

## LETTER FROM THE ENGLISH GARDENER

# A Not So Secret Garden

Dallas Arboretum is full of beauty *and* science with the testing of new plants



Patrick  
Butterworth

Well my dears, talk about an incredible start to my week — breakfast at the Dallas Arboretum (and a leisurely one at that): what a treat for this old gardener.

But this wasn't just any old breakfast. I was the guest of Jimmy Turner, a dear old friend (younger than me, but never mind).

Jimmy, like so many of the plants he uses in his designs for the gardens at the Arboretum, is full of energy. He is overflowing with great ideas for gardeners, or maybe I should say "overgrowing."

Part of his work is to design, locate, and organize the various seasonal planting — no

mean feat. It takes a great deal of planning and a thorough knowledge of the plant material. That, in and of itself, is a test of his abilities.

Mr. Turner's official title is director of horticultural research, and though many of us may not be aware, just like the other great gardens of the world, Dallas' own marvelous showcases of plant material are indeed working gardens.

Yes, there is a very serious side to the Arboretum — plant research and development. Many seed companies, plant growers, and other garden centers from all over the United States and other parts of the world send samples of their wares to be tested under Texas conditions, our weather and our delightful soil.

Whether it is a new variety

of ageratum, one that takes full summer sun; or the tapioca plant, an exotic, colorful, tropical perfect to spice up some of those boring corners in the garden; or that unusual papaya tree, reminding me of something from *The Jetsons*, very exotic, highly perfumed, great to plant around pools and courtyards, you only have to look around at the many large pots and raised beds to get a whole new slant on how and where to use your plants.

Meander through the Fern Dell and quickly you realize there is more to ground cover than Asian jasmine.

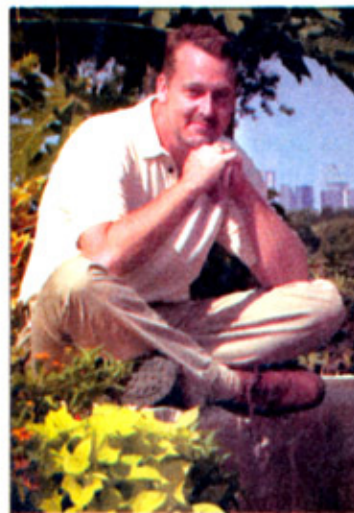
Take a stroll to the Women's Garden. Sit, relax, take a deep breath, savor the sheer simplicity, and let the serenity surround you — it's better than a shrink.

There are two little corners that I just love, one is the Lay Garden. It reminds me of a big old country house garden in England, just overflowing with brilliant rudbeckia, salvia greggii, and delightful pink garden phlox, all bobbing their colorful blooms in a gentle breeze among the evergreen shrubs.

The other is the Sunken Garden — you step down into a very private little space, very cozy, a place to sit and swap secrets.

What a visit I had, mind boggling actually. I could take a week just to wander around taking in all the Arboretum's delights.

Like all folks, especially when the days start getting



STAFF PHOTOS: ELIZABETH LAWIN

**MASTER OF HIS DOMAIN:** Jimmy Turner organizes seasonal planting for the Arboretum and oversees plant testing. Arboretum visitors are treated to the blooms he cultivates (above right and bottom left).

## ■ ABOUT THE DALLAS ARBORETUM:

- 8525 Garland Road, Dallas
- 214-515-6500
- [www.dallasarboretum.org](http://www.dallasarboretum.org)
- Hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. daily (closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day)
- Admission: \$8, Adults; \$7, Seniors 65 and over; \$5, children ages 3-12
- On-site parking is \$5



shorter, I love to learn more about my work, which is my life, so I shall be checking out, and enrolling for some of the fall and winter adult classes offered by the Arboretum. You may not be able to teach old dogs new tricks, but us old gardeners love to learn all about new plants and ways of doing things.

I am looking forward to fall. Just waiting to see what Mr. Turner has in store for us is exciting. Even at the Arboretum, remember, the answer lies in the soil (and the folks that put it all together).