

Department of Horticulture

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



Roger Harris, Department Head

September 2012

Greetings everyone! We are enjoying some early fall colors in the mountains around Blacksburg and are anticipating a beautiful October. Our second annual department meeting with all of our undergraduates was a big success. Two \$300 scholarships and Horticulture T-shirts for all were given out and a good time was had by all at our departmental social in honor of our graduate students. We also recently resurrected an old tradition of hosting a department-wide BBQ (see pictures below), where two additional \$300 undergraduate scholarships were given out. We will be featuring a reflective essay from Susan Clark's Horticulture Seminar class for the next few e-newsletters (see end of this newsletter). This class serves as a capstone class for seniors. Alumni, please let us know what you are up to (rharris@vt.edu). Please visit the [Horticulture](http://www.hort.vt.edu) Department web site often for special departmental features. If you have not seen our new movie, check it out. Enjoy! With kind regards, *Roger*



Hort Department Fall BBQ Then: Faculty, staff, and students enjoy home cooked BBQ chicken (left photo, 1989). The event was traditionally held at the old Horticulture farm, right where Lowe's is now in Christiansburg. It moved out to Kentland Farm just a few years later when the old farm was sold for commercial development. The BBQ master chef was John Barden (right photo, circa 1975). Dr. Barden cooked for many years. Dave Davis apprenticed under Dr. Barden and took over the grilling when Dr. Barden retired in 2002. When Dr. Davis left Virginia Tech a few years later the event was cancelled.



Horticulture Department Fall BBQ Now: The Fall BBQ was resurrected this semester at The Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion. It was a glorious day and the beautiful garden setting was a wonderful stage for our gathering. Barbara Kraft organized the event, but we had the BBQ catered by Due South BBQ in Christiansburg. We had no hopes of matching the grilling prowess of Dr. Barden!

From the Archives: Professor Jim Faiszt (far right in photo) in greenhouse with students (right to left) David (Dee) Laird, Bob Mears, Mickey Hayes and ????. Circa 1963.



New Publication: John Freeborn, David Sample, and Laurie Fox. 2012. Residential Stormwater: Methods for decreasing runoff and increasing stormwater infiltration. *Journal of Green Building* 7(12):15-30. Check it out at [stormwater](#)

Jared Carter, Norma Manrique and Richard Veilleux attended the Solanaceae 2012 conference in late August in Neuchatel, Switzerland, where Norma presented her study of genes controlling potato glycoalkaloids, Jared presented his tomato transposon tagging study and Richard presented his work conducted by postdoc **Tatiana Boluarte** and undergrad **Alex Marand** on genes controlling phytonutrient acquisition in potato. Jared and Norma take five at the Geneva Botanical Garden (photo on right).



Many current and former Hokie graduate students (**Sarah Holt, Nan Lu, Juan Ruiz, Robert Lindsay**), four technicians (**Kerri Mills, Kendall Upham, Cherish Davis and Aaron Baxter**), one undergraduate student (**Frankie Powell**) as well as faculty **Yinghui Dan**, postdoc **Tammy Ferguson** and technician **Chris Pantazis** at the IALR in Danville celebrated the publication of their landmark paper on transposon tagging in diploid strawberry featured on the cover of Plant Biotechnology Journal. The work was conducted as part of a joint project between **Richrd Veilleux and Vladimir Shulaev**.

Applications being accepted for the Garden Club of America's Urban Forestry Fellowship

Application Deadline: January 31, 2013. **Susan Day** is the chair of the selection panel for this fellowship and asks that you pass this information on to whoever might benefit. The Garden Club of America with the support of Casey Trees in Washington, DC, is soliciting applications for its national urban forestry fellowship. GCA has a history of interest in the health of the urban forest and would like to support young scientists in their undergraduate and graduate studies in this field with an ultimate aim of increasing research capacity in urban forest science. Last year, four \$4,000 fellowships were awarded. For more information, online application forms, and past recipients, visit [scholarship](#) or contact Dr. Day at gcaurbanforestry@vt.edu or 540-231-7264.

Hahn Horticulture Garden Happenings

Check out <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/> for more details.

Art in the Garden: A new program featuring the work of local artists on display inside and out! Currently on display in the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion are works by Judy Loope, member of the Textile Artists of Virginia.

Lunchtime Learning - Free Garden Walks and Talks: All run 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. on the occasional Wednesday. Meet at the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion. No registration required.

- October 10 - Plant Diseases with Plant Pathology with Anton Baudoin (PPWS, VT).
- October 31 - Pruning Woody Plants with Wiseman (Forestry, VT).

Fall and Winter Gardening Workshops and Seminars:

- November 8, 2012 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. The History of Landscape Design with Robert McDuffie.
- December 1, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Holiday Wreath Workshop with Richmond Floral Designer, David Pippin.
- December 6, 2012 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. Sex in the Garden: Hidden Secrets!! with Dr. Brian Jackson, NC State University



Madison (left, 2½), daughter of Ashley and Jon Wills, enjoys her new baby sister Sadie

Soil Rehabilitation Specification Available Online: Susan Day and her graduate students Yujuan Chen and Rachel Layman have been researching the effects of soil rehabilitation using a technique called Soil Profile Rebuilding. A study at Virginia Tech's Kentland farm has been underway since 2007 and is quantifying gains in tree canopy, soil carbon, and stormwater capture that be achieved with this practice. Currently she is working with municipalities to continue this research at a national scale. The technique uses compost and subsoiling to alleviate soil compaction deep in the soil and rebuild structure in soil horizons. Recently, with the assistance of numerous VT scientists and alumni, she published written specifications for this technique so anyone can use it. They are available for use and can be downloaded from [Soil Rehabilitation Specification](#). Feedback is welcome (sdd@vt.edu)!

Greg Welbaum will receive the *Seed Science Award* from the Crop Science of America at their annual meeting in October. Congratulations Greg!



Horticulture Seminar (HORT 4004)

Discovering My Ambition

By Jake Shreckhise



My college experiences, including teaching assistantships and undergraduate research, have built the foundation of my professional goals.

During the spring and fall of 2011, I led a section of the Woody Landscape Plant Identification Lab as a teaching assistant. My obligations included: preparing for labs, teaching plant identification techniques, explaining similarities and differences between plant species, and grading weekly quizzes. In addition to reinforcing my knowledge on plant material, my teaching assistantship encouraged me to practice my interpersonal communication skills. I learned how to organize my thoughts, relaying information in a manner that isn't overwhelming and confusing. Most importantly however, leading labs and observing my students' progress triggered my passion for teaching. This teaching assistantship presented the possible career goal of professorship, and my summer internship confirmed my desire to pursue a career in academia.

As an intern, I spent the summers of 2011 and 2012 performing undergraduate research. My projects revolved around the effect of limestone on urea hydrolysis in Pine Tree Substrate. My responsibilities consisted of: reviewing relevant literature, organizing and performing experiments, and analyzing data. While I gained a wealth of knowledge on Pine Tree Substrate, my newly acquired collaboration and preparation skills may be more valuable. Preparing for the unknown with a partner is not only valuable in research, but also in life. After completing this successful internship, I'm confident in my career path. In the fall of 2012, I will apply to graduate school, work to earn a masters and doctorates in horticulture, and then apply for university teaching positions.

