

Department of Horticulture

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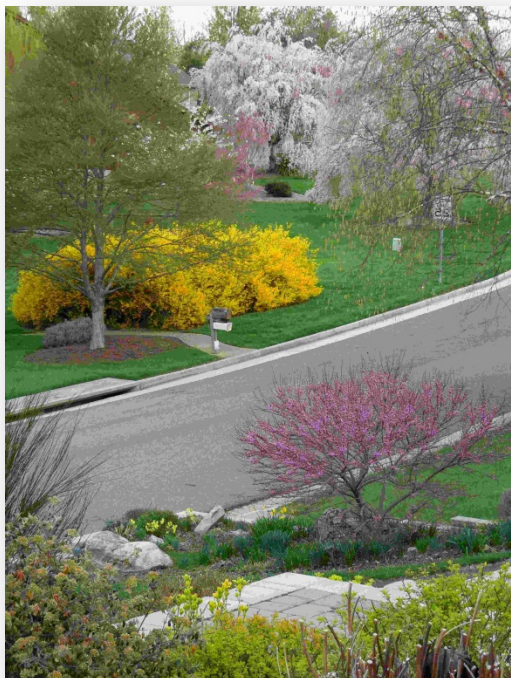


Roger Harris, Department Head

April 2013

Greetings everyone! The relatively cool temperatures this past month have created a slow unfolding of the floral display, creating a very beautiful spring. The full bloom and great weather really brought folks out to the annual Horticulture Club plant sale last week (see pictures below). The event is co-hosted by the Hahn Horticulture Garden and this year's event featured informative "micro" talks by our students, local garden tours, and a sneak preview of unusual plants that were being sold. Proceeds from the sale fund Horticulture Club activities (such as the PLANET trip and scholarships) and various initiatives at the Hahn. This much anticipated event has really become part of the community fabric. Alumni, we would love to hear what you are up to. Please e-mail me (rharris@vt.edu) with an update that you would like to share in our annual newsletter, "Seeds". One way to stay connected with VT is through the university [You Tube](#) channel. Be a life-time 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. Enjoy!

With kind regards, *Reget*



Late April in Blacksburg! Both scenes are from the yard of Jerzy Nowak.

Plant Sale!



Horticulture Club members grew plants and created various planters for the plant sale.



This year's plant sale featured talks by Horticulture Club members throughout the day.



Happy customers shop the sale.

Recent Publications:

Mitter B., Petric A., Chain P.S.G. Trognitz F., **Nowak J.**, Compant S. and A. Sessitsch. 2013. Genome analysis, ecology, and plant growth promotion of the endophyte Burkholderia phytofirmans strain PsJN (pp. 1233-1269). In: Molecular Microbial Ecology of the Rhizosphere (F. de Bruijn, Editor), Volume 1 & 2, Chapter 81, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ.

Mitter B., A. Petric, M.V. Shin, P.S.G. Chain, L. Hauberg-Lotte, B. Reinhold-Hurek, **J. Nowak** and A. Sessitsch. 2013. Comparative genome analysis of Burkholderia phytofirmans PsJN reveals a wide spectrum of endophytic lifestyles based on interaction strategies with host plants. Frontiers in Plant-Microbial Interaction 4: 1-15.

Levy, D., W.K. Coleman, and **R.E. Veilleux**. 2013. Adaptation of potato to water shortage: Irrigation management and enhancement of tolerance to drought and salinity. American Journal of Potato Research. 90:186-206.

Laurie Fox is hosting an exchange student from England through the Norfolk Sister City Association. Lewis Hollingsworth recently graduated from Easton College and won a horticultural knowledge test to come visit. His areas of interest are landscape design and ornamental plant propagation. Lewis is reportedly having a wonderful time seeing and experiencing all things horticultural including the Virginia Zoo, the Norfolk Botanical Garden, trips and talks with the AREC faculty, the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, the US Botanical Garden, and numerous other cultural activities.

Alex Niemiera recently received a \$6,500 grant award from the Virginia Agricultural Council to install an edible landscape demonstration garden at the Virginia Tech Hahn Horticulture Garden. Installation will begin this fall.

VT Engage has nominated **Susan Clark** for the Thomas Ehrlich Civically Engaged Faculty Award. This award is a "national recognition for a senior faculty member for exemplary engaged scholarship, including leadership in advancing students' civic learning, conducting community-based research, fostering reciprocal community partnerships, building institutional commitments to service-learning and civic engagement, and other means of enhancing higher education's contributions to the public good." Congratulations Susan!

Art in the Garden Reception: Sunday, May 5, 2013 2-5 PM

- Free and open to the public
- Hors d'oeuvres
- Music by harpist Camilla Harris
- No parking permit required on weekends.

This is a reception to introduce the gallery for nature-inspired art in the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion. Meet the artists, see the work that has been displayed over the past year, and preview upcoming exhibits. For upcoming exhibits and events visit: www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/artinthegarden

Horticulture sophomore **Victoria Neff** presented her research under mentor **Holly Scoggins** at the 2013 Virginia Tech Undergraduate Research Conference. This year's conference was held on April 19 at the Skelton Inn and Conference Center. Her oral presentation was entitled "Comparisons of Auxin Application Methods and Rates on Rooting of Perennial Cuttings". This project was a continuation of Holly's perennial propagation work, funded by the Virginia Agricultural Council.



