



**Southern
Nursery
Association, Inc.**

PRESS RELEASE

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SNA Announces 2016 Award Recipients

Atlanta, Ga., August 8, 2016 – The Southern Nursery Association (SNA) has announced the recipients of the 2016 SNA Awards. The awards were presented at the 118th Annual SNA Business Meeting on Thursday, September 1, at The Classic Center in Athens, Georgia during SEGreen.

The SNA Awards Program began in 1956, when the late John B. Wight, Sr., suggested to the officers of the Southern Nursery Association that an award be offered annually to the person of their selection who, in their opinion, had contributed most to the advancement of the industry in the South and to the welfare of the Southern Nursery Association. This first award, considered a lifetime achievement award, was named the **Slater Wight Memorial Award** in memory of the late J. Slater Wight, brother of the late John B. Wight, Sr. Nomination. Selection is made by the SNA Board of Directors.

This year's recipient of the **Slater Wight Memorial Award** is Eelco Henry Tinga, Jr. of Tinga Nursery, Castle Hayne, NC. Eelco has lived in Wilmington, North Carolina his entire life and is a third generation nurseryman. Tinga Nursery was founded in 1913 by Eelco's grandfather Eelco I. Tinga. The Tingas had three sons: John, who retired as a commercial cut flower and soy bean farmer; Jacob, a Doctor of Horticulture, retired from the University of Georgia; and Eelco who retired from the Tinga Nursery. The Nursery is now operated by Eelco Sr.'s son and grandson, Eelco H. Tinga, Jr., and Eelco H. Tinga, III, who has two sons, Eelco, IV and Fisher. They hope that the fifth generation of Tingas will manage the business in the future.

Eelco has also been active in the industry most of his life. He has served as Chairman of the Board of the North Carolina Landscape Contractor Registration Board, President of the North Carolina Association of Nurserymen in 1988 and again in 2001, President of the Cape Fear Plant Professionals, member of the Executive Board of the Cape Fear Council BSA, President of the New Hanover County Farm Bureau and vice President of the North Carolina Muscadine Grape Association. He has also served as President of the International Plant Propagator's Society-Southern North America Region in 2001, and President of the Southern Nursery Association (2009) and remained on the board through 2014 having served a total of 11 years.

Eelco, Jr. and his wife Linda reside in Wilmington, NC. They have 3 children and 5 grandchildren. In his time away from the nursery, Eelco enjoys spending time with his grandchildren, traveling, photography and water skiing.

Established in 1974 by David E. Laird, Jr., in memory of his father, SNA Past President David E. Laird, Sr., this award is presented each year to recognize qualified young men and women for outstanding service in the field of environmental horticulture and to offer inspiration for others starting out in the field. The recipient must be 39 years of age or younger and must be a member of his/her state nursery association. Nominations are made by the State Associations within the SNA region with final selection by the SNA Board of Directors.

This year's recipient of the **David E. Laird, Sr. Memorial Award** is Matthew W. Sawyer, CEO of Bennett's Creek Wholesale Nursery, Suffolk, VA. Born in Portsmouth, VA, Matthew attended Nansemond Suffolk Academy and Averet University, Danville, VA. He began working at the family nursery in 1994 at the age of 13, and held the position of VP of Operations from 2007 to 2015, until his father's (Wayne Sawyer) untimely passing in 2015 when he stepped into the role of CEO.

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Matthew has served on the Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association board from 2007 to 2014, and served as President in 2013. He served as Chair of the Virginia Nursery Association Horticulture Research Foundation (2007-2013) and coordinated the annual Research Gala Auction increasing the endowment from \$630,000 to \$698,000 while still funding over \$215,000 in grants.

In his spare time, Matthew enjoys photography, aviation, drums and music, as well as beer brewing and growing his own hops. He and his wife Melanie are expecting their first child (a daughter).

Established by the SNA Board in 1992, the **SNA Pinnacle Award** is given to the individual within the allied industry who, in the opinion of the SNA Board, has contributed most to the advancement of the industry in the south and to the welfare of the Southern Nursery Association. This award is limited to SNA members. Nomination and selection of recipients is made by the SNA Board of Directors.

