

Department of Horticulture

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Roger Harris, Department Head

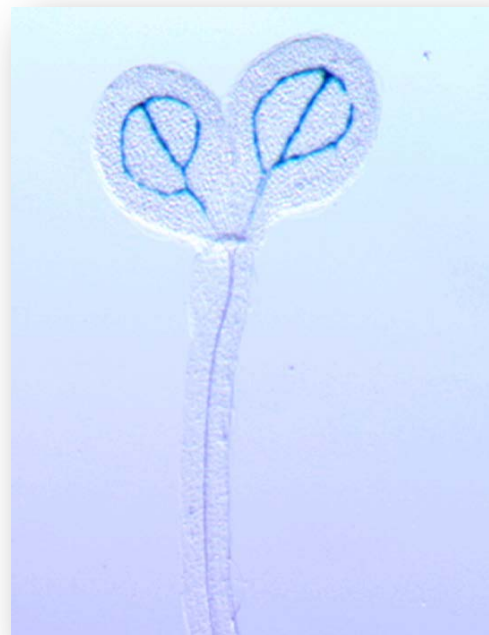
January 2013

Greetings everyone! I hope that your new year is off to a great start. We began our spring semester classes on January 22 since it was our turn to have a late start and Radford's turn to start early. There apparently are just not enough hotels in the area for both universities to have the same schedule. We were delighted to receive a visit from a group of recent graduates during the first week of classes (see below for more details). They were here just in time to see the university close because of a heavy snowfall! We would love to hear from the rest of our alumni so please e-mail me with an update that you would like to share in our annual newsletter, "Seeds". One way to stay connected with VT is through the university [YouTube](#) channel. Please visit the [Horticulture](#) Department web site often for special departmental features. Enjoy! With kind regards, *Roger*



Mennen Middlebrooks, Rebecca Dabney, KeyIn Holcomb, Moe Hemmings, John Pancake, Mark Hoopes, Jamie Stuart, Gina (Sharp) Brydges, Erika Bowling, Sarah Hall, and Sarah (Peters) Davenport, all recent alumni (2008-2012) visited us on Friday of the first week of classes. The group presented a very informative program to our current undergraduates on "Life After Graduation". They also met with our curriculum committee the next morning to discuss their impressions of how our curriculum prepared them for life after graduation. It was great to see everyone again -please come back often!

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences recently sponsored "The Art of Science", a fascinating display of art found in scientific work. The show is currently on display at the "Armory" building across from Bollo's in downtown Blacksburg. **Eric Beers** and **Chengsong Zhao** displayed a picture of a transgenic Arabidopsis plant that was engineered to produce a bright blue strain wherever a specific vascular tissue marker gene is expressed. Beers and Zhao are examining tissue and cell-specific activities in an effort to improve the growth of trees used as a source of renewable energy and forest products. Check out the entire display by visiting the show!



Happenings at the Hahn Horticulture Gardens

Check the website at <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/> or contact Stephanie at vtgarden@vt.edu or 540-231-5970 for more information.

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. Parking passes available at Pavilion for Visitors only. F/S must park in designated F/S spaces.

February 6 12:00-1:00 p.m. "Behind the Scenes: VT Dining Services Garden at Kentland Farm" with Johanna Cricenti.

February 27 12:00-1:00 p.m. "Horrid Insects and Lesser-Known Trivia about What's Eating Your Garden" with Eric Day, VT Entomologist and NPR interview celebrity.

Winter and Spring Gardening Workshops and Seminars

Preregistration is required for workshops and highly recommended for seminars. Call Stephanie at 540-231-5970 to register by phone or email vtgarden@vt.edu.

Eat Your Yard, Drink Your Yard! with Nan K. Chase Thursday, January 31, 6:00-7:30 p.m, Location TBD. \$15 Friends of the Garden/\$20 general public.

Seed Starting and Saving with Holly Scoggins Thursday, February 21, 6:00-7:30 p.m. Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion. \$15 Friends of the Garden/\$20 general public.

[Must pre-register; attendance limited to 25]

Gardening for the Health of It with Stacy Best Saturday, March 2, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Location TBD. \$15 Friends of the Garden/\$20 general public.

The Entrepreneurial Spirit: Horticulture is one profession where the entrepreneurial spirit thrives. Many of our students want to own their own business and there are many examples of outstanding success. Jennifer Horn, BS 1996, recently shared an interesting venture of hers. She is launching a garden coaching company this spring in the DC-MD-VA region and is looking for some good candidates for coaches, hopefully some of our alumni who would like to share their expertise on a part-time basis. You can contact Jennifer at Jennifer@jenniferghorn.com

Recent Publications

Chal Landgren , **James S. Owen Jr.** & Ryan Contreras. 2013. Evaluating soil and foliar fertilization of *Abies nordmanniana* under container and field production, *Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research*, DOI:10.1080/02827581.2012.762939.

Taylor, L., A.X. Niemiera, R.D. Wright, G.K. Evanylo, and W.E. Thomason. 2013. Nitrification in pine tree substrate is influenced by storage time and amendments. *HortScience* 48:115-122.

Taylor, L., A.X. Niemiera, R.D. Wright, and J. Roger Harris. 2012. Storage time and amendments affect pine tree substrate properties and marigold growth. *HortScience* 47:1782-1788.

Xu, Bin, Noppadon Sathitsuksanoh, Yuhong Tang, Michael K. Udvardi, Ji-Yi Zhang, Zhengxing Shen, Maria Balota, Kim Harich, Percival Y-H Zhang, Bingyu Zhao. 2012. Overexpression of *AtLOV1* in switchgrass alters plant architecture, lignin content, and flowering time, *PLoS One*, 7(12): e47399.

Ph.D. student **Hua Xiao** is an Institute for Applied Technology and Applied Science (ICTAS) scholar. The highly competitive selection includes funding for her PhD program. Congratulations Hua!



Hua Xiao

Advisors: Dr. Richard Veilleux and Dr. Mark Williams

Academic Interests: Horticulture

Previous Work: Received a Bachelor's degree in Biological Science from Hainan Normal University in China and her Master's degree in Zoology from Beijing Normal University in China.

Focus on Sustainability! The latest issue of the ICTAS magazine (January 2013, Issue 12) features the research of Bingyu Zhao (*Switchgrass Molecular Breeding Program Seeks to Reduce Oil Dependence*) and Jerzy Nowak (*Use of Emerging Engineering Technology to Enable Sustainable Agriculture*). Check it out at <http://issuu.com/ictas/docs/conn12/7>

Greg Welbaum is moving his research lab from Saunders Hall to Research Bldg. 15, 1880 Pratt Drive at the Corporate Research Center (adjacent to campus). He will retain his office in 306B Saunders.