The Ornamental Plant Production and Marketing class (HORT 4614) had a terrific tour of some of the Commonwealth's finest nurseries, greenhouses, and garden centers over April 4th through 6th. Led by **Holly Scoggins** and assisted by **Lisa Lipsey**, two vans full of students were met by successful and enthusiastic Hokie Hort alumni at nearly every stop, including Battlefield Farms in Rapidan, Waynesboro Nurseries and Milmont Garden Center of Waynesboro, Shreckhise Nurseries in Grottoes (thanks for lunch!), and Strange's Greenhouse, Florist, and Garden Center in Richmond. Other stops included Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden and A Thyme to Plant, both in Richmond. A special treat was a behind-the-scenes tour and tasting at James River Cellar Winery, hosted by Hokie Mike Hildebrand, also owner of James River Nurseries. Mike and Susie went above and beyond by then treating the class to a wonderful dinner in Short Pump.



Matt Shreckhise shares some industry tips with the students of Ornamental Plant Production & Marketing (such as "Chilly springs are bad for business!")

New Resident in Saunders Hall

Margaret Merrill, librarian for CALS and long-time friend of Horticulture has moved her office to 306-E Saunders Hall. Welcome Margaret!



Constance Close is our new Human Resources Administrative Assistant. Constance is filling the position vacated recently by Mary Hagan. Her office is in Saunders 306. Welcome Constance!

Yi Liu recently presented a poster titled "Genetic and biochemical characterization of the ACC oxidase in plant immunity" at the Potomac Division Annual Meeting of the American Phytopathological Society at Sheperdstown, WV. **Taylor Frazier** also attended the meeting won a graduate student travel award that will support her to attend the national annual meeting of American Phytopathological Society at Austin in August.



The giant old sycamore tree in downtown Blacksburg lives! The clone from the old tree that had to be removed from Henderson lawn was recently revealed and planted at a ceremony attended by President Steger. The tree was cloned with a cutting made by forestry professors John Seiler and Eric Wiseman (Eric is left on right photo) and grown by John James (right on right photo) at the Urban Horticulture Center.

Greg Peck has gone undercover!

This just in from *The Winchester Star*

From afar it looks like a wedding tent, but instead of marital bliss growing underneath there are rows and rows of sweet cherry trees. This is what more than 20 area farmers, fruit growers and agricultural professionals came to see Thursday morning at the Alson H. Smith Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center on Laurel Grove Road in Frederick County. Assistant Professor of horticulture Greg Peck said the orchard covering — a mix of mesh and solid material — shields about a half-acre of cherry trees from rain, frost, hail and other weather. It was put in place about two weeks ago and is supported by 47 poles that were installed last year. "Cherries crack as we get close to harvest, and so if we can keep the rain off of the cherries we can ensure a [better] annual crop out of our cherry trees," Peck said. "We're also looking to protect the cherry trees from frost in the spring. Last year I lost 90 percent of these cherries to a spring frost on March 27. We're also looking to protect the trees from bird damage and hail storms."



Grafted tomatoes from Plant Propagation class. The laboratory exercise was led by Dr. Josh Freeman, our vegetable crops specialist at the Eastern Shore AREC in Painter.

Spring Gardening Workshops and Seminars

Take advantage of our low admission prices and prepare to be informed, entertained, and inspired! Become a Friend of the Garden and enjoy our member discounts! (visit ["Memberships" for membership form and more details](#)). Pre-registration is required for workshops and highly recommended for seminars. Call Stephanie at 540-231-5970 or email vtgarden@vt.edu.

[Fruit Tree Grafting Workshop](#) with Barry Robinson - Smithfield/Hahn Partnership!

Saturday, May 4, 2013 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Hahn Garden Pavilion. \$15 per registrant, pre-registration required. REGISTER THROUGH SMITHFIELD - call 540-231-3947

Join Historic Smithfield Plantation and the Hahn Horticultural Garden for grafting class. Horticulturist Barry Robinson will lead the hands-on workshop through the science of fruit tree grafting. Heritage scionwood from the orchards at Smithfield Plantation will be used. Students will be able to take home (4) grafted rootstocks. Minimum class size required to make. Call 540-231-3947 to register!

[The New Native Cottage Garden: Update the Classic Cottage Garden with Bold, Contemporary Designs!](#) with Thomas Rainer



Thursday, May 9, 2013 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Location TBD. \$10 Friends of the Garden/\$15 general public. Call Stephanie at 540-231-5970 to register by phone or email vtgarden@vt.edu. It's time to take a fresh look at the cottage garden. This traditionally British form can be easily adapted for American gardens using American plants. The charming jumble of perennials and shrubs can be a truly sustainable and beautiful model for small gardens. Thomas will share tips for designing a contemporary cottage garden, including his picks of native plants best suited for cottage gardens.

Thomas Rainer is a landscape architect by profession and a gardener by obsession. Thomas has worked on projects such as the U.S. Capitol grounds, the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, and The New York Botanical Garden, but is happiest puttering in his small garden in Washington, D.C. You can find more about Thomas at his award-winning blog, ["Grounded Design."](#)