Renowned naturalist to keynote Moonlight and Magnolias

FOR THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — The South Carolina Botanical Garden will host Moonlight and Magnolias: A Garden Gala on May 19. The event features local celebrities and silent auction items.

The elegant, casual fundraising event will take place at the Fran Hanson Discovery Center and will include locally sourced cuisine, a full-service bar and live entertainment. Proceeds from the gala will be used to create the Natural Heritage Garden — a new showcase garden intended to raise awareness of South Carolina's ecological diversity.

Keynote speaker will be Rudy Mancke, a well-known South Carolina naturalist heard regularly on NPR and founder of the South Carolina Association of Naturalists. Mancke has led viewers on nature walks around the country on the television series "Nature Scene."

Other distinguished guests include Amanda McNulty of SCETV's "Making it Grow;" Richard Porcher, author of numerous works on the South Carolina Lowcountry and professor of biology at the Citadel; Clemson University President Jim Barker and his wife, Marcia; and CJ Spiller, former Clemson football player and current running back for the Buffalo Bills.

The silent auction will feature a number of items including signed footballs from Clemson coach Danny Ford, a private tour of Boone Hall Plantation in Mount Pleasant; two rounds of golf at Chanticleer Golf Course in Greenville; and a BMW driving experience in Greenville.

"The rapid ticket sales for this event will ensure a phenomenal evening as well as the success of the Natural Heritage Garden," said Patrick McMillan, interim director of the Botanical Garden.

The event is open to the public. Ticket instructions are available at http://www.clemson.edu/public/scbg/events/moonlight_and_magnolias/. Attendees may purchase individual tickets or reserve tables for friends and family.