The double row of trees at Oak Alley Plantation in Vacherie is thought to have been planted in the 1700s by an early French settler.

Tumbling words, one upon another, emerge from poets' pens describing trees. From Shakespeare to Frost, leafy branches and sturdy trunks have fascinated writers. So, too, have painters and photographers been captivated by the magical beauty of trees.

In Louisiana, people have created tree allées defining the Southern sense of grace. Walking beneath a canopy of ancient trees is a stroll through nature's cathedral. It gives one time to imagine the past as well as the future of earth's bounty.

"We call them an 'alley,' said Dan Gill, horticulturist with LSU AgCenter, "but the correct French word is 'allée.'"