

Department of Horticulture

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



Roger Harris, Interim Head, Department of Horticulture, www.hort.vt.edu

February 2010

Greetings from Blacksburg everyone! Snow is flying fast and furious as students anxiously await the beginning of "spring" break next week. I related last month that we were offering our $\frac{1}{4}$ zip fleece pullovers (see below again) at our cost. If you are still interested but haven't gotten around to it, we have just a handful of small (6), medium (3), and large (5) left (sorry, no XLarge). Please send us your size and a check for \$40 made out to the Virginia Tech Foundation (address to my attention, dept address on header) and we will mail one if you would like to get one of the last of the group in time for spring. These run a little large so please take that into consideration. As always, we would appreciate e-mail updates from our alumni and friends. With kind regards, *Roger*



Rebecca Dabney, president of the Horticulture Club, reports that The Horticulture Club is having a great start to spring semester. At the monthly meeting with the elementary school students in the Harding Avenue Green Club, Hort club members taught the students about worms and how they contribute to soil quality. At the last meeting of the club Robert McDuffie showed slides from his past trips to England, New Zealand and other exotic places. All agree that it was quite amazing to see these remarkable gardens, especially after a month of constant snow. Plans for the Spring Plant Sale (April 29-May 1) have begun.

Through their VNA Horticulture Research Foundation, the VNLA has kindly sponsored an undergraduate research internship at Urban Horticulture Center this coming summer—the first Virginia Nursery & Landscape Association Urban Horticulture Center Research Internship! Applications are being accepted until March 19. Interns will gain hands-on experience conducting research at the UHC and will be mentored by a faculty member. Faculty interested in mentoring a student, or students interested in applying should visit the UHC website at www.hort.vt.edu/UHC. Contact UHC Director, **Susan Day** (sdd@vt.edu) if you have any questions.

Jeff Miller, VT Horticulture alumnus and VNLA Executive Director since 1985, was recognized for his 25 years of service to the VNLA as executive director at the annual membership meeting in Baltimore earlier this year. He is one of the authors of the original VNLA Certification manual and was one of the original founders of the VNA Horticulture Research Foundation when he and four other board members (Ennion Williams, Michael Ferrara, Bob Papetti, and John Machen Sr.) each contributed \$200 to start the permanent research endowment. Congratulations Jeff! **Robert Wright** was recognized at the same meeting as the 2009 VNLA Professional of the year, and **Laurie Fox** was recognized as the recipient of the 2009 Environmental Steward of the year award. See pictures at end of newsletter.

Barbara Kraft is now an iTunes University professor! She has made all the vocabulary from her *Spanish for the Green Industry* class available! You can download the vocabulary podcasts for free to your iPod or listen directly from the computer. To access iTunes University you must have iTunes on your computer. Downloading iTunes is quick and free. To access the Spanish for the Green Industry vocabulary podcasts follow these directions: Go to <http://itunes.edtech.vt.edu/>. When the VT iTunes University site pops up, click on Public Access. When the Virginia Tech on iTunes U window pops up you will see three boxes, University Podcasts, Courses, Extension and Outreach. Look in the courses box for Span 2154 Spanish for the Green Industry. Click on Span 2154 Spanish for The Green Industry. The official site window will pop up. You now have access to download all or some of the vocabulary. You may also listen from this site. Check it out!

Happenings at the Hahn Horticulture Gardens - from Stephanie Huckestein
Gardens of New Zealand with Robert McDuffie - Wednesday March 17 - 12:00-noon.
Travel down under to visit beautiful gardens filled with unusual plants and wonderful people. Robert's photographs are simply stunning! Pre-registration is required for workshops and highly recommended for seminars. Call Stephanie at 540-231-5970 to register by phone.

Seed Starting Workshop with Holly Scoggins - March 20, 10:00 a.m.—noon
\$25 Friends of the Garden/\$30 general public. Celebrate the first day of Spring by learning tips and tricks to get the most out of your vegetable and flower seeds. Holly will cover seed saving and storage, strategies to enhance germination, and care of seedlings goodies to get you growing! Workshop has limited space so you must pre-register.

Ecological Approaches to Home Gardening with Brinkley Benson - March 25, 6:00 p.m.–7:30
How can you build some of the strengths of natural ecosystems into your home garden? Brinkley will discuss this question and others in this interactive presentation that will help you better understand basic ecological principles and how they apply to your home landscape and garden. Learn how you can apply the principals gleaned from various methods of sustainable land management to build the productive capacity of your home landscape. Topics covered will include cover cropping, biological pest control, farmscaping, and reduced tillage/no tillage gardening.

Jeff Burr reports that there is a new greenhouse web site. Check it out at <http://www.hort.vt.edu/greenhouse/>

Changhe Zhou, a research associate from Bingyu Zhao's lab, won the best poster prize of the 1st symposium of molecular plant sciences of Virginia Tech, Jan 29, 2010. Congratulations Changhe!

Joyce Latimer and **John Freeborn** recently made presentations at Shenandoah Valley's Winter Horticultural Production Workshop Series: *Greenhouse Production Workshop* in Dayton. Joyce also recently conducted an annual *Greenhouse Update on Vegetable Transplants* for the commercial greenhouse producers in Richmond and a 2-day *Getting Started in the Greenhouse Business School* in Blackstone for citizens interested in greenhouse production. Among others participating in Blackstone were **Allen Straw**, **Alex Niemiera**, and **Lisa Lipsey**.



Jeff Miller (left picture), Robert Wright (center picture) and Laurie Fox (right picture) receive awards from the VNLA at their annual membership meeting in Baltimore.



Rachel Layman at the Cascades this winter