

Work Space / Inside Dr. Jared Barnes' Classroom



DR. JARED BARNES
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Horticulture

1. Barnes often makes his office outdoors in the Plantery, a growing operation that includes greenhouses, teaching gardens and Sprout, a microfarm food garden. This living laboratory allows students from across campus to engage in hands-on learning about plants. One of the labs SFA students enjoy most is grafting. Barnes said the students are so proud of themselves when they stick two plant parts together that then fuse to form one composite plant. The whiteboard illustrates the classes' grafting lesson.
2. Barnes said he has the privilege of advising students in the SFA Horticulture Club. His students amaze him with the passion they invest in this extracurricular activity. The club meets on a weekly basis and is always doing something fun with plants. Members also host plant sales on campus, and they use the profits to learn more about the flora around them. They have participated in day trips to Big Thicket National Preserve and hosted an on-campus workshop with Thomas Rainer, who co-authored "Planting in a Post-Wild World."
3. Inside the Plantery's glasshouse, Barnes strives to have tropicals, succulents, begonias and carnivorous plants on display near the entrance. Many of these plants provide propagation material for classes.
4. In the fall and spring, students host plant fairs to showcase their projects and plants and decorate the Plantery with colorful banners and twinkle lights. Mark your calendars for the 2021 Fall Plant Fair, which will be held Nov. 4.
5. If you see Barnes outside, chances are he has his rugged Tilley hat with him. He loves the inside pocket where he stores his earplugs for loud gardening tasks. Barnes has owned the hat since 2010, and it's traveled the world with him on trips to Singapore, Costa Rica, England, Switzerland and Italy.
6. Barnes said the growing operation would not exist without a talented team of student apprentices, who do more than just weed and water. They propagate plants, scout and treat for plant problems, host tours, garden markets and plant fairs, and use cutting-edge techniques. For example, Hanna LeFlore, a senior from Valley View, is shown sampling plant root ball growth using a pH meter.
7. Barnes enjoys showing students new tools that capitalize on simple technology. Here are some of his favorites. The auger and cordless drill allow him to quickly plant rooted seedlings. The blue King of Spades shovel features a handle welded to the spade, so it never breaks, and the Neversink Farm wire weeder allows him to swiftly sweep away weeds in the garden after they sprout.
8. After completing his plant identification class, students tease that every plant is Barnes' favorite because he seems to say that often in his descriptions. But, two of his top favorites are oakleaf hydrangeas and pitcher plants. Barnes loves oakleaf hydrangeas because of their four-season interest and giant flowers (in the vase on the table). Pitcher plants (in pot next to the table) are new to Barnes, and he said he feels like a kid again learning about these carnivorous plants. Plantery apprentice Jevon Richeson from Houston inspired Barnes to start growing them. He now has almost 20!
9. Hope Smith, a senior horticulture student and Plantery apprentice from Georgetown, built a hydroponic system to grow basil (pictured here), lettuce, cilantro and parsley. Barnes said during tours, people are always amazed to see plants growing without soil.
10. The horticulture program is best known for its Garden Market, a Friday plant and produce sale offering seasonally available harvests from Sprout and plants students have cultivated. The plants they grow span from seed to sale; therefore, students witness the complete cycle instead of just one aspect of horticulture. If you look around campus, you also will notice many of the Plantery's annuals in the color beds and containers.