

Department of Horticulture

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The end of spring semester must be upon us - signs advertising the Hort Club's annual plant sale are everywhere and a feeling of excitement abounds. Perhaps it is just that the final Plant Propagation exam was yesterday? After the whirlwind of the next couple of weeks we will have 19 new alumni. These new graduates will be featured in the e-newsletter next month. Below are highlights from April. Enjoy! As always, we would appreciate e-mail updates from our alumni and friends. With kind regards, *Roger*

I am sad to report that one of our faculty members, Dr. Rongcai Yuan passed away April 14th in Winchester. Dr. Yuan was hired in April 2005 and served as an Assistant Professor and Extension Horticulturist at the AHS, Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center (AREC) in Winchester. His research and extension programs focused on regulation of apple thinning and pre-harvest fruit drop within the broader area of tree fruit horticulture. Rongcai was a friend and respected colleague and he will be greatly missed. He is survived by his wife, Ying Shen Yuan, and young sons William and John. Expressions of sympathy can be sent to Ms. Yuan at 734 Kennedy Dr., Winchester, VA 22601.

Seeds, our annual newsletter is in the mail. Featured as a distinguished alumnus in *Seeds* this year is **Mickey Hayes**. Look for an electronic copy soon on our web site.

The Horticulture Department ruled in the 2010 edition of *Innovations*! **Tony Wolf** is featured on the cover and in an article about Virginia's wine industry. Inside the covers are articles on the plant breeding program at the IALR in Danville featuring **Yingui Dan**, the potato genome project featuring **Richard Veilleux**, and the trees and stormwater work featuring **Susan Day** and **Sarah Dickinson**. Check it out at <http://www.cals.vt.edu/news/pubs/innovations/mar2010/index.html>.

The Hahn Horticulture Garden was recently featured on the university daily e-mail. Check it out at <http://www.vt.edu/spotlight/impact/2010-04-19-hahn/hahn-garden.html>. The

The Hahn Horticulture Gardens are used by many classes spanning several departments. Check out one interesting example:
<http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/story.php?relyear=2010&itemno=320>

Graduate students **Linda Taylor, Katie England, Kevin Harris, Luther Carson** recently participated in VT's local community engagement event called "The Big Event". Linda reports, "We raked leaves and picked up twigs at one home, cleaned out a tack room in a horse barn at another home and cleaned out a garage at the last home. We encountered some nice people."

Check out the podcast featuring the big tree hunting of **Byron Cameron** at <http://podcast.prx.org/nature/?p=724>. Byron was featured on our web site recently. Check that out at <http://www.hort.vt.edu/alumnispotlight.html>.

Jon Woogie, agricultural program coordinator at Kentland Farm, was recently honored as the CALS employee of the month (see picture below). Congratulations Jon!



The proposal by **Bingyu Zhao** and Foster Agblevor (BSE department), "Hydrocarbon fuels production from genetic engineered and natural selected biomass feedstocks using catalytic pyrolysis." has been funded by the Biodesign and Bioprocessing Research Center for over \$71,000.

Susan Day has been awarded the 2010 Early Career Scientist Award by the International Society of Arboriculture. This award is granted to scientists in the fields of arboriculture and urban forestry who demonstrate exceptional promise and high career potential for producing internationally recognized research. Congratulations Susan!

Laurie Fox reports that the Sustainable Landscape Practices Garden at the Hampton Roads AREC was 1 of 200 projects selected from 345 applicants nationwide to be part of the Sustainable Sites Initiative pilot program to test the first national rating system for sustainable landscapes.

Joyce Latimer received the university's 2010 Alumni Award for Outreach Excellence. Established by the university's Commission on Outreach and International Affairs with the support of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association, the Alumni Award for Outreach Excellence is presented annually to recognize outstanding contributions by Virginia Tech faculty members who have extended the university's outreach mission throughout the commonwealth, the nation, and the world. Congratulations Joyce!

Dave Close reports that the Master Gardeners in Danville are planting some good seeds. Check it out:

http://www2.godanriver.com/gdr/news/local/danville_news/article/danville_students_plant_seeds_for_good_habits/20372/

The Horticulture Department welcomed CALS Dean, Alan Grant, for a tour of the department recently. After conferring with faculty, we toured the department's offices and labs in Saunders Hall, Latham Hall, the Urban Horticulture Center, the Greenhouse Complex, and the Hahn Horticulture Gardens.



Rhododendron Gap (Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area) in June