

# Department of Horticulture

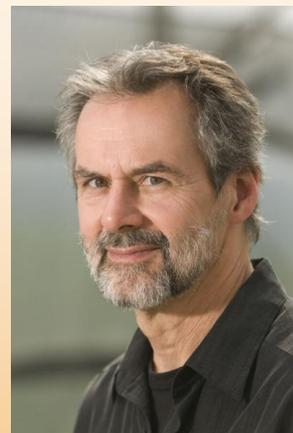
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*Dr. Richard Veilleux, Interim Department Head*

## October 2014

With no frost yet in Blacksburg, lingering summer flowers are competing with fall foliage to make a colorful palette, enhanced by an abundance of pumpkins. Thanks to bountiful pumpkin harvests from our horticultural research plots at both Kentland Farm and the UHC, they have been finding their way to the food pantry, public school groups and shut-ins. Students from the floral design class volunteered to make pumpkin arrangements that were used for President Sand's reception during a visit to CALS on Oct. 30. Our Hort Club members made a nice impression by pinning a boutonniere on the President as he stopped at their display. The same arrangements took on renewed life as they were recycled to The Inn for the CALS Scholarship Banquet that evening. The CSES Soil Judging Team sold excess pumpkins on campus to fund scholarships. And the Dining Hall has been serving them as part of their Farm-to-Table program. But enough about pumpkins. October has been a busy month for the department with changes in store for the Hahn Garden, award of the Clean Water<sup>3</sup> grant to Jim Owen and colleagues, and planning for three courses to be offered during the Wintermester session. There is still the possibility of yoga in the garden.



### Change in leadership at the Hahn Horticulture Garden

Holly Scoggins who has prevailed over the Hahn Horticulture Garden as director for the past 12 years will be stepping down from her position as director as on January 1, 2015. Robert McDuffie, one of the original planners of the garden and longtime instructor in our Landscape Design option for Horticulture majors will be assuming leadership. Holly oversaw design and construction of the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion from its inception, made possible by a generous gift by Peggy and T. Marshall Hahn, Jr. Holly has worked with determination on a multitude of improvements that have elevated the garden to a showpiece. Under her direction the garden expanded from 2 to 6 acres, including the installation of the Jocelyn Couture Nowak Memorial Terrace Garden, the Amphitheater, and the Meadow Garden. She oversaw the planning and execution of the annual Garden Gala fundraiser hosted with grace and wit each June for the past many years. Holly will remain in the Horticulture Department where she will continue to teach her popular courses on herbaceous perennials, ornamental plant production and greenhouse management and direct a research program focused on ornamentals. She will also continue to serve as the Herbaceous Plants Curator for the garden. Robert brings to the garden a wealth of experience gleaned from his many years of teaching landscape and leading tours of hundreds of



**Dr. Holly Scoggins**

gardens around the world. He is excited about this new career direction and expects to continue to teach landscape design and offer garden tours to far off places, while continuing to improve the Hahn.

## Alex Niemiera receives the Award for Excellence in Career Advising

Congratulations to Alex Niemiera for receiving the 2013-2014 Award for Excellence in Advising from Career Services. As our undergraduate coordinating counselor, Alex works with many of our undergraduates to try to conform their undergraduate experience to their career objectives. In addition, Dr. Niemiera teaches many courses for the Horticulture Department, including *Woody Landscape Plants I and II*, *Horticulture Science and Industry*, *CALS First Year Seminar Course*, *Plants, Places, Cultures Globally*, and *Environmental Factors in Horticulture*.

## Outreach

### Meet the Scientist

Holly Scoggins represented Horticulture at the 1st Annual Virginia Science Festival's "Meet the Scientist" event held Oct. 4th at the Inn. She presented an overview of Horticulture as a discipline, undergraduate major and career opportunity, and featured our department's research programs.



Mara and Erika at the GLC open house

### Graduate Life Center Open House

Mara Grossman and Erika Lyons participated in the GLC open house. They did a plant propagation demo and gave away cuttings to people who came to the open house.

