

# Department of Horticulture

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Roger Harris, Department Head

## May 2013

Greetings everyone and congratulations to our recent alumni (see list below)! After the flurry of graduation activity, Blacksburg is now in a state of sleepy rest. The abundant spring rain has left us with a lush landscape and it seems that everything is in full flower. Could this much-anticipated time be the most beautiful time of year? We have enjoyed getting to know our recent graduates well, but we need to hear from our not-so-recent graduates! Please e-mail me ([rharris@vt.edu](mailto:rharris@vt.edu)) with an update that you would like to share in our annual newsletter, "Seeds". The current edition will be in the mail and up on our website soon. One way to stay connected with VT is through the university [YouTube](#) channel. Be a lifetime Hokie by staying in touch with the [CALS alumni association](#). Check out the current issue of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences "[Innovations](#)" newsletter. Please visit the [Horticulture](#) Department web site often for special departmental features. Since the academic year is over now, we will not have a monthly e-newsletter for June and July. Please enjoy this edition and look for the next one in August. With kind regards, Roger

### Recent BS graduates

(EHRT = Environmental

Horticulture and LCON =  
Landscape Contracting):

Elise Benhase - EHRT

Katie Elliott - EHRT

Brittaney Nelson - EHRT

Kristin Purgason - EHRT

Carly Reynolds - EHRT

Jacob Shreckhise - EHRT

Elizabeth Sonifrank - EHRT

Charles (Willie) Knight - EHRT

Thomas Galle - LCON

Jacob Chance - LCON



A few of the new graduates



Graduation breakfast is served (left)! The beautiful flowers on the stage at graduation this year were by **Barbara Leshyn** and **Donna Long** (right).

**New alumni from our graduate program:**

Norma Constanza Manrique Carpintero - PhD  
Rui Xia "Harry" - PhD

Sukhwinder Aulakh - PhD  
Johanna Cricenti - MALS



**Greg Welbaum**, professor turned street vendor, serves cotton candy to dean **Alan Grant** (center in left photo) and president **Charles Steger** (right) at the recent international street festival in Blacksburg. Greg later went down to Danville to give a research seminar at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research. He is shown with **Barry Flynn**, program director and adjunct Professor of Horticulture in the right photo.

**Jude Moon, Madhavi Kakumanu, Ping Hu and Rosana Pineda Tuiran** recently attended the Microbial Genomics and Metagenomics Workshop at the Joint Genome Institute in Walnut Creek, CA. The workshop group is shown in the picture above, gathered around the appropriate sculpture!



Student project presentations for HORT 2134 Plants and Greenspaces in Urban Communities showcased innovative ideas in urban horticulture. First prize this year went to Anna McAuley (Urban Forestry major), **Colleen Beard** (Environmental Horticulture), Sara Diaz (Geography), **Sonya Hodges** (Environmental Horticulture), and **Carly Reynolds** (Environmental Horticulture) for their design of a sensory garden featuring wheelchair accessible planting beds and a pizza garden for children. Fifteen groups of students from majors across the university presented creative, research-based projects on everything from soil contamination from treated lumber to retrofitting a green roof to provide habitat for the endangered Henslow's sparrow. HORT 2134 is a core area class taught by **Susan Day**.

**Emily Zhou and Brenda Arnold** were recently awarded P. Howard and Betsy Massey Scholarships in International Horticulture. This departmental scholarship program supports travel of graduate students presenting at international conferences and/or other forms of internationalization of our program. Congratulations Emily and Brenda!

## **Recent Publications:**

**Rui Xia, Blake C. Meyers, Zhongchi Liu, Eric P. Beers, and Zongrang Liu.** . 2013. MicroRNA superfamilies descended from miR390 and their roles in secondary siRNA biogenesis. *The Plant Cell*. [www.plantcell.org/cgi/doi/10.1105/tpc.110957](http://www.plantcell.org/cgi/doi/10.1105/tpc.110957).

**Jared. D. Carter, Andy Pereira, Allan W. Dickerman, and Richard E. Veilleux.** 2013. An active Ac/Ds transposon system for activation tagging in tomato cultivar M82 using clonal propagation. *Plant Physiology* 162:145-156.

**Rainbolt, C.M., J.B. Samtani, S.A. Fennimore, C. Gilbert, K.V. Subbarao, J.S. Gerik, A. Shrestha, and B. Hanson.** 2013. Steam as a preplant soil disinfestant tool in California cut-flower production. *HortTechnology* 23:207-214.

**Hirsch C.N., Hirsch C.D., Felcher K., Coombs J., Zarka D., Van Deynze A., De Jong W., Veilleux R.E., Jansky S., Bethke P., Douches D.S., Buell C.R.** 2013. Retrospective view of North American potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) Breeding in the 20th and 21st Centuries. *G3: Genes|Genomes|Genetics*

**Kimberly J. Felcher, Joseph J. Coombs, Alicia N. Massa, Candice N. Hansey, John P. Hamilton, Richard E. Veilleux, C. Robin Buell, David S. Douches.** 2013. Integration of two diploid potato linkage maps with the potato genome sequence. *PLoS ONE* 7(4): e36347. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0036347

**There's still time to get tickets to the 9th Annual Garden Gala, June 8th from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** This year features a Wine & Roses theme with fabulous food and drinks by Blue Ridge Catering of Roanoke including wine and food pairing stations. We've got some terrific items for our live & silent auction, and live music by the Bakery Boys Jazz Band. Visit the Hahn Horticulture Garden website for more information, sponsorship opportunities, and ticket ordering forms. Don't miss the best garden party in the New River Valley! <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/gala.html>



The *Craze Dayzees* represented us with distinction in the "rat maze race" at the 20th Annual Staff Appreciation Picnic by finishing in 4th place. The picture was taken BEFORE the race. Congratulations **Dayzees!**



Hort 3544 Landscape Construction, taught by **Robert McDuffie** (red shirt, left photo), built and installed the new structures in the Hahn Horticulture Garden this spring. Stay tuned to see the ornamental vines soon to appear!



**Jake Shreckhise** was our outstanding senior for the 2012-2013 school year. Jake (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) was recognized at the CALS annual awards ceremony by dean Alan Grant (far right). **Alex Niemiera**, undergraduate program director for our department is to the left of Jake and **Roger Harris**, department head, is on the far left.