is not the end but merely a milestone event in the continued journey of creating an attractive and inviting campus environment.” Although the garden is now open for tours, Schretter anticipates its completion in 2007.

“The garden is heavily weighted right now toward Asia and Africa,” he said. “There are so many things in Southeast Asia and Southeast China that grow well here. The cape of South Africa is close to our climate, so it has many plants that grow well here.”

As garden’s development continues, Schretter hopes to include more plants representing Europe. “It’s tough to find plants from Europe that grow well here. Mediterranean plants can tolerate the heat, but sometimes we have too much rain for plants from that region.”

Fortunately, Schretter has identified some species of trees from northern Europe that will grow well in the coastal Georgia climate.

Schretter’s fascination with plant life extends beyond their native climates, however. “Part of selecting plants that interests me is the story behind the plant—how they got their names, are there economic uses for them. I try to tell the stories behind the plants too.”

Schretter has many stories to tell. The International Garden is only one of seven major collections on campus. Combined, Armstrong’s arboretum features more than 300 species of trees and over 700 species of shrubs and woody plants.

“We have a primitive garden, a fern garden, a ginger garden,” Schretter explained. “We have a conifer garden, a thorn garden, a camellia garden. Plants can be organized by all different ways: by color, by family, by geography.”

Even with so many collections to tend, Schretter still lists other opportunities for growth. “We will have a native flora garden, a collection of plants native to Georgia, behind the Fine Arts Building,” he said.

Schretter also said he’d like to develop an “ethno-botanical collection—plants used by early inhabitants of Georgia for food, textiles, and tools.”

For now, though, Schretter has his hands full. “The International Garden is not finished,” he explained. “Gardens are always a work in progress. We’re a very young arboretum, and it takes a while for a garden to be established.”

While Schretter explained “setting is important” at Armstrong, he also recognized that “our primary focus is the university.” Schretter is proud to show off the fruits of his labor. “The gratifying thing is to be able to show people what we do have because you can’t see what we have from Abercorn.”

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**Cootamundra Wattle**

In the short time we have been able to evaluate new plants in the International Garden, many have impressed us with their vigorous growth and unique forms. But by far, the most asked about plant is Cootamundra Wattle (*Acacia baileyana* ‘Purpurea’). This small tree attracts attention because of the unique, purplish-red tint of its new foliage and its airy, fern-like, blue-gray, older leaves. Rapidly growing to around 25 feet tall, this member of the Bean family (*Fabaceae*) is native to southeastern Australia. *Acacia baileyana* is the floral emblem of the small township of Cootamundra, located on the western slopes of New South Wales, about 225 miles southwest of Sydney. Widely planted as an ornamental in temperate climates throughout the world, Cootamundra Wattle is adaptable, fast growing, and cold hardy to zone 8. Our 15-foot tall specimen planted in 2004 can be found next to the brick compass in the Australian section of the International Garden.

**Hey it’s July and the winter sun is shining**

**And the Cootamundra wattle is my friend**

**For all at once my childhood never left me**

‘Cause wattle blossoms bring it back again

*From John Williamson’s song Cootamundra Wattle*
Broadleaf Evergreens
Make the Winter Grays Green

By Philip Schretter

Broadleaf evergreens represent a group of plants indispensable in any landscape. By retaining their leaves in the winter, they make the colder months seem a little less bleak by providing rich, dark colors in winter landscapes dominated by shades of gray and brown. Many uncommon broadleaf evergreen plants are well established in the Arboretum and the collection continues to grow.

An evergreen shrub growing to 20 feet tall, *Daphniphyllum macropodum* produces attractive, dark green, large glossy leaves with red petioles. The 15-foot tall, rhododendron-like plants on our campus were planted in 2004 in a partly sunny location and can be seen on the southwest corner of the Science Building. Four other species of *Daphniphyllum* grow in the Arboretum. *Daphniphyllum hamile* develops into a small shrub growing only four feet tall and grows in front of the CIS building. *Daphniphyllum glaucocarpos* produces an attractive white undersurface to its shiny green leaves and should reach only 20 feet tall in garden conditions, although will grow up to 50 feet tall in the wild. *Daphniphyllum himalayense* spp. *macropodum*, according to the literature, should grow to 15 feet tall with the same rhododendron-like leaves as the other species in the genus. So far, no information could be found *Daphniphyllum calycinum*, our newest acquisition. These last three species are planted on campus in front of the new recreation center. The genus *Daphniphyllum*, comprised of 15 species of evergreen shrubs or trees native to China, Japan and Korea, is a member of the *Daphniphyllaceae* family.

