

Teaching in an Arboretum: Spartanburg Community College Horticulture, the First 50 years

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Keywords: college enrollment, horticulture, arboretum, sustainable agriculture, hands-on experience, inspiration, persistence, Spartanburg Community College (SCC)

Summary

The green industry is experiencing a shortage of skilled labor, yet the number of institutions offering horticulture degree and certificate programs has been on the decline. In this paper the 50-year history of the Horti-

culture department at Spartanburg Community College (SCC) is presented as an example of a traditional horticulture program that has been able to adapt, survive, and thrive.

INTRODUCTION

During the 2021 International Plant Propagators' Society (IPPS) Southern Region in Mobile, Alabama, concerns about skilled labor shortages and enrollment decline across many of the region's horticulture programs were voiced in the Question Box

Session. These concerns have been quantified in various literature. Fifty-three percent of institutions eliminated horticulture programs between 1997 and 2017 (Brown et al, 2019), and enrollment of undergraduate baccalaureate students decreased 19% between 2004 and 2012 (Reed et al, 2016).

The answer to these concerns may be the recognition of shifts in student demographics. In a study by Choloupka et al (2018), 39.7% of students were female, and 30.3% were non-traditional (25 or older). Frequency of working professionals taking part-time course loads also made it difficult to clearly capture enrollment data, especially in two-year programs (Brown et al, 2019). There is agreement among these sources that shifts in recruitment strategies and revealing details about how certain programs are thriving will be necessary to reverse the downward trend. Student enrollment at SCC has been relatively stable for most of its history. Pre-2007 numbers are incomplete, but it is known that the program began with about 14 students in 1971 and trended upward for 20 years. Student enrollment of 40 to 60 was common through the 1980s-early 2000s. A spike occurred between 2008 and 2012 with headcounts approaching 100 (**Fig. 1**).

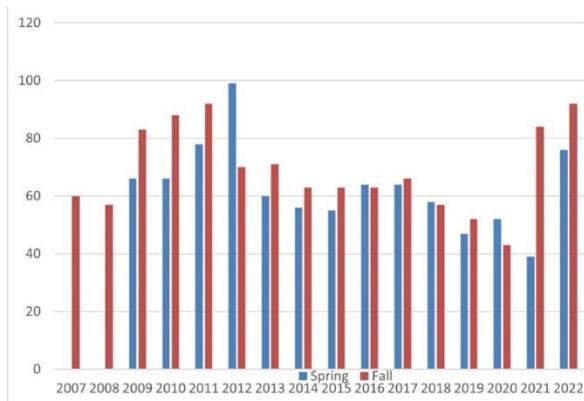


Figure 1. Student enrollment in the horticulture program at Spartanburg Community College (SCC), Spartanburg, South Carolina, 2007-2022.

A brief enrollment drop occurred just before 2020, but rebounded strongly post COVID-19 quarantines (**Fig. 1**), due in part to a tuition-free initiative made possible

with COVID-19 relief funds and an institutional scholarship program made possible by community partners. The collective forces of enrollment (quantity and quality), faculty stability, administrative support, and community engagement have the program positioned for growth. I hope the history of the horticulture program at SCC will serve as an inspiration for others to stabilize their programs, grow enrollment, and provide eager minds and skilled hands for industry.

INSPIRATIONS

In 50 years of working with students in the midst of a campus arboretum (**Fig. 2**), inspiration has come from a wide array of individuals and gardens. Trends have shifted, science has advanced, and technology has evolved; however, the formula has remained the same.

1. Present the latest, relevant information inside the traditional classroom.
2. Put that information into practice in the outdoor classroom (**Fig. 3**).
3. Observe what others are doing, and assimilate (**Fig. 4**).
4. Repeat.

