**Herbaceous Ornamentals Crop Germplasm Committee Meeting Minutes**

Friday, July 9, 2021

Start time: 10:02 AM EST

Attendees: Susan Stieve, Scott Aker, Pam Allenstein, Gary Kinard, Barbara Hellier, Jeff Carstens, Andy Sherwood, Hannah Hall, Neil Anderson, Ed Snieder, Marty Reisinger, John Ruter, Marvin Miller, Madhugiri Nageswara-Rao

Reviewed last year’s minutes and made changes as needed.

Jeffrey Carsten: Accessions are close to 4,000 (woody and herbaceous accessions). They have approximately doubled their accessions in just a few years. *Agastache foeniculum* is one of the collections. *Monarda brevis* has done very well—a heavy bloomer that grows about 10 inches tall. Acquired *Monarda austroappalachiana,* which was recently described in 2015 seems to almost function as an evergreen, maintaining green leaves until early December in central Iowa.

Andy Sherwood: Approximately 24 accessions (2 replications) of *Monarda* were planted in 2020 to assist with harvesting of leaf tissue for Patrick McKenzie at Columbia University for a phylogenetic study. Most of the accessions were *Monarda fistulosa.* Observation data collected to date has included measurements on plant heights/widths; leaves; petiole lengths; pubescence; mildew ratings; various flower measurements; and floral phenology. A rather diverse group of *M. fistulosa* phenotypes, specifically colors ranging from white to deep pink.

Barbara Hellier: Orders went down significantly from previous years. 52 orders. 237 seed packets. Requests are much lower due to Covid-19. A lot of breeding and variety development requests. They added a few more accessions from the SOS program. They don’t control where collections are made from the BLM program. Continue to regenerate a lot of different taxa. There is confusing new guidance on whether *Papaver braceatum* is now a controlled substance. For now, that collection is not available. They continue to have vacancies at their location. They are going to readvertise for the Phaseolus curator position. They have been allocated 12 acres to replace land lost from the airport realignment project.

Susan Stieve: OPGC Joe Scheerens is named interim, and Susan is the interim director. They are going to re-hire soon. They will fill the HCS Chair position first (Jim Metzger retired). It’s a tenure track faculty position with an HCS faculty appointment. Covid had a major impact. Distributions have been challenging being at home. Tissue cultured Phlox are available for distribution. OPGC holdings were increased by approximately 500 accessions, which were largely transfers from W6 via the SOS program. They are collected primarily by the bureau of land management. They are close to 8,000 collections. They have been open for 20 years.

Madhugiri Nageswara-Rao: Germplasm in Miami. He is trying to figure out what the focus needs to be for the stakeholders. He has a very nice group. Contacting local nurseries and Fairchild. 90% of the accessions are out in the field; the rest are stored in the storage. He is interested in collaborations with germplasm. If interest, please contact him.

Scott Aker, U.S National Arboretum: suffered some major impact from Covid-19 pandemic. Staff hours were limited during the shutdown, so activity was limited to watering greenhouse and nursery plants for a time. Staff was unable to control weeds adequately. Volunteers were suspended from mid-March 2020 through early May of 2021. New plantings in the Friendship Garden and rain gardens had some challenges. The rain gardens are constructed mostly of sand; therefore, they are typically planted with desert-type plants due to municipal drainage requirements. Mulch exasperated the weed problem. It will need to be renovated. They were able to bring back their aquatic garden after 9 years. *Carex nebrascensis* has done very well in the aquatic gardens. *Rosmarinus* is still under evaluation. They continue to lose 1 FTE per year. Visitation numbers are very busy. They had 300,000 visitors in 3 months.

Neil Anderson and Hannah Hall: The proposal is going well. They are working on evaluating the phenotypic and genotypic diversity of flax in the NPGS collection. They have received annual, biennial, and perennial species (150 accessions). Most had high germination rates. Three species did not germinate. 16 accessions had less than a 10% germination rate. Those with low germination generated seedlings with low vigor. Unusually hot weather caused some accessions not to survive the field transplant. *Linum austriacum* is flowering well and looking nice (well-branched). They have much diversity in leaves, flowers, and growth habits. The SNP data will help ID some questionable accessions and provide information about the collection's diversity.

Gary Kinard: Many collection trips have been postponed but should be back on track next year. Distributions had a 20-25% decrease. This year is expected to be a bit of a rebound. Most germplasms are operating close to a normal level. Ann Frances, Botanist from NatureServe, will join the USDA-ARS PEO on 08/02/2021

John Ruter: Covid restrictions result in the loss of outside plant material. He was able to have a trial garden this year. They have about 400 trial plants this year from 18 companies. From GRIN seed, they evaluated *Monarda*, but they got powdery mildew, and about 70% did not survive the winter. *Helianthus mollis* evaluations are also underway with different flowering times from eastern and western material. They continue moving forward in the perennial hibiscus breeding program with triploids and their national head-over-heels collections. They are also working on *Agapanthus* and *Pavonia*.

Marvin Miller: Ball’s new research facility is open, Ball Helix. They acquired Gloeckner, which is heavily involved with cut flowers and bulbs. This acquisition will expand Ball’s offering. Breeding work continues, and they had little disruption from Covid.

Pam Allenstein: Planning on having an in-person Plant Collections Network meeting on June 20-24, 2022, in Portland, and it will be held in Fortworth, TX in 2023. PCN was able to obtain the herbaceous perennial hibiscus collection at Lincoln Zoo.

Neil Anderson: Dwarf gladiolas are in trial and getting ready for release. Painted daisies with extreme winter hardiness in a range of colors that can also serve as cut flowers. They identified two flowering genes in gladiolas.

Shaun Broderick will continue to serve as chair.

The 2022 annual HOCGC meeting will be held the Friday before Cultivate ’22.