The Himalayan Blue Poppy Show

The Himalayan Blue Poppy Show was very successful this year. It was a great weekend with close to 300 visitors. There were 40 poppies in bloom in the conservatory. The plants were bigger and the flowers were bluer than last year. It has been a true learning experience growing these plants for the last two years and I am proud to say that the U of I is one of only a very few conservatories that has successfully grown the blue poppy. Thank you to all of you who made the show a success.

The University of Illinois Mom’s Day Weekend is almost here. If you are going to be in town come by and visit the conservatory. Also, make sure you make it to the Horticulture Club’s Mom’s Day Show at the stock pavilion. The Hort Club members put a lot of hard work into the show and it is always worth the visit to the show.

The epiphyte tree is coming along. We have started putting the bark on the tree. If all goes well, the tree will be in the conservatory before the end of the school year. This will be a great addition to the conservatory. You will be able to see first hand how orchids, bromeliads and other epiphytic plants grow in their natural environment. While most people know that orchids and bromeliads grow in the trees, we will also be displaying other epiphytes such as cacti, ferns and ant plants.

Plant of the Month

On Sunday of the Poppy show, our visitors were fortunate to see and smell another native of the Himalayans, the Voodoo Lily (Sauromatum venosum). The voodoo lily is in the aroid family, Araceae which also includes plants such as anthuriums and spathiphyllums. This plant is know for it’s unpleasant fragrance when in bloom. The flowers smell like rooting meat in order to attract flies for pollination. The flower emerges before the leaf in early Spring with the leaf emerging a month or more later.