



# CYPRESS

## Helps Shangri La Rise from Ruins to Platinum

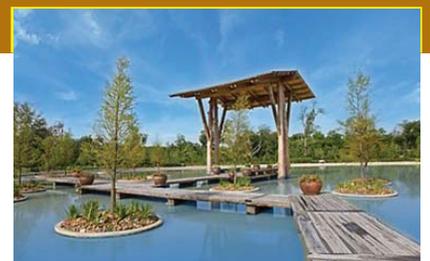
Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center in Orange, Texas, was named one of the Top Ten Green Projects of 2009 by the American Institute of Architects, and its use of cypress not only makes the facility more environmentally sustainable, it makes it more beautiful, too.

Although the Shangri La Botanical Gardens officially opened in 2008, its roots, so to speak, actually go back to 1937, when H.J. Lutch Stark, a local businessman and philanthropist, built its precursor on 252 acres of land in his hometown of Orange. For the next 21 years, the gardens served as a community and cultural hub until a devastating freeze in 1958 destroyed its plant life, which

closed the facility for more than 50 years.

Work to restore the gardens began in 2005, yet Mother Nature continued to take her toll. Four hurricanes in four years, including infamous Hurricane Rita, ultimately pushed the reopening back to 2008. Ironically, the wreckage that resulted from those violent storms became the structural framework for the new Gardens in the form of felled cypress trees.

LakelFlato Architects is known internationally for its innovation in green building and design. Using an on-site mill, they transformed numerous cypress trees that had fallen on the property into framing lumber for the facility's main pavilion, as well as its outdoor

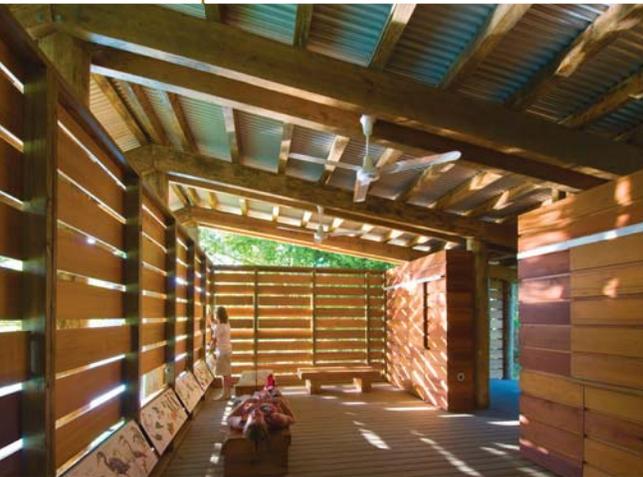


*Walk the cypress boardwalk across the Pond of the Blue Moon and enjoy the scenery from the Garden Gate made of 60-foot cypress logs.*

benches and furniture for an orientation center.

Cypress salvaged from rivers in nearby Louisiana was processed into slats for the bird observatory, siding, and gates.

Bob Harris, FAIA, the lead architect on the project, said cypress was chosen for its good looks, natural durability, and low maintenance requirements. "We



*Above: Three outdoor pavilions made of cypress help visitors learn about Texas' native wetland, grassland, and forest ecosystems.*

*Below: Cypress salvaged from rivers in nearby Louisiana was processed into slats for the bird observatory, siding, and gates.*

often use cypress, especially where we need a highly decay- and infestation-resistant material that can stand up to the elements," noted Harris. "It's a sustainable material that holds up over the long haul. It adds lasting beauty and functionality."

Other green products employed in the garden revival include reclaimed plastic decking (the equivalent of 1.1 million milk jugs), as well as salvaged brick and asphalt. In addition, more than three-quarters of the construction waste was diverted from landfills, and nearly half of the building materials were manufactured within 500 miles, which reduced transportation impacts and supported the regional economy.

As a result of these and other efforts, the Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center became the first building in the Gulf Coast region to earn Platinum Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for new construction from the U.S. Green Building Council. Even more importantly, the facility allows visitors of all ages to connect with nature and learn about Texas' native wetland, grassland, and forest ecosystems.

For more information about cypress and the exceptional value, beauty and sustainability it offers, visit [www.cypressinfo.org](http://www.cypressinfo.org), a service of the Southern Cypress Manufacturers Association.



**SOUTHERN  
CYPRESS**  
MANUFACTURERS  
ASSOCIATION

**Southern Cypress  
Manufacturers Association**

400 Penn Center Boulevard  
Suite 530

Pittsburgh, PA 15235

[www.cypressinfo.org](http://www.cypressinfo.org)