This year's recipient of the SNA Pinnacle Award is Howard Smith of Haviland Plastics Products. After serving in the Marine Corps, Howard graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science in 1971, with emphasis in World History. He earned a Master of Science Degree from Stetson University, in DeLand, Florida (1975), with emphasis on Economics and History. Howard taught Economics, Geography, History, Psychology, and Political Science at Seabreeze High School in Daytona Beach until 1984, and served as Head Tennis Coach from 1979-1984 while teaching there.

In 1975, he and his father, Gene Smith, developed and pioneered the industry's first large poly growing container, and started Hercules Nursery Containers, Inc. Their first poly containers were specifically designed for specimen and interior trees. In 1995, Hercules Nursery Containers merged with IEM Plastics, which was subsequently purchased by the Lerio Corporation. Howard worked with the Lerio Corporation and Nursery Supplies until 2003, when he joined Haviland Plastic Products as Regional Sales Manager for the Southern Tier of States to assist the Haviland family in their innovations.

Howard served on FNGLA's Florida East Coast Chapter Board of Directors from 1978-1982, and has been active in SNA's Disaster Relief Team since 2004.

"I take great pride in promoting HPPs environmental accomplishments utilizing recycled plastics and producing the majority of our energy from renewable sources. I have enjoyed working with growers and their teams over the past four decades developing better ways to green the planet, and I am proud to say that many close personal relationships have been developed over the years with such a wonderful cadre of people," Smith said.

His hobbies include traveling, photography, boating, golfing, entertaining, coin collecting, and NASCAR. He and his wife of 40 years, Roben, reside in Daytona Beach with their toy poodle, Cinnamon.

Established by the SNA Board in 1999, the **SNA Environmental Award** recognizes individuals and businesses that have demonstrated exceptional leadership and through their voluntary efforts exemplified inspiration, vision, innovation, leadership and action to preserve and protect the environment. This award is not limited to SNA members or to the horticulture industry. Nominations for this prestigious award are made by the SNA Participating State Associations and SNA Members with final selection by the SNA Board of Directors.

This year's recipients of the SNA Environmental Award is Tim Thoms, Thoms Trees and Plants, Fayetteville, GA. Thoms Trees specializes in locating quality trees and shrubs for landscape projects. A registered Landscape Architect who has been in the industry for more than 30 years, Tim's list of contacts and sources for quality materials means he has the experience to find plants that meet his customer's needs for quality, value and needed delivery time. His past projects include the Carter Presidential Library, the John Portman residence, Centennial Olympic Park, Callaway Gardens, East Lake Golf Club, Lindbergh City Center, and Disney's Animal Kingdom.

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Tim has been an industry leader on water issues for more than 20 years and has spent countless hours away from his business working on behalf of the industry with little notice or appreciation. He played an integral part in the early days of the Georgia Water Wise Council which seeks to bring together the green industry along with water providers and environmental groups to find common ground on water conservation. He has also served with the Metro Atlanta Water Planning District many times being the sole voice representing the industry among hundreds of elected officials and regulators. Finally, Tim served as the only green industry representative on the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint Stakeholders group which worked for 3 years to develop operational plans for the basin and its reservoirs. This monumental effort brought together stakeholders from Georgia, Alabama and Florida all focused on protecting their interest's right to water while working to find a solution that would work for all. Tim has become a recognized and knowledgeable source on outdoor water issues. His integrity and experience on the topic make him an invaluable member of the industry in Georgia and beyond.

Tim is a member of the Georgia Green Industry Association (GGIA), Georgia Society of Landscape Architects (GSLA), and International Society of Arborists (ISA). He has served with the Metro Atlanta Water District, ACF Stakeholders and the GGIA Board of Directors. He is a prior winner of the GGIA-Jake Tinga Distinguished Professional Award. He is a GGIA Certified Plant Professional, and a GGIA Certified Nursery Professional. He is also a registered Landscape Architect and ISA Certified Arborist.