### New Master Gardener Website

In September, the VCE Master Gardener Program unveiled a new website with improved features and an updated look. Users can connect and stay updated with VCE Master Gardener Facebook posts through the live feed displayed on the home page. Through a password-protected area, coordinators can access resources, including certificate requests, downloadable marketing tools/templates, and social media guidelines. Some familiar features have been retained, such as Master Gardener College news, Coordinator Endowment updates, and local unit contact information. Past and current editions of the "In Season" newsletter will still be available to users through the site. We intend for the website to be visually engaging while providing users with a more seamless navigation through content.



Home page of the new and improved Master Gardener website

Check out the site [here](https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/):

<https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/>

## Undergraduate News

### Learning from Alumni

Hokie Horticulture Alumni, Mark Maslow, Southern Landscape Group, Chapman Williams, Williams Brothers Tree and Lawn and Sonya Westervelt, Saunders Brothers, visited the Career Practicum class to offer sage advice on the “Do’s and Don’ts” for student transitioning from college to career.



**Group photo of the Career Practicum class with Horticulture Alumni**

### Horticulture Trip

The Horticulture Club went on a road trip to North Carolina. They visited the Biltmore home and gardens, the North Carolina Arboretum and Max Patch Knob on the Appalachian Trail. The students left Dr. Harris a note hidden for him to find on his way through the area. A special thanks to James and Amy for organizing the trip!



**Amy Puckett presenting President Sands with a boutonniere**

### Visit from President Sands

Student representatives of the Horticulture Club had an opportunity to meet President Sands during his visit to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences on October 30th. Elizabeth Wilson, James Rockwell and Amy Puckett (pictured) represented the department well. They spoke of the different degrees offered by the department, the Horticulture Club and proffered Dr. Sands a boutonniere to wear for the rest of his visit.

### Normand Adams speaks on behalf of scholarship recipients at the CALS Scholarship Banquet

Normand represented CALS undergraduate scholarship recipients who collectively received nearly \$1 million in awards. The banquet was held on October 30th and students from all over the college received scholarships, including several from Horticulture!



**Normand Adams speaking to represent CALS undergraduate recipients of scholarships, at the CALS Scholarship Banquet, Oct. 30.**

## Fall Grape Harvest

Horticulture Ph.D. candidate Cain Hickey (center) and associates from the Alson H. Smith, Jr. AREC harvesting Vidal Blanc grapes at Indian Springs Vineyard in Shenandoah County. The grapes are from vines being used by GRA Russell Moss as part of his research exploring the role of vine nitrogen status on aroma development in resulting wines. Russell is pursuing dual M.S. degrees in HORT and FST, and is co-advised by Drs. Tony Wolf and Amanda Stewart.



Grape harvest at Alson H. Smith, Jr. AREC



Conference participants during the field day



Alex Niemiera giving a workshop on notable trees on VT's campus

## MAC ISA Conference

Virginia Tech hosted approximately 350 arborists and urban foresters, many of them Virginia Tech graduates, for the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture annual meeting in early October. The Field Day, organized by Eric Wiseman, included Alex Niemiera and Susan Day (who also served as conference chair) as presenters from the Department of Horticulture. Other horticulture participants included Sarah Gugercin (logistics chair). Upon being handed a Virginia Tech Horticulture Department T-shirt as a door prize, one conference attendee exclaimed, "This is perfect, I'm a Horticulture alum but I never got the shirt! Now I have one." This year's meeting was the largest yet for the MAC-ISA, the weather was perfect, and the company was good.