This loop of learning has lasted half of a century because of the interactions of people, plants, and places. The result is something that continues to exceed the sum of the parts, much like the photosynthetic process. If you ask any instructor, current student, or graduate of the program what they have been most inspired by, they are likely going to list experiences that took place outside the walls of the classroom, on a field trip, or during an event where they heard from the experiences of notable, and noble horticulturalists (**Figs. 5-10**). Exogenous inspiration has permeated the program. A universally important lesson was delivered to students during the fall 2004 field

trip to the Raleigh-Durham area. In a serendipitous encounter with Dr. Michael Durr at the J. C. Raulston Arboretum he shared he was visiting the garden while his daughter Susy was receiving treatments for her battle with cystic fibrosis. In an incredibly

generous donation of personal time, Dr. Durr taught us that a walk through a garden is good for the soul. *Horticulture is a noble profession because gardens have the power to heal.*



Figure 2. The Giles Campus of Spartanburg Community College is nestled into 50 years of cultivated vegetation, serving as a 40-ha (100-ac) classroom.



Figure 3. Jay Moore (white beard) demonstrating tree injection to Urban Tree Care students, Fall 2016. (Right) Jason Bagwell (center) emphasizing the importance of spreader calibration to Turfgrass Management students, Fall 2019.



Figure 4. (Left) Faculty and students were treated to a tour of the J.C. Raulston Arboretum with Dr. Michael Dirr (red cap), after bumping into him on a fall day in 2004. (Right) Dr. Bruce Fraedrich (far right) demonstrates methods to test wood strength with SCC students during a spring 2016 field trip to the Bartlett Research Laboratories & Arboretum.



Figure 5. Scott McMahan (1994) and Alaina Mansueto (2019), SCC graduates, welcomed us to ABG-Gainesville on a fall 2019 field trip.



Figure 6. (Left) Mark Weathington (center) discusses the iconic specimen of *Lagerstroemia fauriei* 'Fantasy' with SCC students at the J.C. Raulston Arboretum, fall 2021. (Right) Tony Avent (white shorts) welcomes students to Juniper Level Botanical Garden and Plant Delights Nursery, fall 2016.



Figure 7. (Left) Elden LeBrun talks about the importance of codominant leader suppression at Bartlett Research Laboratories & Arboretum. (Right) Jason Bagwell and students gather under the Centennial Oak, *Quercus macrocarpa*, during a 2007 field trip to Clemson University.



Figure 8. Wayne Nicholson demonstrating the grafting and production of Japanese Maples at Pacific East Nursery, Lyman, SC is an annual field trip.



Figure 9. (Left) Retired Clemson professor Dr. David Bradshaw (holding deerskins) talked to our group about everything from sustainable agriculture, to making watercolor paint and deer-skin clothing at his home in 2012 on a spring break adventure day. (Right) Andy Cabe welcomes the SCC Horticulture Department to Riverbanks Zoo and Botanical Garden in 2017.



Figure 10. (Top) Jenks Farmer (second from left), with SCC Faculty following his 2016 Arboretum Adventures presentation. Jenks has lectured to our classes on multiple occasions and provided internship opportunities. (Bottom) 2019 Arboretum Adventures guest presenter Brie Arthur (left) signs a copy of her book, *The Foodscape Revolution*, for dedicated event attendee and program supporter Dr. Larry Roël.

CAMPUS, PROGRAM, AND ARBORETUM DEVELOPMENT

The Early Years. Prior to 1930, the Spartanburg County Home and Farm were located on the property, which served as the County Poor House possibly as far back as the Civil War era. The County Home structure was last used in the mid-1980s as the Davenport Rehabilitation Center, which was demolished in the late 1980s. The site of the former structure has a landscaped perimeter and remains a potential building site.

In 1961 funding for a Technical Education Center in Spartanburg was approved with classes beginning in 1963. The TEC's 1st building is now known as the Hull Building in honor of college's first President, Dan P. Hull. A second building was added to the site in 1968 and later named in honor of former college President, Jack Powers.

This early phase of campus development preceded the existence of the Horticulture Department. Still, some very important broad strokes landscaping was initiated around the Hull and Powers Buildings. From these early plantings, venerable specimens of *Taxodium distichum*, *Quercus virginiana*, *Liquidambar styraciflua*, *Plantanus occidentalis*, *Ilex vomitoria* 'Pendula', *Ilex cornuta* 'Burfordii', and *Cornus florida* remain (**Fig. 11**). The presence of these specimens, particularly the *Taxodium* provides another universally important lesson for students, many of whom represent the first generation of their family to attend college. *If a tree from the swamp can survive, and even thrive on a dry, west facing slope on a college campus; students can also have the power to grow and exceed expectations in a new environment.*



Figure 11. (Left) 1970 Aerial of the property. (Center) Looking into the canopies of trees planted in 1963 of a robust *Cornus florida* and (Right) a noble *Quercus virginiana*.

