

Fort Myers, Florida: Edison's Laboratory – Part 5

On the website <explainthatstuff.com> rubber, as a tool or component for working with other things, is taken for granted by most people. However, in an industrialized setting rubber is very important. It's not just elastic bands, erasers, or tires. It's found and used in far more appliances and manufacturing techniques that one can image.

The importance of both natural (latex) and synthetic (chemically produced) rubber in our world today was a concern over 100 years ago. Natural rubber supplies were depleted during World War I <news-hearld.com> and a substitute was needed.

Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Harvey Firestone were industrialists. Forecasting the future is an important part of doing business then, now, and in the future.

"In 1927, Edison, Ford, and Firestone were concerned about America's dependence on foreign rubber sources for its industrial enterprises. The three men formed the Edison Botanic Research Corporation (EBRC), and the following year, built this Laboratory, which became the project's international headquarters.

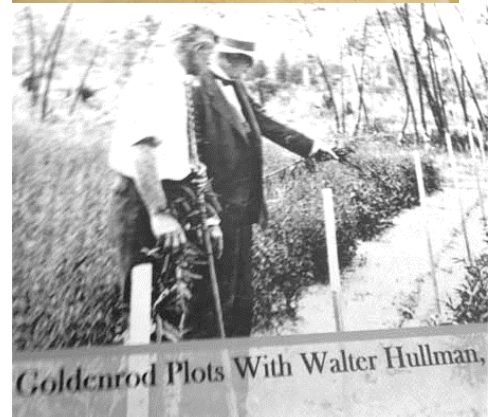
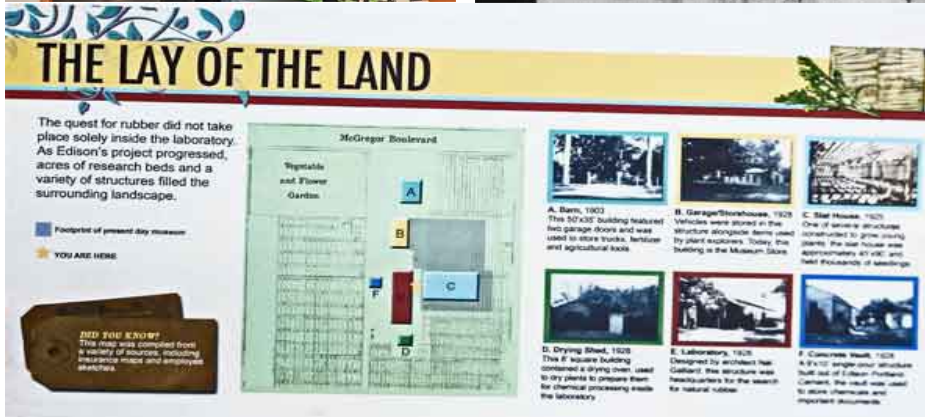
Under Edison's leadership, the corporation sought a source of rubber that could be grown and produced quickly in the U.S., in the event of a foreign supply shortage. After testing more than 17,000 plant samples, Edison eventually selected Goldenrod as the most suitable.

The Laboratory was operational until 1936 (five years after Edison's death), when the project was transferred to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The layout of the interior contains a chemical processing area, machine shop, grinding room, office, and dark room." <edisonfordwinterestates.org>

Part of the Museum tour includes Edison's Laboratory.

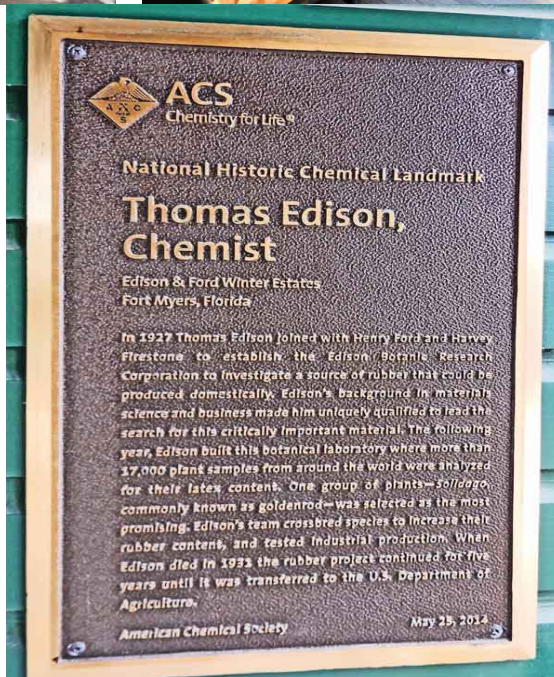
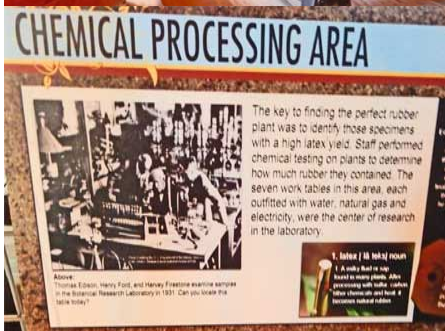
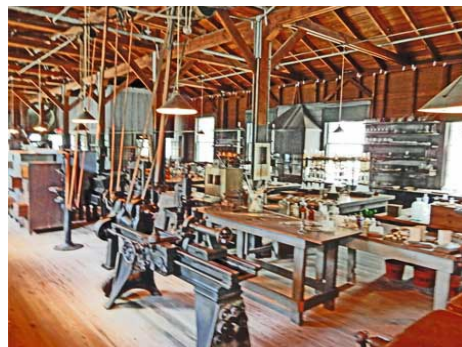
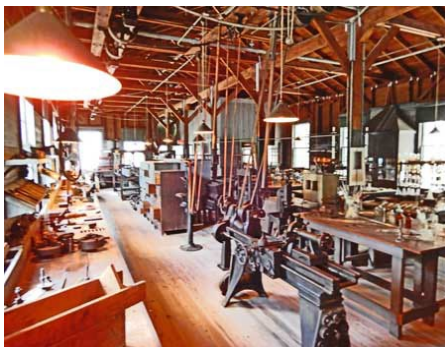


Staff Members Behind the Laboratory, circa 1929



Goldenrod Plots With Walter Hullman,





"In 2014, the American Chemical Society designated the Edison Botanic Research Laboratory as a National Historic Chemical Landmark. The lab is the only site in the state of Florida to receive this title and is a true national treasure!"

[Edison-Ford Winter Estates: Part 1-Overview; Part 2-Homes; Part 3-Botanicals/Automobiles; Part 4-Museum](#)

Sources: <https://www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/>, <https://www.edisonfordwinterestates.org/what-to-see/laboratory/>, https://www.nybg.org/library/finding_guide/archv/edison_ppf.html, <https://www.news-press.com/story/entertainment/2016/01/30/examining-edisons-lab-home-wallace-rubber-fort-myers-chestnut/79114332/>, <https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/5047>, and <https://www.explainthatstuff.com/rubber.html>.