## Grants and Funding

**Clean Water<sup>3</sup> - Reduce, Remediate, Recycle – Enhancing Alternative Water Resources Availability and Use to Increase Profitability in Specialty Crops**

Jim Owen, Assistant Professor of Horticulture at the Hampton Roads AREC, has been awarded funds for the first year of an \$8.7 million, five year USDA/NIFA/SCRI competitive grant as part of a national team of 21 scientists from nine institutions working to encourage use of alternative water resources by the nation's nursery and floriculture industry. The team will develop and apply systems-based solutions to assist grower decision making by providing science-based information to increase use of recycled water. This award will be managed by Project Director Sarah White of Clemson University. The trans-disciplinary Clean Water<sup>3</sup> team will develop these systems-based solutions by integrating sociological, economic, modeling, and biological data into a user-friendly decision-support system intended to inform and direct our stakeholders' water management decision-making process. Others from VT involved in the project include: David Sample, Asst. Professor of Biological Systems Engineering, Laurie Fox, Horticulture Associate and Saurav Kumar, Research Associate of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Developing Organic and Integrated Management Strategies for Pest Control in Annual Strawberry Production  
Jeff Derr and Jayesh Samtani at Hampton Roads AREC were recently awarded a USDA Specialty Crop Competitive Grant "Developing Organic and Integrated Management Strategies for Pest Control in Annual Strawberry Production" Amt. funded \$28,817.

## Hahn Horticulture Garden Events

Yoga in the Garden with Megan Helmer

**October 28 - November 23, every Tuesday & Thursday, 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.**

Series of beginner-intermediate level yoga at the garden!! Bring your yoga mat and be surrounded with a great view. Class is held indoors. Limited to 12, must pre-register.



Art in the Garden: Botanical Drawing Class with Felta Virginia

**November 12, Wednesday, 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.**

Visit the garden for instruction in botanical drawing using colored or graphite pencil. Guidance also available for those with experience and desire to incorporate watercolors. Limited to 20, must pre-register.

Also, a new **Art in the Garden** display will be installed the first week of November. Works by Darcy Meeker.

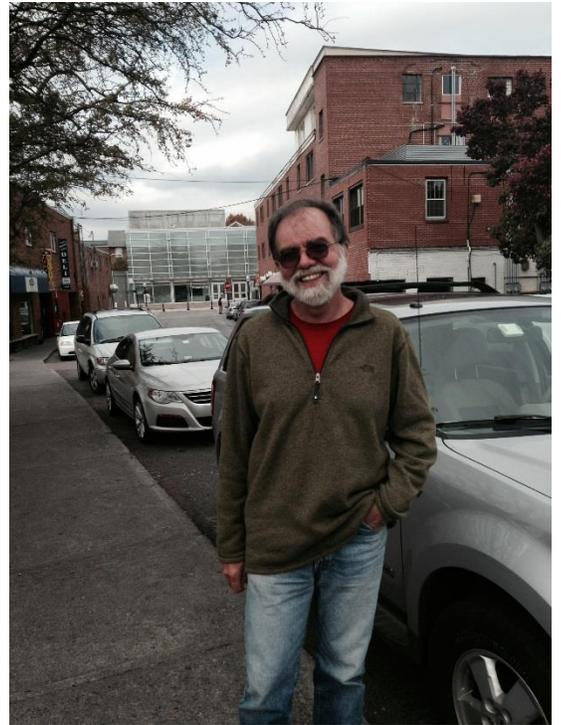
Those who want to register for an event should contact Stephanie Huckestein at 231-5970, or at [vtgarden@vt.edu](mailto:vtgarden@vt.edu)



Pictures from Barbara Leshyn's Pumpkin Mania Week!

## Appalachian Trail Update

Roger has passed by Buena Vista, Virginia and is narrowing in on Glasgow. Now that he is back on his home turf and the ankle injuries are mostly healed, the hiking is easier and he is getting about 20 miles a day in. It's going to be a push to finish the entire Appalachian Trail (2200 miles) by the end of the year, but it certainly looks possible. The fall color has been absolutely fabulous in the mountains as he came through Shenandoah National Park and his spirits are high. Roger appreciates all the good wishes he's received so far.



**A ghost spotted passing through Blacksburg on October 31st!**