Horticulture Arrives. In 1971 the Horticulture Program began with a focus on pomology under the leadership of Jimmy Painter (**Fig. 12**). Jimmy ran the department single-handedly for a decade, fighting hard for its existence every step of the way. In 1980 the Gaines Building was added, and

Jimmy's students were actively involved in the landscape installation. The tradition of the horticulture faculty and students being involved in campus development projects as well as projects at satellite campuses continues to this day.



Figure 12. Jimmy Painter (arrow) and the first class of horticulture students in 1971 with the old Case tractor used by the department for many years.

After graduating from Clemson in 1981, Doug McAbee, a 1977-78 student of Jimmy Painter, joined the staff. Garden development became a focus and a shift toward ornamental horticulture was in full swing after Doug's arrival (**Fig. 13**).



Figure 13. Doug McAbee (right) taught landscape design throughout his career at SCC.

The Horticulture Gardens began to have structure in the 1980s thanks to several hardscape projects implemented by students.

The 1980s also marked the timeframe of the construction of a new nursery production area. These facilities gave the department a way to grow plants for annual sales, as well as propagate plants for the campus landscape. Funds generated by these sales have helped keep learning opportunities available to decades of students by supplementing scholarships, field trip expenses, equipment acquisition and repair, and the purchase of plants and building materials for campus improvement projects (**Figs. 14-15**). Production of plants uncommon in the nursery industry, but worthy of more widespread appreciation, has been a focus for many years. This ideology was inherited from Dr. J.C. Raulston of North Carolina State University (NCSU), and we are proud to continue his mission in any small way that we can.



Figure 14. (Left) Students installing trees and shrubs in the Horticulture Gardens in 1981 and (Right) working on site preparation for the nursery production area in the early 1980s.



Figure 15. (Left) Jimmy Painter (arrow) helps customers during a 1980s plant sale. (Right) Kevin Parris (arrow) working with students Delaine Childress and Stephen Parris in the propagation house in 2016. Several thousand plants are germinated, rooted, or grafted within this structure each year.

In 1990, Kevin Parris began as an adjunct instructor and consultant for new plant additions to campus while working full time at Gilbert’s Nursery as their plant propagator. Infill and diversification of the Horticulture Gardens with shrubs, ornamental grasses, and herbaceous perennials continued. Doug focused on the study and acquisition of herbaceous material while Kevin served as a pipeline of woody plant material from Gilbert’s. Horticulture Garden expansion to the western property line and an Urban Forestry Grant also contributed to plantings that continued into 1999. Jimmy

Painter championed these perimeter plantings and grant work. It is hard to image the arboretum today without these maturing specimens. Jimmy brought together the services of Kevin with Tipton Pitts, a former STC student and graduate of the Landscape Architecture program at Clemson University. Together they drafted the plans that helped Jimmy secure the grants. This collaboration was fitting given that Tipton’s father Irvin was an architect for several of the college’s first buildings.

Jason Bagwell came on board as an adjunct instructor in 1998 and became the

3rd full-time instructor in 2000. Jason's addition was vital as it coincided with a period of increased enrollment and a phase of new construction and building renovation on campus. Within eight years of Jason's arrival new projects transformed the campus landscape into what most people are familiar with today (**Fig. 16**).



Figure 16. A young Jason Bagwell in the International Peace Garden just one year after construction, 2002.

During these years Jimmy, Doug, and Jason worked steadily on the implementation of these projects in collaboration with Campus Operations Director Tommy Bulman, with support from College President Dan Terhune. This flurry of effort, following years of use of the campus landscape for education, led the Spartanburg County Commission for Technical Education to officially designate the campus as an arboretum in the spring of 2005. SCC has been a member of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA), now known as the American Public Garden Association (APGA) since that time.

