Supporting the ‘Green Industry’

The Need: North Carolina is increasingly becoming more urban, and ornamental plants play an important role in our urban settings. Students, the nursery and landscape industry — which contributed more than $8 billion to the state's economy in 2005 — and the public demand knowledge, educational programs and creative research that addresses and promotes responsible design and management of cultivated landscapes. Continued economic growth in the nursery industry requires the acquisition, development and testing of new plants with commercial ornamental potential.

Serving the Need: The JC Raulston Arboretum at NC State University was established 31 years ago to provide research and educational programs for the nursery industry, NC State students and the public.

Today, the 1,800-member Arboretum:
- hosts from 20,000 to 30,000 visitors annually, with more than 3,000 people attending lectures, workshops, field days and symposia on ornamental plants and their cultivation in 2006;
- is an educational resource for the university, the public and the “green industry,” displaying and interpreting about 5,000 different plant types in its 8.5 acre ornamental garden;
- serves as a catalyst for North Carolina nursery industry growth through plant introduction and plant evaluation programs, public educational programs and its new initiatives in ornamental plant breeding;
- serves as a living laboratory for NC State students in horticulture, plant biology, and landscape architecture.

Impact beyond North Carolina: Many plants currently important in the North Carolina nursery industry and in the Southeastern U.S. trace their origin to Arboretum plant introduction and breeding activities, and new creations are under development for future introduction to the industry.

For more information, contact: Dr. Dennis Werner, director, JC Raulston Arboretum, Department of Horticultural Science, 919-513-7006 or dennis_werner@ncsu.edu