



Director's Update June 2018

Greetings Garden Friends and Patrons!

How do you get 3,000 people to visit the greenhouse in one day? Have a corpse flower bloom! And if you want even more, have two bloom in a month! During the month of May, we had an amazing crowd of plant lovers converge on the botanical gardens to see our two titan arums, Rotney the Magnificent and Odie, bloom. Both were about five feet four inches tall and smelled just awful. Personally, I felt very fortunate to have the opportunity to smell two different corpse flowers so close together in time.

Differences in smell were obvious: Rotney's odor was slightly milder with a healthy dose of dead fish and decayed garbage mixed in with the rotting deer on the highway smell, while Odie smelled more like dead raccoon with a heavy dose of used baby diaper. To answer the obvious question, no, in all of my almost fifty years I never thought that I would ever write a sentence describing the differences in smell between two corpse flowers.



Rotney the Magnificent bloomed May 3rd. Pictured here with a growing baby Odie.



Odie bloomed three weeks later, May 24th. Pictured here with a decomposing Rotney.

June is going to be a great month too. Maybe not as amazing as when I get to write sentences about the smell of nauseating flowers, but great nonetheless. I'm excited about leading a flower walk on the morning of June 13th (register [here](#)) and about some new children's events that we'll be trialing called the **Kid's Crafternoon** where kids get to see and learn a little bit about some of our great plants and then make a craft related to the plants they saw. Our first Crafternoon will be June 21st (Register [here](#)).



Podcast: The Plants We Eat

We have a brand new project here at the gardens designed to help you learn more about the plants that we depend upon for so many parts of our lives. Cindy Proctor and I have begun to produce a podcast titled The Plants We Eat, which investigates the surprising history, biology, and culture behind the plants we eat. So far we have done about 8 podcasts with topics ranging from Apples and Grapes to Poppies and Mad Honey with many more coming! You can find the episodes [here](#).

Introducing New Staff

We have three new faces at the Gardens! Many of you will get to know our new education coordinator Wendy Wilson. She is a transplanted Canadian who is diving in head first to our Certificate Program, and she has also started to develop some exciting new programming for children and adults. Our new Marketing Manager, Christen Hoover, is a Charlotte native and comes to us from the nonprofit world where she specialized in Development and Marketing. Jennifer Bueno is our new Gardener who is originally from Ohio and who spent some time learning North Carolina Plant Materials from her years at Daniel Stowe Gardens.



Left to right: Christen Hoover, Wendy Wilson, Jennifer Bueno.

Plant Spotlight: Lotus

Ordinarily I'm not much of an aquatic plant enthusiast, but when our turtle, Nugget, decided to use a lotus pad as his own private flotation device I became a convert. Lotus is a remarkably versatile plant in a pond setting and, besides its obvious benefits for turtles, also has an amazing summer bloom.



That's all for this month! I look forward to seeing you in the Gardens!

Jeff Gillman Ph.D.
Director, UNC Charlotte Botanical Gardens

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