1999. Blue Jay Way, a connector road, was built above the horticulture gardens to improve traffic through campus with access to two new parking areas. While roads and parking areas were a loss of green space, these hardscape additions created better access and opened new vistas into the Horticulture Gardens.

2000. The Health Sciences Building was completed, becoming the site's first multi-story building, providing visibility and new landscaping along Business 85. The landscape partially adopted a medicinal theme.

2001. The Horticulture Pavilion was completed along with associated landscaping and additional buffers from Business 85 road noise (**Fig. 17**).

2002. The façade of the Hull Building was remodeled along with a reconfiguration of adjoining parking and green spaces (**Fig. 18**).

2003. The construction of the Terhune Student Services Building tied the core of the campus landscape to its perimeter (**Fig. 19**).

2006. The Library Learning Resources Building was built within the core of campus, which also turned some asphalt into green space. In addition to campus development driven projects, the horticulture department initiated their own projects between 2001 and 2007 to better diversify plant collections within the heart of campus. This allowed for class time to be more easily split between indoor and outdoor learning opportunities. These projects were able to come together with revenue from plants sales, private donations and the partnership of the SCC Foundation.

These planting designs were typically hammered out during brainstorming sessions while on overnight field trips to favorite garden and nursery destinations.



Figure 17. (Left) The Horticulture Pavilion under construction. (Right) Diverse plantings now grace the approach to the Horticulture Pavilion.



Figure 18. (Left) View from within the canopy of a Chinese Fringe Tree planted following the renovation of the Hull Building. (Right) An approach to the Hull Building guides you under the canopy of a Sugar Maple planted in the 1980s, toward an entrance framed by Bottlebrush Buckeye, an intersection of walkways shaded by Orange-Flowered Tea Olive, and Shawnee Brave Bald Cypress, all planted in the early 2000s, towering in the background.



Figure 19. Terhune Student Services Building. (Left) Soft pink panicles of Near East Crepe Myrtle brighten a pathway. (Right) Kay Parris Magnolias provide a screen for a utility area and loading dock.

This tradition often included students circling the round table, cheering or jeering the ideas that were being bantered back and forth. Jimmy, Doug, Jason, and Kevin would frequently use sports terminology to affirm what made it from a wild notion, to pen, and paper. Homeruns, slam dunks, and touchdowns have become a portion of the living collections within the campus arborum.

2001. The George and Sissy Stone International Peace Garden was an extensive landscape renovation between the B and C wings of the Powers Building. Incorporation of species from many different regions of the world, in comfortable cohabitation, continues to be the theme of this niche garden, and the entire campus (**Fig. 20**).



Figure 20. (Top Left) Students adding herbaceous perennials to the International Peace Garden early in its development. (Top Right) Jimmy Painter in 2002. (Bottom Left) A 2020 rooftop view of the garden. (Bottom Right) No caption needed.

2005. The Sallie Barre James Plant Zoo, inspired by the diversity of Tony Avent’s Juniper Level Botanical Garden, became the second niche garden.

A renovation of the space between the A and B wings of the Powers Buildings, the garden contains plants with animals in their names. It also includes a display of hardy palm species (**Fig. 21**).



Figure 21. (Left) Jason Bagwell (arrow) works with students on the construct of a water feature in the Sallie Barre James Plant Zoo in 2005. (Right) Rooftop view in 2020.

2007. The Garden Railroad was built on the north side of the Library Learning Resources Building in the spring semester (**Fig. 22**). A small amphitheater with a canopy of *Ulmus americana* ‘Princeton’ was included to provide an outdoor classroom within a secluded greenspace cloaked with

Cryptomeria japonica ‘Radicans’ and *Osmanthus fragrans* ‘Aurantiacus’. The railroad and amphitheater were scaled down versions of these features seen at the Morris Arboretum and Swarthmore College, respectively.



Figure 22. The train crosses the bridge in the Garden Railroad in 2007.

THE NEXT GENERATION

The year 2007 was pivotal for the horticulture program, and the arboretum. At the

conclusion of the spring semester, Jimmy Painter retired after building and guiding

the program for 37 years. Jimmy's contributions to the campus, his students, and the horticulture industry are immeasurable. At the time it was difficult to envision the program moving forward without him, but his vision and energy persisted in his colleagues and former students. Support for the continuation of the program was overwhelming. Jason stepped forward to assume the role of Department Chair and began to come up with a plan for the fall semester so he and Doug could manage course loads with the help of adjunct instructors.

