

Horticulturist's Corner

I ♥ Mulch!

Ahhh....mulch! I sure do love mulch! Nothing completes a landscape like nicely edged beds and a fresh layer of shredded hardwood mulch. And what instant gratification, you finish mulching a bed, step back and whoa – what a difference! Mulch is not only attractive - it offers many **benefits**. Mulch helps to **reduce weeds**, (perhaps most important!), it **moderates soil temperature**, preventing extremes and sudden temperature changes by providing insulation, and **adds nutrients to the soil** as it breaks down. It's best to use double shredded mulch that is slightly decomposed.

Mulch **helps retain moisture in the soil**, which in turn requires us to water less often. It also **prevents soil erosion**. Plants should have a modest layer of mulch around them all year round, but no deeper than 4". Care should be taken to keep mulch away from the bark of trees and shrubs and should be used sparingly at the base of any plant material. At the Garden, we keep a large pile of mulch available at all times to replenish areas that are newly planted or have been disturbed. With all of its benefits and beauty, mulch is an important addition to any landscape.

- **Stephanie Huckestein**

The Virginia Tech Horticulture Garden needs your help.

We depend on gifts and donations for our operating budget and on our Garden Volunteers for essential manpower and inspiration. Check out our website or call Stephanie for specific projects in need of benefactors and volunteer opportunities. Also, please remember the Garden when you are contacted by Virginia Tech fundraising.

www.hort.vt.edu/vthg/
(540) 231-5970

Garden Director, Webmistress, and
Newsletter Editor.....Dr. Holly Scoggins
Head Horticulturist:Stephanie Huckestein
Woody Plant Curator.....Dr. Alex Niemiera



Ornamental onion (*Allium nigrum*), VTHG.

VIRGINIA TECH HORTICULTURE GARDEN

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GARDEN NEWS
SUMMER 2002



VIRGINIA TECH HORTICULTURE GARDEN

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The **Friends of the Garden** annual membership program has been resurrected and retooled; we now offer wonderful benefits in return for critically needed funds. Several levels of giving are available. Among the benefits of the tax-deductible membership are

- discounts at educational programs, special events and plant sales,
- a wonderful reciprocal (i.e. free) admissions program to over 100 botanic gardens and arboreta across Virginia, the U.S., and Canada, courtesy of the American Horticulture Society.

Check out the details and a printable membership application at our website (www.hort.vt.edu/vthg) or call (540) 231-5970. Become a Friend of the Garden and help us grow!

FRONT ENTRANCE REVAMP

We have a new look along Washington Street! Two rustic stone walls were built by students in Robert McDuffie's Landscape Construction course .

Designed in the centuries-old method of mortarless construction known as dry stack, the Virginia Tech Quarry generously donated the genuine "Hokie Stone" pieces that were used in the wall. Beds of annuals will be added in front of and behind the walls, providing a bright punch of color to welcome our visitors.

SHORTCOURSES A SUCCESS!

The first annual Winter Short Course series was enjoyed by over 150 attendees total to both the hands-on series and the home landscape series. Gardeners and gardeners-in-the-making learned about a wide variety of topics from eight different experts.

We especially thank Virginia Tech Horticulture Department professors Alex Niemiera, Roger Harris, Robert McDuffie, and Holly Scoggins for contributing their expertise to the Home Landscape Series. Proceeds from the classes helped support Garden operations.

Meet our Summer Interns

We are fortunate to have two ambitious, resourceful, and hard-working women as our interns for summer 2002. Rachel Bailey and Allison Byrd are undergraduates in the Department of Horticulture.

Our interns provide a great service to the Garden in exchange for a valuable learning experience. Though they handle a great deal of the Garden's maintenance, they will also sample other aspects of public gardening such as

- interactions with Garden tour groups
- plant collection records and labeling
- visits to other gardens and arboreta

Funding for the internships is provided by the M. Evans Gardner Memorial Internship Endowment and the Virginia Tech Horticulture Club. These positions are essential to the Garden's success and help us fulfill our mission as a real-world learning experience for Horticulture students.



Rachel Bailey

A native of Waynesboro, Rachel has a broad background in horticulture. Experienced in both the garden and the greenhouse, she intends to work with a landscape design-build firm upon graduation with a B.S. this winter.

Allison Byrd



Allison hails from Manassas where she graduated cum laude from the Northern Virginia Community College with an Associate's degree before joining us at VT. Once she finishes her B.S. in Horticulture, she plans to enter the Master's program in Agricultural Education.