*Lithocarpus edulis* ‘Variegata’, known commonly as Variegated Japanese Tanbark Oak, matures into a medium sized tree with leathery, dark green leaves with creamy, yellow variegated centers. Planted in the fall of 2004, our two-foot tall specimen is located on the west side of the Science Building. *Lithocarpus* contains about 275 species of evergreen, oak-like shrubs and trees in the Beech family (*Fagaceae*).

*Litsea japonica* grows into a 20 to 30 foot tall evergreen tree with thick, glossy, magnolia-like leaves with brown fuzzy undersides. Native to the coastal areas of the southwest islands of Japan and southern Korea, this species can be found growing in shade in front of Gamble Hall. The genus *Litsea*, a member of the Laurel family (*Lauraceae*), contains about 400 species of trees and shrubs found in tropical and subtropical Asia, Australia, North America, and South America.

*Lindera megaphylla*, native to southern and southwestern China, reportedly grows to 30 feet tall with very glossy, evergreen leaves that are aromatic when crushed. Planted early in 2004 in front of Gamble Hall and now three feet tall, *Lindera megaphylla* produces greenish yellow flowers in spring and black fruit in autumn. *Lindera*, also a member of the Laurel family, contains about 100 species of aromatic shrubs and trees native primarily to southern and eastern Asia, except for two species native to North America. Two other species of *Lindera* reside in the Arboretum. *Lindera benzoin*, commonly known as Spicebush, is a deciduous, shrubby species native to southern and eastern North America.
Lithocarpus edulis ‘Variegata’

and also can be found on campus in front of Gamble Hall. Lindera strychnifolia, an evergreen species from east Asia, has grown to six feet tall since planted in 1998 in front of Fine Arts Hall.

Another uncommon member of the Laurel family on campus, Nothophoebe cavaliere, reportedly grows at a rapid rate into a medium sized tree with glossy deep green foliage. One of the newly planted specimens in the Arboretum of this rare plant can be found in the Camellia Garden.

Eurya emarginata grows into a dense, upright shrub to nine feet tall and produces flat, herringbone-like, layered branches. Our plants, growing in light shade under pines, have matured to seven feet tall and four feet wide since planted in 2000. Another species growing in the Arboretum, Eurya japonica ‘Green Thinly Margined’, becomes a low growing, dwarf shrub with pewter-green leaves with dark green margins. Both of these species can be found growing in front of Gamble Hall. A member of the Tea family (Theaceae), Eurya is a genus of roughly 70 species of evergreen shrubs and small trees native to eastern Asia with great potential as ornamentals.

Manglietia insignis, a vigorous, evergreen, small tree in the Magnolia family (Magnoliaceae), produces long, narrowly pointed leaves that droop gracefully along the stems. In the summer, large, fragrant, magnolia-like flowers appear that are creamy-white on the inside and reddish-pink on the outside. Commonly known as Red Lotus Tree, one of our trees growing in front of Gamble Hall has grown to eight feet tall and six feet wide since planted in early 2002. We recently acquired Manglietia fordiana, a small tree with cup-shaped white flowers.

Michelia maudiae, another member of the Magnolia family, grows into a small rounded tree to 20 feet tall and displays fragrant, white, six-inch flowers in late winter. Planted in early 2004, one of the Michelia maudiae on campus growing in almost full sun in front of Jenkins Hall has quickly grown to over six feet tall. Other species of Michelia growing successfully in the Arboretum are Michelia figo, Michelia floribunda, Michelia skinneriana, Michelia wilsonii, Michelia x ‘Jack Fogg’, and Michelia yunnanensis. The genus Michelia includes about 50 species of evergreen trees and shrubs native to temperate and tropical Asia. Botanists have historically classified about half of the evergreen members of the Magnolia family under the generic names Michelia or Manglietia. Recently, DNA sequencing and other studies have convinced many taxonomist that the two genera should not be separated from the genus Magnolia and should be placed back under that generic heading.