Having been an adjunct for 17 years, the call to provide more help stirred Kevin's soul. Before the start of the fall semester, he sold his shares in The LandArt Design Group, Inc. and enrolled in graduate school at Clemson University to obtain the Master's degree necessary to maintain a position as a full-time instructor. From 2008-2011 he taught a full course load at SCC while doing a mix of course work at Clemson and research at The North Carolina State University Mountain Crop Improvement Lab under the direction of Tom Ranney to fulfill his degree requirements (**Fig. 23**).



Figure 23. Summer graduate school experiences, including a hike to Roan Mountain with Dr. Tom Ranney (standing, back left) and a team from the NCSU Mountain Crop Improvement Lab were important influences on Kevin Parris between 2008 and 2010.

Having become deeply involved with the study of Magnolia genetics and breeding, Kevin continued to do research and completed his Ph.D. from Clemson in Plant and Environmental Sciences with research advisement from Donglin Zhang at University of Georgia in 2018. These pursuits helped build connections with colleagues at a wide range of institutions, leading to the SCC Arboretum becoming one of

the nation's most diverse collections of Magnolia taxa.

By 2008 Doug McAbee had retirement in his sights and knew exactly who he wanted to fill his shoes. He went to visit one of his favorite former students, Jay Moore, owner of Carolina Garden World. Much like Kevin had done the year prior, Jay Moore answered the call. With some graduate credit already in hand, Jay became an

adjunct instructor in 2009, all while juggling the demands of teaching, owning a business, and traveling to Clemson to complete his M.S. in Plant and Environmental Sciences. For Jay and Kevin, 2008-2010 were the sleepless years, and Jason tirelessly held down the fort while they cleared all their academic hurdles. Doug’s retirement in 2010 marked the beginning of Jay’s full-time employment and the addition of Kelly Lewis as an adjunct to help manage course loads and take charge of greenhouse production. Despite the long days and sleepless nights, the desire to provide students with memorable experiences continued to drive projects in the arboretum, which became much more extensive thanks to Jay’s construction skills. The years 2010-present, can simply be captioned “Jay Moore and students built...”. These years also brought another universally important lesson to the forefront. Life will present many opportunities. *If you can balance, prioritize, and hybridize what life brings your way, the interactions can yield products that exceed the sum of their parts.*

2008. A new parking area in front of the library created an opportunity to plant a median with *Nyssa sylvatica* ‘Wildfire’. Several trees were salvaged from the planned footprint of the parking lot with a last-minute relocation. New trees were added in various locations throughout the campus. The hillside behind the Health Science Building was renovated into a *Buxus* collection following a donation by Saunder’s Brothers Nursery in Virginia.

2009. “Mac’s Seating Area” was built in honor of Doug’s coming retirement with a new *Prunus ×yedoensis* planted to generate fast shade for him to sit under when he visited (**Fig. 24**). A Green Roof Gazebo was built within the Horticulture Gardens. A renovation to the lower entrance to the Ledbetter Building added *Stewartia pseudocamellia*, *Halesia tetraptera* ‘Wedding Bells’, and *Magnolia maudiae* to the collections. Kevin traveled to China for two weeks in May and gave a presentation to the community in October. This marked the beginning of the annual fundraising event: *Arboretum Adventures*.



Figure 24. Horticulture faculty in “Mac’s Seating Area” 2009. (Left to right) Kelly Lewis, Jason Bagwell, Doug McAbee, Kevin Parris, Jay Moore. Doug served SCC for 28 years, 21 of

those as a full-time faculty member. Doug passed away in 2018, but he will always be at the heart of the horticulture program and gardens.

2010. The pedestrian bridge and associated garden areas were renovated in the heart of the old garden area. Deciduous azaleas donated by Bob Head were planted on the creekbank flanking the pedestrian bridge. The International Peace Garden was renovated with the addition of an expanded paver entrance, and planting diversity was enhanced. Inspired by Kevin’s hike to the peak of Roan Mountain, the construction of the Garden of Convergent Waters began in front of the library with the addition of a grove of *Gymnocladus dioicus*.

