

# Arboretum celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month



Laura McCabe

We are celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month through October 15 at the New Hanover County Arboretum. We invite everyone to visit and take part in a scavenger hunt to learn about plants that are native to Latin America. Free scavenger hunt maps will be available at the garden entrances. Look for the colorful signs placed by the plants for identification. Completed maps can be entered into a drawing for a valuable door prize that will be awarded after Hispanic Heritage Month concludes. We will stream a playlist of Latin American music for you to enjoy from your own phone, to get you into the spirit, as you visit the gardens. And if you're hungry, there will be a food truck serving Latin American cocina on some weekend days.

The Friends of the Arboretum is a nonprofit volunteer organization whose mission is to support the gardens and programs at the Arboretum. We do this through memberships and fundraising. I know that many of you reading this are already Friends of the Arboretum, and we thank you for your support! Your membership dues and other donations are an important part of our fundraising.

Another important part of our fundraising comes through events, such as Art in the Arboretum, which has been held for 25 years in the fall. It's no secret that the pandemic has dramatically hampered our ability to hold large in-person fundraising

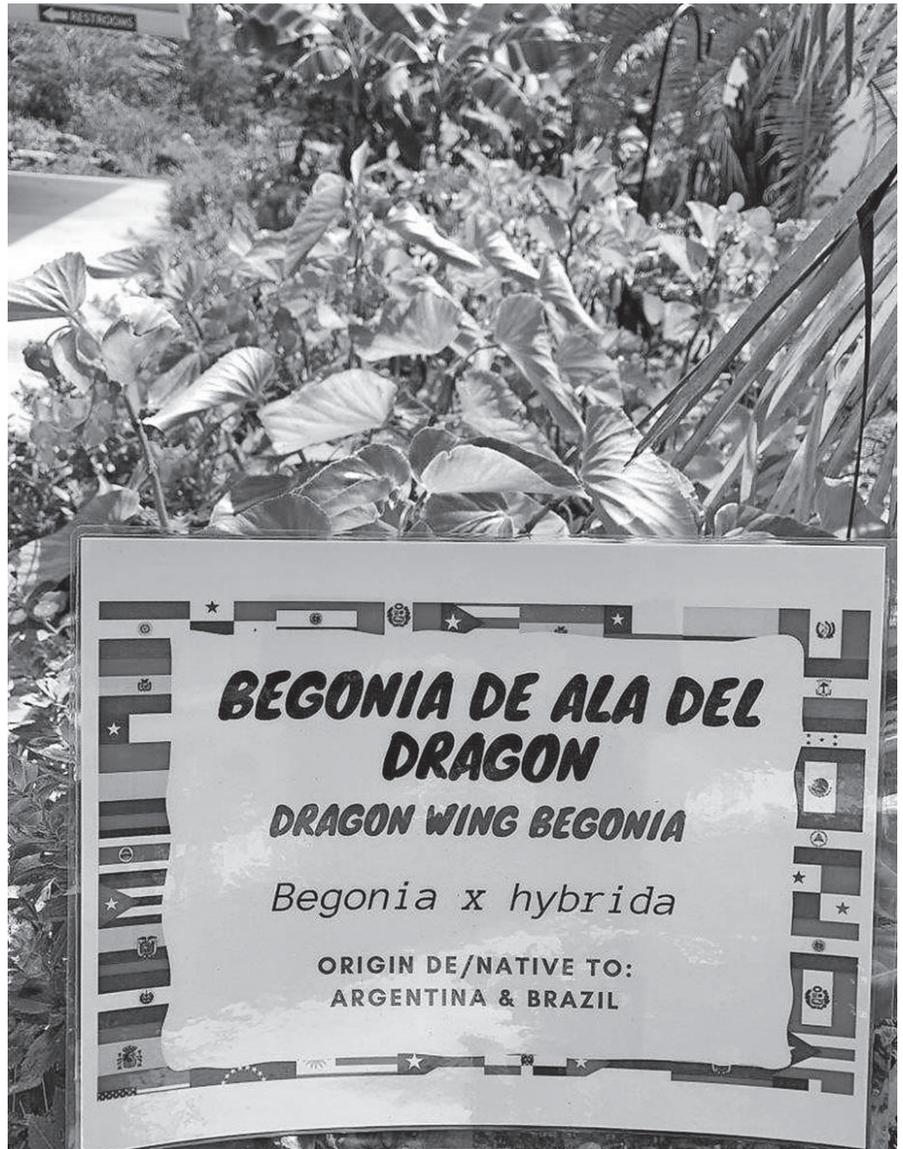
events, so like everyone else, we're having to get creative by holding smaller and more virtual events instead. We will be sharing more soon about plans for Art in the Arboretum 2020, which will be held virtually this year from November 6 to December 17.

But we are not just about fundraising. The Friends of the Arboretum board has made a commitment to expand our outreach to the entire community, to ensure that everyone feels welcome and invited to enjoy the gardens and participate in the events and programs that are offered.

Hopefully Hispanic Heritage Month will be the first of many successful events to celebrate our diverse communities and recognize important milestone dates while surrounded by the beauty of the Arboretum gardens. What do you think our next celebration should be? Can you think of a way to weave in something fun and educational about plants? We want everyone to be a part of the Arboretum. We welcome your ideas for future celebrations.

The gardens at the Arboretum are free and open daily to all New Hanover County residents and visitors. Those of us who volunteer at the Arboretum are very proud of this fact, and we love being ambassadors for the Arboretum. Just the other day I was chatting with some tourists from Charlotte at a local restaurant, and eagerly invited them to visit the Arboretum after they finished their seafood lunch.

As a volunteer at the Arboretum, I try to take note of who I see enjoying the gardens when I'm there. One thing I love about the Arboretum is its accessibility to everyone, including your leashed pet. I think you'll love it too. If you are one of those folks who



Dragon Wing Begonia is native to Latin America [CONTRIBUTED PHOTO]

has never visited the Arboretum, or it's been a while, we are located at 6206 Oleander Drive in Wilmington. Don't forget, the Arboretum

grounds are free and open every day from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

If you have questions or comments, you can contact Lloyd

Singleton, New Hanover County Extension director, at [lsingleton@nhcgov.com](mailto:lsingleton@nhcgov.com) or 910-798-7660.