

Department of Horticulture

Saunders Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061
www.hort.vt.edu (540)231-5451



Roger Harris, Interim Head, Department of Horticulture, www.hort.vt.edu

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I am pleased to report that we have put the snow shovels away and that spring is finally upon us here in Blacksburg. Daffodils, Hyacinths, Forsythias, and Star Magnolias are in full bloom, so Cherries, Crab Apples, and Redbuds must be near! The spring flowers certainly help as we get ready for the final semester push and spring graduation. Please pass along the Hort Department monthly e-News to anyone that you think might be interested. Enjoy! As always, we would appreciate e-mail updates from our alumni and friends.

With kind regards, *Roger*

Rebecca Dabney, president of the Horticulture Club, reports that The Horticulture Club has had a very busy March. At the March 3rd meeting, recent graduate Sarah Hall shared her experiences of participating in an internship in Germany. At the March Green Club meeting with the Harding Avenue Elementary School group, the kids planted seeds for their plant sale. The club also participated in *Kids Tech*, a program designed to teach kids 9-13 about science related topics. Hort Club members had a display of carnivorous plants and guided the kids as they made a paper pitcher plant. On March 26th, the club installed a landscape in the Saunders bed area near the parking lot. Gone are the tired old burning bushes! See photos below.



The spring plant sale is April 29-May 1. Come support the Horticulture Club by buying some plants!

From Dave Close: Check out this link for a news brief on Master Gardeners in Arlington County <http://downloads.wamu.org/mp3/nw/10/03/n11100312.mp3>

Steve Grigg was recently inducted into the *Distinguished Horticulture Department Alumni Hall of Fame*. After receiving an Honorable Discharge from the United States Marine Corps in 1974, Steve went back to Virginia Tech to complete his studies and graduated in 1976 with a BS degree in Horticulture. Early in 1986 he achieved that goal and founded Grigg Design, Inc. a landscape design/build company. Over the following twenty-three years he has gone from designing and selling at night and installing the jobs himself during the day to managing one of the most recognized landscape design/build firms in the Northern Virginia area. See photo below.

Darren DeStefano was also recently inducted into the *Distinguished Horticulture Department Alumni Hall of Fame* in the recent graduate category. Darren graduated from VT with a BS in Horticulture in 2000. In 2001 he conducted research at Wageningen University in the Netherlands working on a project to reduce the incidence of seed-borne diseases. His work on the methodology and technology to coat seeds with aspirin has resulted in the development of the commercial venture. In 2004 Darren earned a MS degree from the University of Maryland in their Plant Science Department working on the bacterial leaf scorch disease of oaks. Darren works as an administrator with the General Services Administration and supervises all Horticultural activities for the federal buildings in Washington DC. See photo below.



Dean Alan Grant presents Distinguished Alumni Awards to Darren DeStefano (left picture) and to Steve Grigg (right picture)

Upcoming events at the Hahn Horticulture Gardens from **Stephanie Huckestine**.

See <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/> for more detail.

Wednesday Garden Walks - Free! All run 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. - meet at the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion. No registration required. Parking passes available at Pavilion for Visitors only. F/S must park in designated F/S spaces.

- Wednesday April 7 - Dr. Holly Scoggins - Early Spring Perennials
- Wednesday May 5 - Dr. Alex Niemiera - Spring-blooming Woody Plants

Cool Plants from a Crazy Woman Preparing for a Magazine Shoot with Elissa Steeves
Thursday, April 15, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Location TBD. \$15 Friends of the Garden members/\$20 general public

Wildflower Walk with Dr. Holly Scoggins - Saturday, April 24, 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Hike location to be determined (will be in Montgomery County) \$15 Friends of the Garden members/\$20 general public

Jon Wooge (Kentland Farms) is the CALS employee of the month for March. Congratulations Jon!

Alex Niemiera presented two talks at the recent Four-County Master Gardeners Conference entitled "A Fresh Look at Your Landscape" in Culpepper: Attractive Woody Plants; and Tough Characters for Challenging Landscapes. Alex also presented a Woody Plant presentation to the Washington County Master Gardeners.

Juan Ruiz, Ph.D. candidate working with Horticulture professors, **Richard Veilleux** and **Vladimir Shulaev**, recently published a chapter of his dissertation in the prestigious journal, *Theoretical and Applied Genetics*. The title of the paper is "SNP discovery and genetic mapping of T-DNA insertional mutants in *Fragaria vesca* L."

Horticulture professor **Tony Wolf** and Food Science and Technology professor Bruce Zoedklein are featured in the story on Virginia Wine at <http://www.vtmagazine.vt.edu/sum09/feature1.html> Check it out!

Alex Niemiera and his colleagues in China have a just-published manuscript titled: In vitro propagation of four threatened *Paphiopedilum* species (Orchidaceae). *Plant Cell, Tissue and Organ Culture*. The manuscript can be found at: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/h0t86462u8142601/?p=fffa4b47fe304105bf233569adc1e603&pi=0>