In his time away from his business, Tim enjoys XXXXXXXX (hobbies, wife, children, etc.)

In 1969, an Award of Merit was created to honor those individuals who have made outstanding contributions to ornamental horticultural research and, more specifically, to SNA. In 1972, the SNA Board of Directors resolved that the Award of Merit would be renamed the **Porter Henegar Memorial Award** for Horticultural Research in memory of the late Porter Henegar, Past Executive Secretary of SNA (1959 - 1972), to commemorate his years of tireless effort and service to the SNA. The recipient is selected annually by fellow research workers for his/her concern and work toward improving the nursery industry.

The recipient of the 2016 **Porter Henegar Memorial Award** is Dr. John Lea-Cox, Professor and Nursery Research and Extension Specialist at the University of Maryland, College Park where he teaches courses in Principles of Water and Nutrient Management, Greenhouse Crop Production and co-teaches Senior Capstone and Sustainable Seminar courses.

His research and extension programs are focused primarily on increasing the efficiency of water and nutrient applications in the nursery and greenhouse industries. He leads the water and nutrient management extension program for ornamental production in Maryland, with one other colleague. To date, this program has trained over 130 professionals and growers who have written over 350 water and nutrient management plans for nursery and greenhouse operations.

John currently leads a national \$5.16M USDA-NIFA specialty crops project, which is developing advanced sensor-based networks for decision-based irrigation and nutrient management in nursery and greenhouse systems. During his career, John has established or co-established five major research and extension programs, co-authored one book and five book chapters, published 24 peer-reviewed journal articles, 32 national and international conference papers, and more than 60 society, trade or extension articles. He has been invited to speak at more than 50 International and national conferences, and has given more than 300 other national, regional presentations and workshops.

John received the SNA Environmental Award in 2013 for his work in the development of advanced sensor-based wireless networks for decision-based irrigation and nutrient management.

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The Don Shadow Award of Excellence, named for the first recipient, Don O. Shadow, Shadow Nursery, Winchester, TN, is presented to an individual, corporation or organization that has provided exemplary service, leadership and generosity in the development, promotion and use of new and improved landscape plants. Recipients must demonstrate a sincere commitment to and passion for expanding knowledge and use of new and improved plants for the landscape. Nominations are accepted from attendees of the Southern Plant Conference and SNA Members. Nominees may be carried forward from one year to the next. Selection is made by the SNA Board of Directors.

The 2016 recipient of the **Don Shadow Award of Excellence** is Dr. Michael A. Dirr. Retired University of Georgia Professor, world renowned plant breeder, author, **XXXXXXXXXX**

Dirr earned his Bachelor of Science and Masters of Science degrees in Horticulture from The Ohio State University and a Ph.D in Plant Physiology from the University of Massachusetts. Upon graduation from the University of Massachusetts, Dirr was an Associate Professor of Ornamental Horticulture at the University of Illinois, Urbana, where he continued to work until 1978. He then became a Mercer Fellow at the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University through 1979. In 1979, he became the Director of the University of Georgia Botanical Garden. In 1981, he returned to teaching and research at the University of Georgia and was promoted to Professor in 1984.

From 1981 to 2007 Dr. Dirr fostered the University of Georgia Plant Introduction program, a program widely emulated by other universities. His program has contributed more than 100 new plants to the industry, with 13 patents. In October of 2003 Dr. Dirr officially retired from the University of Georgia and as a tribute to his many contributions to the plant world, the Department of Horticulture at the University of Georgia established the Michael A. Dirr Endowed Professorship for Woody Plant Instruction and Introduction. The endowment will insure that future faculty members will embody the commitment to teaching, research and woody plant introduction exemplified by Dr. Dirr.

