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Extension Solutions for Homes and Gardens

by Paul J. Pugliese

“The Burgess Arboretum at Reinhardt College”

The Reinhardt College campus in Cherokee County contains a unique arboretum, initiated by the late Dr. James Rowland Burgess, Jr. in 1951, which contains heritage trees of historical and noteworthy value to Cherokee County and Georgia. The Arboretum is located on the 540-acre campus of Reinhardt College in Waleska, GA, just 20 minutes northwest of downtown Canton. The convenient location of the Arboretum makes it easily accessible and a desirable destination point for eco-tourists, hobby gardeners, green industry businesses, horticulture enthusiasts and interested students.

Dr. Burgess dedicated his time and service to the creation of an arboretum on the Reinhardt College campus. The work done by Dr. Burgess still remains in the archives of the College’s Hill Freeman Library and Spruill Learning Center. During his 28-year presidency (1944-1973), more than 550 trees and 800 shrubs were planted and cataloged by Dr. Burgess. Although the Reinhardt College campus has changed dramatically since the Burgess Era, the landscape still contains large green space tracts that are intact with numerous, noteworthy tree specimens.

Since 2008, the Arboretum and associated tree records have undergone a revival and restoration so to be utilized and more greatly appreciated by the general public and the Reinhardt College community. The College partnered with the Cherokee County Cooperative Extension Office and Cherokee County Master Gardeners to restore the campus arboretum into a modern arboretum for historical and educational value. To date, the restoration effort has included entering tree records from the original card catalogs into a database, conducting surveys on new trees and shrubs and original specimens according to the map and cataloging system used by Dr. Burgess, and posting new signs to mark original trees for identification. A tour map of the arboretum will be completed in the near future using GPS technology.

On Saturday October 3, 2009, the Burgess Arboretum will be officially dedicated and open to the public during Reinhardt College’s Alumni Day. In celebration of the College’s 125-year Anniversary (1883-2008), visitors can take a tour of Reinhardt’s 125 Most Noble Trees and Shrubs Walk. More tree walk paths and signs will be added as Arboretum restoration efforts continue into the future.

So, if you want to see or learn some interesting trees and enjoy this year’s fall color, come by and see the newly restored arboretum at Reinhardt College! Touring the Burgess Arboretum is free and the campus is open to the public daily from dusk to dawn for self-guided tours. Guided tours for groups are available upon request. If you would like to make a donation, an endowment fund has been established for student projects, memorial trees, tree planting and labeling initiatives in the future. For more information, see the following websites, join us on Facebook Groups under Burgess Arboretum at Reinhardt College, or contact Zach White, Reinhardt College Horticulturist at (770) 720-5988.

Visiting Reinhardt College: www.reinhardt.edu/visitors

Directions to Reinhardt College: www.reinhardt.edu/OurStory/Directions

Blog Site about Burgess Arboretum: <http://burgessarboretumatreinhardtcollege.blogspot.com>

October 3rd Grand Opening Schedule: www.reinhardt.edu/Events/2009/alumni-day-09.html

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