

Department of Horticulture

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



Roger Harris, Department Head www.hort.vt.edu

May 2012

Greetings everyone! We are basking in the beauty of early summer up in Blacksburg. Our gardens are full of flowers and the weather has been very pleasant. Summer school has started, but there are not too many Hort students about. Most are out on internships or getting industry experience in summer jobs. We stopped teaching "live" summer horticulture classes years ago, but Holly Scoggins offers an on-line greenhouse management class summer semester, allowing students to work off campus and still gain class credit toward graduation. We are looking at other such opportunities. I have no definite news yet on our open Sustainable Hort Food Systems faculty search, but stayed tuned. Please e-mail me with an update that you would like to share in next year's annual newsletter, "Seeds". Our current edition should be arriving in the mail soon. A good way to stay connected with VT is through the university [You Tube](#) channel. Please visit the [Horticulture](#) Department web site often for special departmental features. Enjoy! With kind regards, *Roger*

Greg Welbaum recently designed and showed an exhibit at the USA Science and Engineering Festival in Washington DC. The exhibit was part of the Crop Science Society of America's display for teaching K-12 kids the importance of science in society. The exhibit included peanut and cotton plants, a hydroponic vegetable production demonstration, tissue culture potatoes, and a potato tuber development demonstration. **Richard Veilleux** and **Suzanne Piovano** contributed examples of tissue culture and potato tubers for the display and **Bingyu Zhao** contributed switchgrass plants. Over 40,000 people attended!



Laurie Fox reports that the City of Virginia Beach's Department of Planning, Environment and Sustainability, through their Clean Water Fund, has funded preliminary work on floating treatment wetlands at the Hampton Roads AREC. Two different types of floating wetlands will be installed in the AREC stormwater and irrigation pond in June for evaluation.

We are sad to report that **Alan McDaniel** taught his last floral design class this past semester. Although officially retired two years ago, we had talked him into staying for a bit more! Challenged with eating the entire breakfast buffet at our graduation reception (see below left), he opted for moderation until the graduating seniors and their families arrived (below right).



The Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research (CIDER) recently recognized **Susan Day** as the Virginia Tech Teacher of the Week. She was honored for "engaging all of her students by getting them out of their chairs and working on problems and activities together".

Virginia Tech is a [Grand Challenges Explorations](#) winner, an initiative funded by the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#). **Richard Veilleux**, **Mark Williams**, and Merideth Bonierbale (The International Potato Center, Lima, Peru) will pursue a global health and development research project, "Growing nutrient-rich food for an impoverished world: exploiting gene diversity for Fe and Zn accumulation in tubers of potato and its interaction with helper microbes".

Joyce Latimer recently conducted five workshops on "Profitable Greenhouse Production of Local Produce" around the Commonwealth, reaching nearly 200 interested producers and agents. More information will be soon available at: <http://www.hort.vt.edu/ghvegetables/>

Shawn Appling, recent MS (floriculture) graduate has taken a grower position at Battlefield Farms, Rapidan VA. **Mara Grossman**, also a recent MS graduate will be continuing on for a Ph.D. in the floriculture program.

The annual Hort Club plant sale was a huge success! The sale was featured in the Roanoke Times (see below). The Hort club is advised by **Barbara Kraft** and **Velva Groover**.

Home / News, NewsRiver / Horticulture club offers shower of flowers in April

Horticulture club offers shower of flowers in April

Posted April 28, 2012



Ethan Harris of the Virginia Tech Horticulture Club tends to a selection of tropical plants for sale at the Hahn Horticulture Garden at Virginia Tech Wednesday. Matt Gentry | The Roanoke Times

BLACKSBURG — The Virginia Tech Horticulture Club is currently holding its annual plant sale at the Hahn Horticulture Garden off Washington Street on the Virginia Tech campus.

The sale began Thursday and will conclude today.

Two full greenhouses and a covered patio of plants are for sale to the general public at retail prices. Annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees, vegetable, herbs, cactus and tropical plants are featured.

The three-day sale features a staggered display of plants for sale, and new plants are

displayed each day.

"We have an abundance of plants as you can see," said Samantha Massa, club vice president and environmental horticulture major.

"We grew all the hanging baskets and all the vegetables."



New Publication: **McAvoy, T., J.H. Freeman, S.L. Rideout, S.M. Olson, M. Paret.** 2012.
Evaluation of Grafting Using Hybrid Rootstocks for Management of Bacterial Wilt in Field
Tomato Production. HortScience 47:621-625.

Audrey Longfellow, a rising senior in Biology at Fairfield University (Connecticut) is a National
Science Foundation Research for Undergraduates Fellow in **Mark William's** lab.

Ashley Rhodes, a rising senior in Environmental Science (CSES) is a Fralin Summer
Undergraduate Research Fellow and is also working in **Mark William's** lab.



Mennen Middlebrooks (right in photo) was
our outstanding senior for the school
year. Photo on left shows Mennen with
CALs dean, Alan Grant.

Holdup in Saunders Hall!

Bennett Niemiera (photo on right) and his
dog Loki recently made a hit and run raid
in 301 Saunders. Benet made a quick
getaway with some candy and Loki left a
puddle on the floor. The outlaws are still
at large.