2011. The Convergent Waters feature was completed surrounded by a landscape reminiscent of a mountain bald (**Fig. 25**). Inspired by Jay Moore’s adventures in the National Parks of Utah, construction of a Xeric Garden also began (**Fig. 26**). *Magnolia macrophylla* and *Magnolia acuminata* groves were planted near the Horticulture Garden entrance. *Magnolia officinalis* were planted behind the Health Science Building, and the first magnolia trial beds were planted along the roadway to the nursery production area.



Figure 25. An industry sponsored workshop brought students, faculty, graduates, and area landscape professionals together to build the Garden of Convergent Waters in the spring of 2011.

2012. The Louie Phillips Memorial Xeric Garden was completed, and the Health Science parking lot addition provided opportunities for more diversity.

2013. The department assisted with the planning and renovation of the original Spartanburg High School, turning it into the SCC Downtown Campus/ Evans Academic Center. The landscape was completely renovated, including an interior courtyard. On the central campus a tired hillside of *Juniperus conferta* became a diverse collection

known as Mt. McKinley, named for the student who did all the demolition and soil preparation by himself. The front of the Powers Building was also renovated after the removal of a monoculture of *Ilex vomitoria* ‘Schelling’s’. These plantings featured *Ginkgo biloba* ‘Saratoga’ espaliered on each section of wall.

2014. Linda’s Hill was planted above the stone wall built prior to the Growing Great Gardeners event (**Fig. 27**). The Balmer Fountain and associated plantings were added to the Downtown Campus.



Figure 26. (Top Left) The courtyard between the C and D wings prior to renovations and (Top Right) Plan for the space to become a waterwise demonstration with a southwestern theme. (Bottom Left) Jay Moore (wheel barrel) and students planting the Xeric Garden wagon wheel beds in 2012. (Bottom Right) Rooftop view of the garden in 2020 while the *Agave salmiana* var. *ferox* was flowering. The central bed is now a crevice garden.



Figure 27. (Left) In the fall of 2013 SCC hosted The Growing Great Gardeners Symposium with Fergus Garrett (left) and Aaron Bertelsen from Great Dixter Garden in East Sussex, UK. Fergus also jumped in and helped break ground with students in an area called Linda's Hill (Right), in honor of our mutual gardening friend, Linda Cobb.

2015. Business 85/ New Cut Road Interchange project extended the arboretum into the gateway to campus. The bank of New Cut Rd, the frontage road, and the perimeter of the old stand of *Pinus taeda* were dotted with noble trees and masses of shrubs (**Fig. 28**). The Heath Science courtyard had

another renovation including the construction of swings and a stone seating wall. New parking islands in the center of campus were planted with new material. Students began referring to the largest of these as “Parris Island”.



Figure 28. (Top and Bottom Left) Students planting the New Cut Road / Business 85 interchange in 2015, and (Top and Bottom Right) after establishment.

2016. After the maintenance of the train in the Garden Railroad became problematic, it was converted into an Asian Garden given there were established dwarf conifers and several *Acer palmatum* cultivars (**Fig. 29**). The new infill of evergreen groundcovers, hostas, and hardscape features transformed the space into one of the most beautiful gardens on campus. A stone staircase and new plantings were added to create an entrance to the south end of the Horticulture Gardens.



Figure 29. A peaceful view from within the Asian Garden.

2017. The Synthetic Putting Green and garden area was designed and built (**Fig. 30**). The Powers Building B-Wing Container Garden and Horticulture Television Location were developed after drainage renovation work displaced the 2014 landscaping along that wall. On October 23rd, an F2 Tor-

nado moved across campus, severely damaging or uprooting over 60 trees within campus and over 100 *Pinus taeda* in the 85/ New Cut Rd. interchange. Miraculously, none of the new interchange landscaping from 2015 was damaged by the heavy wind and falling pines.



Figure 30. (Left) Students preparing the base for the synthetic putting green. (Right) The completed green and surrounding garden.

