

Department of Horticulture

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April 2011

Greetings students, Alumni, and Friends! It has been a spectacular spring in Blacksburg. The dogwoods have been especially beautiful (but aren't they always?). The Hahn Horticulture Garden is in full glory, and the greenhouse complex is alive with the annual plant sale. If that isn't exciting enough, we will soon have 16 new Hort Hokie alumni. We plan on sending them on their way with a congratulatory breakfast bash at the Hahn Horticulture Garden Pavilion the morning of graduation. As always, we would enjoy hearing what our alumni and friends are up to. Please send news to rharris@vt.edu. Enjoy this latest edition of our monthly e-newsletter! With kind regards, *Roger*

Our spring graduates

Ericka Bowling (Landscape Contracting)
Pam Domingue (Horticulture Crops)
Robert Dowell (Horticulture Crops)
Zeb Ethier (Horticulture Crops)
David Fetchko (Horticulture Crops)
Yvonne Hansotte (AG Education)
Larkin Hottel (AG Education)
Paul Hutcheson (Horticulture Crops)
Eric Jochum (Horticulture Crops)
Daniel King (Landscape Contracting)
Katherine Pate (Landscape Contracting)
Anthony Piselli (Landscape Contracting)
Ladell Sumpter (Landscape Contracting)
Holly Willgruber (Landscape Contracting)
Tiffany Wilson (AG Education)
Kae Yowell (Landscape Contracting)



Gamma Sigma Delta, the Honor Society of Agriculture, inducted 59 students on April 19th at the University Club. Inductees included several of our Horticulture graduate students: Shawn Appling, Katie England, Jack Erwin, Bin Yu, and Emily Zhou. Congratulations to our outstanding graduate students!

The Horticulture Club announced the 2011/2012 officers at their annual banquet, held this past April 13 at the German Club near the VT campus in Blacksburg. The officers are:

President: Mennen Middlebrooks

Vice President: Sam Massa

Programs Chair: Amy Tran

Social Chair: Laura Shields

Secretary: Anne Howell

Treasurer: Brianna Swanson

SGA Rep: Kayla Jordan

Historian: Amaal Alsharkawi

Webmaster: Mark Hutcheson

Saunders Bed: Trey Watford

Plant Sale Co-Chairs: Katie Elliot
and Sarah Auringer



Past and future officers at the Hort Club banquet



Scenes from this year's 2011 Annual Hort Club / Hahn Horticulture Garden plant sale

The manuscript "Effects of 1-Methylcyclopropene and Naphthaleneacetic Acid on Fruit Set and Expression of Genes Related to Ethylene Biosynthesis and Perception and Cell Wall Degradation in Apple" (J. Amer. Soc. Hort. Sci 135:402-409) by **Hong Zhu, Roncai Yuan, Duane Greene, and Eric Beers** has been named the American Society for Horticultural Science Outstanding Fruit Publication Award winner for papers published in 2010.

Qiang Cheng and Lu Qiao announce the birth of a baby girl, Katie Cheng, on March 31st. Congratulations Qiang and Lu!

Sy Traore and **Bingyu Zhao** recently attended the annual Potomac Subdivision meeting of the American Phytopathology Society at Rehoboth Beach, Delaware and presented a poster titled "Characterize the type III effector repertoire in *Acidovorax avenae* subsp. *Citrulli*"

Changhe Zhou recently attended the 12th Annual Plant Biology Symposium at University of Maryland where he presented a poster titled "Xoc-avrRxo1-orf1 encodes a chaperone that physically interacts with bacterial effector Xoc-AvrRxo1-ORF1 and is required for its function".

John Freeborn recently completed two articles that were made into podcasts. The first podcast is [Springtime Mulching](#) and the second is [Breaking the Spring Seeding Cycle](#). Check it out! Two extension publications are due out very soon: Urban Water Quality Management and Residential Stormwater: Put it in its Place--Decreasing Runoff and Increasing Stormwater Infiltration.

Jerzy Nowak recently attended a conference on bioenergy that was held in Dalian, China. Jerzy chaired a session called Feedstock Genomics and Plant Biotechnology Development and gave a presentation entitled "Development of Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum* L.) for Marginal Lands Based on Genotypic Compatibility with Beneficial Bacteria". The paper was co-authored by **Chuansheng Mei, Scott Lowman, Bingyu Zhao, John Seiler** and **Barry Flinn**. For images from the opening ceremony, see [Bioenergy](#).

Alex Niemiera announces that his proposal "Urea use in Pine Tree Substrate" was recently funded by the Virginia Agricultural Council.

Lisa Lipsey, Velva Groover, and Alex Niemiera recently conducted a plant breeding workshop entitled "Plant Breeding for Fun and Profit" at the Norfolk Botanical Garden on April 18. This workshop trained gardeners to breed plants with the ultimate goal of producing new-to-the-trade plants. These plants can then be evaluated, introduced, and marketed via the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association's plant introduction program, Beautiful Gardens - Grow with Confidence®. There will be five more plant breeding workshops throughout Virginia; the workshops are funded by a USDA grant.

The 7th annual Garden Gala will be held on Saturday, June 11 at the Hahn Horticulture Garden. Don't miss this great event! Check it out at [Gala](#).

Also coming to the Hahn Horticulture Garden: August 27, 2011 - Down and Dirty Garden Symposium II: The Wicked Garden All-day symposium featuring Amy Stewart, author of "Wicked Plants" and coming in 2011, "Wicked Bugs". Registration information will be available soon at [Garden Events](#).



Hort Club plant sale - 1960's