Lastly, Olea yunnanensis, a rare evergreen from China, has shown strong growth since planted under tall pines in front of Lane Library in the fall of 2004. Olea, a genus containing about 20 species of evergreen trees and shrubs (including the tree that produces olives), belongs to the Olive family (Oleaceae).
How long have you worked at AASU?

Two years.

What are your job duties?

I cut the grass, operate heavy equipment like the loader, the forklift, and the tractor and handle whatever else needs to be done. However, my primary job is to install sprinkler systems. Currently I’m installing a new system around the recently constructed Recreation Center. A lot of work goes into keeping Armstrong green, but you can’t see my contribution unless you are here early in the morning when the sprinklers go off.

What is your favorite part of your job?

I enjoy operating the loader, installing sprinkler systems, and watching them water the plants that make Armstrong so beautiful. I like being outside, it is much better than being stuck in an office all day.

What is your favorite plant on campus?

I like the Century Plant because of its appearance. It looks like its straight out of the Jurassic period plus its covered with spikes and they grow enormous…. really cool.

What do you like to do for fun when you’re not at work?

I play guitar in a band called Blacktusk, so when I’m not at work I’m rocking out, or playing shows out of town. You can check us out at www.blacktuskterror.com. Be on the lookout for our new record which you can get from me or off our website.

Editors note: Andrew graduated from AASU with a bachelor’s degree in Liberal Studies in December 2005.
The Malpighiaceae Family

By Philip Schretter

The Malpighiaceae family, composed of 60 genera and 850 species of trees, shrubs, and vines, are pantropical in their distribution but concentrated in South America. Named for Marcello Malpighia (1628-94), an Italian anatomist and physician, three representatives of this family grow in the AASU Arboretum.

Thryallis (Galphimia gracilis) is a medium sized, evergreen tropical shrub growing to 6 feet high and about as wide. Producing neat light green leaves and slender reddish colored stems, Thryallis grows quickly into a dense, rounded shape. Thryallis covers itself with clusters of yellow flowers in the late summer and fall and will sporadically bloom other times during the warm months. Native to tropical areas from Mexico to Guatemala, it flowers best in full sun but will grow in partial shade. My fascination with the Malpighiaceae family began with my search for the origin of the word Galphimia. The word Galphimia is simply the rearranged letters of the word Malpighia. Thryallis can be found on campus on the northeast side of Victor Hall.

Mascagnia macroptera fruit

Yellow Butterfly Vine (Mascagnia macroptera), a scrambling or trailing vine with rich dark green leaves, makes clusters of bright yellow flowers in the summer and fall. Incredibly heat tolerant, this native of Mexico produces an unusual fruit resembling a green butterfly, thus the common name and can be found growing on campus on the southeast corner of Burnett Hall.

Brazilian Gold Shrub (Heteropterys salicifolia) produces panicles of small yellow flowers that develop into three-winged, red samaras that are astonishingly similar to the winged fruit of maples. This rambling vine grows on campus on the east side of Hawes Hall.
In 1768, Joseph Banks sailed from England on HMS Endeavour under Captain James Cook on an expedition proposed by the Royal Society to observe the Transit of Venus in the south Pacific. Personally financing his own team of scientists and illustrators, Joseph Banks embarked on the voyage for the purpose of botanical investigation. Sailing into Botany Bay in April 1770, Joseph Banks collected four different species of a genus eventually named in his honor. The genus *Banksia*, a member of the Protea family (*Proteaceae*), contains about 75 species with all but one occurring naturally only in Australia. The photo on the cover of this newsletter depicts a flower spike on a Heath Banksia (*Banksia ericifolia*) growing in the International Garden on the AASU campus and was one of the four species of *Banksia* collected by Joseph Banks in 1770.