

Department of Horticulture

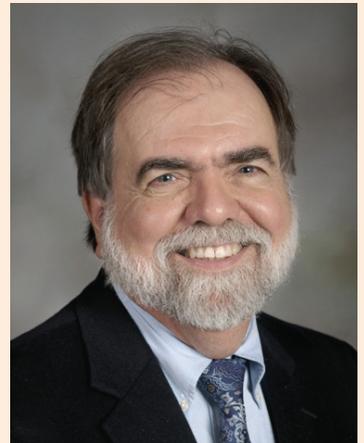
Saunders Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24061
www.hort.vt.edu (540) 231- 5451

Dr. Roger Harris, Department Head

October 2016

Greetings everyone! Fall semester is a favorite time of year and it is gratifying to see our students enthusiastically getting off to a good start in their classes and club activities. The Horticulture Club is currently harvesting beautiful pumpkins that they grew at the Urban Horticulture Center. Please support the club by getting your locally grown pumpkin from a club member – sales will begin soon. Some much needed rain last week should help the trees on campus and the surrounding mountains reach their potential for putting on their amazing show of color. The signs are showing up already and it promises to be a great one! We are also anxiously anticipating the annual fall career fair on Tuesday, October 18. This major event is the best way for our students to connect with internship and career opportunities. The job fair is also a homecoming of sorts since company representatives are often our own recent graduates. These alumni were sitting in the same seats as our current students a short while ago and they are a wonderful resource for advice. This year, we are reviving a favorite event from the past and are featuring an industry-sponsored dinner the night before. This is a casual event where students can mingle with industry representatives and wait to see if their name is drawn to receive one of several substantial scholarships. You must be there to win! In this newsletter we are featuring our newest member of our office team. Tabitha Hartman is Office Manager and Chief Administrative Assistant for Human Resources and Academic Programs. The development of the new School of Plant and Environmental Sciences is proceeding as planned. The school proposal is currently in University Governance and we hope to have the final approvals through by next spring. A search for the new Director of the school will begin later this semester. I hope you enjoy this edition of our e-newsletter. Please pass it on!

— Roger



Congratulations to Cain and Lisa Hickey! Their baby girl, Maya Lee Hickey, was born at 4:13pm on September 22nd. 8 lbs. 12 oz.



Welcome Tabitha Hartman!

Tabitha is Horticulture's new Office Manager and Human Resources Associate. She joined the department this past June. Tabitha and her husband originally come from Northern New York. They visited Virginia a few times on vacation, fell in love with the state, and made it their goal to live here. Their dreams came true in 2015 when she was offered a position in another department at VT. She decided to apply to the Horticulture Department so that she could work more closely with students, faculty, and the academic side of the university. She loves the community vibe in the department and says she has felt nothing but welcomed and that she feels blessed to be part of our family!

Her favorite flower is the sunflower and she loves walking in forests. Her hobbies include being in nature swimming, and trail trekking. Tabitha loves to travel, get lost, and explore new places. While exploring, she also likes to try local cuisines and shop at the local farmer markets. She also loves all music, cooking, baking, hosting parties, and planning events. She has a chubby tomcat named Mozart who has been with her through thick and thin for 13 years.

According to Dr. Harris, "Tabitha has been an incredible help to the department in an extremely hectic period. She cheerfully took on the role as office manager and I am very grateful that she is a member of our Horticulture team."



Undergraduate News

Horticulture Club Service Project

Just in time for Halloween, the horticulture club made a video about pumpkins for elementary students. Watch "The life cycle of Steve the Pumpkin" here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKrenSo4IJM>

Laura Yuhase shares her #vtfirstdays on the CALS Facebook page.

Her photo essay about the beginning of her last semester is here: <https://www.facebook.com/vtagricultureandlifesciences/posts/10153847274253441>



Graduate Student News

Mark Williams's lab has a new PhD student Hazem Sharaf. He is a student in Geospatial, Bioinformatics, and Computational Biology. Welcome Hazem!

Publications

D Zhou, J Barney, MA Ponder and GE Welbaum (2016) Germination Response of Six Sweet Basil (*Ocimum basilicum*) Cultivars to Temperature. *Seed Technology* 37(1):43-51.

Moon, J., Ma, L., Xia, K. and Williams, M.A., 2016. Plant-Microbial and mineral contributions to amino acid and protein organic matter accumulation during 4000 years of pedogenesis. *Soil Biology and Biochemistry*, 100, pp.42-50.

Kakumanu, M., Reeves, A.M., Anderson, T., Rodrigues, R.R. and Williams, M.A., 2016. Honey bee gut microbiome is altered by in-hive pesticide exposures. *Frontiers in Microbiology*, 7, p.1255.

Rodrigues, R.R., Moon, J., Zhao, B. and Williams, M.A., 2016. Microbial communities and diazotrophic activity differ in the root-zone of Alamo and Dacotah switchgrass feedstocks. *GCB Bioenergy*.

Retirement

Congratulations to Jerzy Nowak, who has retired from his position as CALS International Programs Coordinator on September 30th. During his last few months in this role he successfully facilitated development of student exchanges between Virginia Tech (CALS students in particular) and:

- Memorial University, Newfoundland, Canada, MUN Botanical Garden and Fisheries and Marine Institute, in particular.
- Ecole d'Ingénieurs de PURPAN (Purpan Agricultural College), Toulouse University, France with animal science, viticulture/enology, food processing, and culinary culture as components of their summer programs designed for American students.

Jerzy also served as the Horticulture's department head (2000-2008), and the Founding Director of the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention (2008-2011).

Jerzy will continue serving the Horticulture Department as Professor Emeritus.

Hahn Horticulture Garden Events

September 1 to October 31 Art in the Garden exhibit: Bursting with Color with Karen Sewell.

Learn at Lunch Wednesdays at the Hahn Pavilion- FREE!

- October 5, 12-1pm Trees and Shrubs- the ceilings and walls of outdoor spaces with Alex Niemiera
- October 19th, 12-1pm Ornamental Grasses: Garden Heroes! with Holly Scoggins

For more information please visit <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html> or contact the Hahn Garden by phone, 540-231-5970, or by email, vtgarden@vt.edu.