Dr. Dirr's influence in horticulture is far reaching. From landscape and nursery industry professionals to the home gardener, his teaching and research have impacted the way we interact with woody landscape plants. He has published more than 300 scientific and popular publications, and has authored 12 books. His book, *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture and Propagation and Uses* is one of the most widely adopted reference text in Horticulture and Landscape Architecture education. It has sold over 500,000 copies.

Dr. Michael Dirr continues his quest to bring only the most outstanding plants to market. He is a founding partner of Plant Introductions, Inc. PII breeds, evaluates and introduces new woody and herbaceous plants for the nursery industry. The company's new breeding, propagation, production and testing facilities are located in Watkinsville, GA.

The SNA Board of Directors also honors individuals that have served this association and the nursery industry in various capacities throughout the years and have made outstanding contributions during their active participation in the Southern Nursery Association with honorary membership awards. This year, six (Gene Brogdon, James Harwell, Louis Hillenmeyer, III, Sherry Morris, Jeff Miller and Ed Porter) deserving industry members received **SNA Honorary Member Awards**. Each recipient has made outstanding contributions to the association and the industry during their active participation in the Southern Nursery Association.

Ted Stephens, Nurseries Caroliniana, North Augusta, SC

Ted was born a plantsman. His sandbox served as his first propagation bed and he spent his allowance on plants and garden supplies. So there was no surprise when Ted received his BS and MS degrees in Ornamental Horticulture at Clemson University. From 1969-1972, he taught Horticulture in the Department of Golf Course and Landscape Operations at Lake City Community College, Lake City, Florida.

In 1973, he founded Nurseries Caroliniana, in North Augusta, SC, a retail garden center focusing on offering rare and unusual plant material to the gardening public. In 1990, a wholesale division was begun to offer plants to other nurseries throughout the Southeast.

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Ted travels to Japan and other foreign countries on a regular basis to collect new plant selections for introduction to the American market. He is also introducing a number of his own selections which he has developed in selective breeding programs. Among these is Loropetalum 'Carolina Moonlight'™, which is a compact white flowering form of Chinese Fringe. Loropetalum 'Carolina Midnight'™; an upright deep burgundy foliage form with red flowers; Loropetalum 'Garnet Fire'™, Albizia julibrissin 'Merlot Majik'™, a deep burgundy colored leaf Mimosa; Ilex vomitoria 'Carolina Ruby'™ PP# 19266, a female, compact growing Yaupon Holly with one of the heaviest berry crops of any holly, and "Distylium myricoides 'Spring Frost' PPAF, a compact form with white spring new growth."

Ted has served as the president of the South Carolina Nursery & Landscape Association and has received its "Outstanding Contribution to the Nursery Industry" award. He currently serves on the advisory board for the SC Botanical Garden, Clemson, SC and The Center for Applied Nursery Research, Dearing, GA.

Nurseries Caroliniana has recently begun a mail order division, where many of their plants are shipped nationally and globally. They ship to other nurseries in Japan, Australia, New Zealand, France and England, where they wish to add new cultivars of southern natives as well as other new selections from Nurseries Caroliniana to their offerings.

Dr. Thomas Yeager, Professor, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Tom

Marc Tefteau, former ANLA Director of Horticultural Research and HRI, Canton, GA

Marc

SNA believes industry members should be recognized for their distinguished talents, extraordinary service and life achievements. The SNA Awards Program is designed to recognize professionals who have demonstrated their commitment to the Southern Nursery Association and the industry through these annual awards. For a list of previous SNA award winners, visit the SNA website at www.sna.org.

Founded in 1899, the Southern Nursery Association is a non-profit trade association representing the horticultural industry in the southeastern U.S. SNA provides member services to wholesale growers, brokers, retailers, landscape contractors, landscape architects, grounds maintenance contractors, interiorscapers and allied suppliers. The SNA strives to unite and advance the horticulture industry through educational, research and marketing efforts.

Photos of all award winners can be found on the SNA website at www.sna.org.

For more information on SNA, contact the Southern Nursery Association, Inc., PO Box 801454, Acworth, GA 30101, 678.809.9992, mail@sna.org, or visit the SNA website at www.sna.org.

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