2018. The Sustainable Agriculture Facility was built to support a new certificate, signifying the program had come full circle (**Fig. 31**).

A new orchard, greenhouse, and garden plots were built where Jimmy's orchard was in the 1970s. A Mary Black Foundation grant supported the construction of the facility.



Figure 31. (Left) A fallow piece of ground was transformed into the Sustainable Agriculture Facility in 2018. (Right) The Red Barn contains a classroom, kitchen, and storage for harvested produce. A greenhouse is equipped for hydroponic and aeroponic production. Field plots and a small orchard complete the site. The development of this site truly brought the program full circle as this location was the original site of an orchard used to teach pomology in the 1970s.

Magnolia trial beds occupy the lower portion of this field, providing evidence of the diversity of our efforts. The Campus Green was completed, replacing a parking lot that had existed since the 1960s. At the 85/ New Cut Road Interchange a Primitive Forest was planted in the footprint of the old Pine grove eliminated during the 2017 Tornado. The Primitive Forest was funded by the Balmer Foundation and the Noble Tree Foundation. Other projects in 2018 included the Hub Garden and Xeric Garden Water Feature Renovation.

2019. The Culinary Arts Bistro Garden was a major renovation effort that started in 2018 with demolition efforts. The paver work was some of the most detailed our students have ever done (**Fig. 32**). The International Peace Garden was also renovated with a dry-stacked stone wall, new evergreen groundcovers and herbaceous perennials. New equipment sheds adjacent to the greenhouse and nursery production areas were built to better house the tools needed maintain the arboretum.



Figure 32. Seeing projects move from the conceptual stage (top left) through the construction process (top right, bottom left) and into a garden management phase (bottom right) is one of the most valuable experiences Spartanburg Community College provides to horticulture students.

2020. The parking and entrance renovations to the Terhune Student Services Building provided opportunities to install new trees. A fitting project for the spring of 2020, a semester cut short due to the COVID-19

Pandemic, was the *Parenchyma Feature*. A small number of students were allowed to return for a few hands-on instruction lab periods to complete this feature (**Fig. 33**). Parenchyma cells make up the rays and rings

within a tree, providing a living impediment against the pathogens that lead to decay, defining the walls of Dr. Alex Shigo's CODIT model (Compartmentalization of Decay in Trees). Students now walk by the Shigo model daily.

Surrounding the symbolic stonework and turf is one of the most diversely planted gardens on campus.

In the fall semester project, Paisley Beds were planted with a mosaic of plants artfully bisected with stone pathways near the Terhune Student Services Building. 2020 also marked the retirement of College President Henry Giles who served the college for 50 years. To honor him, the Central Campus location is now known as the Giles Campus.



Figure 33. (Left) Students place stones symbolic of a wall of “compartmentalization of decay in trees” (CODIT) in the Parenchyma Feature. (Right) The completed garden area.

2021. The COVID-19 pandemic gave all of us a greater appreciation for our outdoor spaces. In response to a request from the Math Department, a covered patio area behind the Powers Building was expanded and seating walls were added to create a new outdoor classroom. The 50th Anniversary celebration on Sept 23rd was highlighted by completion of The Roel Bridge, the first vehicular bridge in the gardens which now provides a direct route to the Horticulture Pavilion and equipment sheds. It is a symbolic bridge to the future.

A respect for the past 50 years keeps us focused on the next 50. We prepare for the future, by caring for the past, in the present. Our campus operations staff consistently employ several graduates of the

program, and their partnership is essential to the condition of our classroom. The growth of the program and arboretum have also been dependent on forward thinking administration, the support of the SCC Foundation, the SCC Marketing Department, donors from the community, and friends from arboreta and botanical gardens far and wide. We are grateful for our mentors and we are charged with the task of propagating their inspirations. We are proud of students, who in turn, carry those inspirations with them. We love what we have planted and cultivated. We are humbled when friends, graduates, colleagues, and mentors come to see what we have planted (**Fig. 34**). Every campus should be an arboretum!



Figure 34. A visit from the NCSU Mountain Crop Improvement Lab, July 2021. The Convergent Waters Garden, inspired by a 2010 hike on Roan Mountain, led by Dr. Tom Ranney (far right).