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### Forestry Museum honors volunteer

By STEVEN ALFORD  
The Lufkin Daily News

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

A few years ago Johnnie Davis was visiting the Texas Forestry Museum with his family and noticed that the wildflower garden looked a little overgrown. In fact, it was full of weeds.

He didn't give much thought to it until someone asked him why it didn't look as good as his flowers at home.



(ENLARGE)

Contributed photo  
Master Gardener Johnnie Davis has kept the flowers blooming at the Texas Forestry Museum for years and was honored at a luncheon Tuesday.

To Davis, a master gardener and a recent retiree, it clicked that he could make a difference at the museum and have fun while doing it. Davis asked to help out and he's been in charge of the grounds ever since.

To show their appreciation to volunteers, museum officials gathered Tuesday at Outback Steakhouse to honor those who had given their time over the past year.

In the beginning, volunteers played a huge role in the development of the facility.

For its first 10 years the forestry museum was run solely by volunteers. The only one of its kind in Texas, the museum honors the trade that built Lufkin and most of East Texas — the lumber industry.

Employees honored the many volunteers with a steak lunch, a personalized cake and several awards.

"Each minute you spend at the museum is a huge benefit to us," said David Young, education coordinator. "Thank you for the time and effort you've donated over the years."

Davis, who won an award for "Volunteer with the most hours" last year, was surprised to be given the same award again this year. From helping to restore the popular butterfly garden to cultivating rare specimens of native East Texan wildflowers, it's been a labor of love for Davis.

"The rewards are worth it. Seeing the flowers bloom is my pay right there," Davis said. "You work all winter long and right around now things start blooming and it all pays off."

Davis enjoys sharing seeds of native flowers with visitors from all over the country.

"People come to visit the museum from everywhere you could imagine and I'm glad that they have a nice garden to look at when they come here," Davis said.

After two years of service as grounds keeper and gardener, Davis plans to stay on for one more year and keep the museum looking great for another season.

Friday night is the museum's 21st annual "Sawmill Supper" fund-raiser, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the facility on Atkinson Drive. The dinner will feature a traditional "sawmill meal" featuring beans, cornbread, coleslaw, cobbler and drinks. Live bluegrass music will be provided by Yeller Dawg, and local craftsmen will be creating an array of wooden novelties. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$3 for children 6-12. For more information, call (936) 632-9535 or visit [treetexas.com](http://treetexas.com).

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