

Botanical Research Institute of Texas 500 East 4th St. Fort Worth, Texas 76102

For Release: Tuesday, September 16, 2008

PIONEERING STUDY OF PLANTS SUITABLE FOR “GREEN” ROOFS IN NORTH TEXAS TO BE TOPIC OF TALK BY DESERT ECOLOGIST AND TCU ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR ON THURSDAY, OCT. 2, 2008; FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC; RECEPTION, 6:30 P.M.; LECTURE, 7:00 P.M.

FORT WORTH, Texas – Breaking new ground in the world of eco-design and environmental stewardship, Tony L. Burgess, Ph.D., a botanist, desert ecologist, and Texas Christian University (TCU) professor, will discuss his pioneering study of the plants suitable for “green” roofs in North Texas on Thursday, Oct. 2, 2008, at Fort Worth Botanic Garden’s Dorothea Leonhardt Lecture Hall at 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard (off University Drive).

Professor Burgess is the second speaker in this fall’s Distinguished Lecturer Series organized by the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT). This year’s series is about what it means to live sustainably in urban areas and how green building and landscape practices help us to be better stewards of our environment and finite natural resources. Professor Burgess’s talk will be especially à propos, since BRIT is planning to have a green roof over its new gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System™ facility to be built adjacent to the Fort Worth Botanic Garden.

The co-hosts of the lecture series, the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, Fort Worth Botanical Society, and Fort Worth Garden Club, will hold a reception from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in honor of Burgess. He will begin his talk, titled “Green Roofs From Prairie Barrens: Inviting the Fort Worth Prairie Into the City,” at 7:00 p.m. Admission is free and open to the public for both the reception and lecture; seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. For information, call BRIT at 817.332.4441 or Metro 817.429.3200, or visit BRIT’s Web site: www.brit.org.

As Professor of Professional Practice in Environmental Science for The Institute for Environmental Studies at TCU, Burgess is on a mission to connect people with the vitality and heritage of the landscapes that they inhabit. Besides green roofs, he currently focuses on the environmental history of the western Cross Timbers and the wetlands of North Central Texas.

In the 1980s, he created the desert plant exhibit for the rooftop of the former Caravan of Dreams before he joined the Biosphere 2 project north of Tucson. Biosphere 2 was an attempt to create an enclosed, evolving model of our planetary biosphere. Burgess participated in the design and assembly of the dry biomes (ecological communities) of the project and served as manager of the biomes. After Columbia University took charge of Biosphere 2, he became site naturalist. He joined the faculty of Columbia’s Earth Semester, an interdisciplinary program that emphasized field experience and environmental problem solving, and taught there until Columbia withdrew from the Biosphere 2 campus in December 2003.

A Fort Worth native, Burgess earned his Ph.D. in botany at Texas Tech University. He received his master’s degree in ecology from the University of Arizona.

more

About the Botanical Research Institute of Texas

Opened in 1991, BRIT is a nonprofit international botanical resource center open to the public. Its mission is to conserve our natural heritage by deepening our knowledge of the plant world and achieving public understanding of the value that plants bring to life. BRIT fosters respect for ecological balance and the interconnectedness of all living things, the conservation of biological diversity, the integrity of scientific investigation and intellectual pursuits, and the desire to discover the unknown to expand humankind's knowledge and understanding of plants in our natural environment.

BRIT has conducted extensive research in tropical rainforests in the Philippines, Costa Rica, and currently in Peru and Papua New Guinea. At the Fort Worth headquarters, BRIT's staff presents workshops and educational programs and provides consultation to research scientists, students, teachers, artists, plant enthusiasts, vineyard owners, ranchers, veterinarians, farmers, homeowners, gardeners, lawyers, physicians, businesses, government agencies, museums, schools, arboreta, hospitals, and poison control centers.

With a collection of approximately one million dried plant specimens representing most of the Earth's plant families, BRIT has one of the largest herbaria in the United States. It has the largest independent herbarium in the Southwest and one of the world's best collections of Texas plant specimens. Its botanical library houses approximately 100,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and journals from 100 countries. BRIT's primary facility is in downtown Fort Worth in a restored historic warehouse at the corner of 4th and Pecan Streets.

End

Contact: Pat Harrison, Assistant Director and Head of Education
Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Inc.
817.332.4441, ext. 20; Metro 817.429.3200
Email: pharrison@brit.org; BRIT Web site: www.brit.org