

Department of Horticulture

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Dr. Roger Harris, Department Head

April 2017

Greetings, students, alumni, and friends! After a few false starts, spring is in finally upon us in Blacksburg. The late freeze claimed some of our early flowers but we are hopefully past the danger of that happening again. Spring means the Hort Club Plant Sale! This much anticipated event is held every spring at the VT Greenhouse Range adjacent to the Hahn Horticulture Garden and is something you don't want to miss. Local gardens are being plowed and will soon be ready to receive the bounty. A full array of vegetables, flowering annuals and perennials, and the latest cultivars of woody ornamentals and fruit plants will all be there to behold. All proceeds from the sale support student activities. Another great event is the upcoming Garden Gala at the Hahn Horticulture Garden on June 10. It is indeed the best garden party of the year! As promised in our last newsletter, the results are in from the National Collegiate Landscape Competition, held this year at Brigham Young University (see the following page). Congratulations to everyone who participated. Besides the fun competition, students had a great opportunity to network with industry representatives from around the country. It is a great time to be graduating – business is booming! The much anticipated launch of the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences at the end of June is almost upon us. Searches for the inaugural Director of the new school as well as the Director of the Hahn Horticulture Gardens are both well under way. I will give you an update on both of these searches in our newsletter next month. I hope that you enjoy this edition of our monthly e-newsletter. Please pass it on!

– Roger



Fran de la Mota, a PhD arranged to have Bill Graves visit Virginia Tech on March 13th. Bill is a professor and associate dean from Iowa State University and he is currently researching historic trees on Land-Grant University Campuses. Before his seminar, we introduced him to some of Virginia Tech's special trees. To see more photos from this tour, visit <https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/horticulture/2017/03/24/william-graves/>



Undergraduate News NALP Edition!

The National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP) 2017 National Collegiate Landscape Competition (NCLC) at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT was a big success for fifteen Virginia Tech students and their sponsors. Students from the Dept of Horticulture, the Agricultural Technology Program, Landscape Architecture, and even the Mathematics Dept traveled to Provo on March 14 thru 19 to compete in 29 events against over 60 schools and universities from across the country and Canada. While Blacksburg was suffering through a resurgence of winter, Utah was experiencing one of its mildest months of March on record... the over 650 students in attendance were greeted with sunny skies and temperatures in the 70's for our entire stay!

Several notable performances from this year's event propelled the VT Team, smaller than usual in numbers and HUGE in Hokie Spirit, to a 19th Place finish. Congratulations to Justice Schlemmer (HORT 2017) for finishing 4th in the Super Star competition for overall NCLC student performer! This is the third year in a row that VT has placed a student seventh or better in the overall event!

Here are other great performances:

- Justice Schlemmer, 1st Place – Construction Cost Estimating; 10th Skid Steer Loader Operation
- Maddie Pequigney, 6th – Sales Presentation “She sold the job!”
- Alysha Lawless, 6th –Computer Aided Landscape Design
- Alysha also won a \$500 award for designing the 2017 NCLC T-shirt worn by all 672 competitors at this year's event! She also won this contest in 2015!
- Joseph Mills, 9th – Maintenance Cost Estimating
- Harley Curran, 11th – 3D Landscape Design
- Daniel Milihram & William Shelburne, 3rd –Truck & Trailer Operation

- Joseph Mills & Daniel Milihram, 5th –Landscape Maintenance Operation
- Kevin Osborne, Maddie Pequigney & Justice Schlemmer, 9th – Landscape Plant Installation
- Joseph Mills & Justice Schlemmer, 14th – Hardscape Installation

Laura Yuhase, William Shelburne, and Justice Schlemmer each received \$1000 Scholarship Awards at the NALP Student Scholarship Reception on Wednesday night at the Bean Life Science Museum on BYU campus.

Students had many opportunities to speak with companies and sponsors throughout the week, including at Industry sponsored Workshops and the NALP Scholarship Reception on Wednesday, the large Career Fair and Trade Show and Event Briefings on Thursday, and informally in Convention center hallways, hotel lobbies, and all across campus. Students have related many instances of follow-up job interviews and internship offers as a result of their interactions.

We would like thank all of the wonderful Industry leaders and individuals who donated funding toward this year's trip! Without your GENEROUS support the NCLC Provo experience for our team would not have been possible. Thank you also to Ruppert Landscape for hosting the entire team along with team members from 3 other universities for a meal and social on our final night in Provo.

Thank you to Mark Maslow and his team from Southern Landscape Group for hosting the VT NCLC 2017 team for a social at PK's Restaurant in Blacksburg after our return.

We can't wait to begin planning for the 2018 NCLC Event at Alamance Community College in North Carolina!

Barbara Leshyn, Tom Martin, John James

To see more photos, visit: <https://blogs.lt.vt.edu/horticulture/2017/03/31/nalp/>



Outreach

Jayesh Samtani was visiting a strawberry variety trial that he set out this strawberry growing season at Motley farms in Gretna, VA and the owner Kevin Motley was being interviewed with local ABC news channel as he was collecting data. They also asked him to chime in after his interview was done. See the article and video here: <http://wset.com/news/local/fluctuating-winter-temperatures-had-farmers-working-overtime-for-strawberry-season>



Conferences

Ramón Arancibia and Holly Scoggins presented at the 2016 Small farmer conference in Virginia Beach, VA. Proceedings from the conference can be found here: <http://www.vsu.edu/nationalsmallfarmconference/Draft%20proceedings.pdf>

Joyce Latimer along with graduate students, Mara Grossman and Rachel Mack, attended the National Floriculture Forum in Philadelphia March 16-19. The National Floriculture Forum (NFF) is an annual educational meeting for greenhouse growers, industry leaders, university faculty, graduate students and government scientists from academic institutions, governmental agencies and the greenhouse industry. Thirty-one attendees, including over 10 graduate students, arrived in Philadelphia on the heels of Winter Storm Stella. Our meeting included the Philadelphia Flower Show, a tour of a hydroponic cut flower operation, Flowers by Bauers, and a behind the scenes tour of production areas of Longwood Gardens. Sunday was our business day with research updates by faculty and graduates students, including one by Mara Grossman, along with a special presentation by industry champion, Lloyd Traven of Peace Tree Farms. Lloyd is a primary supplier of forced material for the Philadelphia Flower Show.



Yes, the flowers in the background are Phalaenopsis!!!!

Graduate News

Rachel Mack and Chris McCullough, both Horticulture PhD students, will become Graduate Teaching Scholars this fall. This program emphasizes innovation in teaching providing its participants one-on-one mentoring, class observations to learn teaching practices, team teaching experience, and discussions on scholarship in teaching.

Awards

Mark Williams was recognized as the Scholar of the Week for the week for his research into the way plants, microbes, and soil interact to affect the health of each and of the wider ecological systems. Congratulations, Mark! <https://www.research.vt.edu/scholar-of-the-week>

Susan Clark was recognized as Teacher of the Week for “aspiring to create positive, collaborative, and vital learning environments where students–instructor(s)–off-campus community partners learn and grow together in acquisition of knowledge that is connected to real-world experiences within the larger community and to humanitarian values”. Congratulations Susan! <http://www.cideronline.org/teacheroftheweek/pastwinners2.cfm?tid=385>



Velva, Roger and Tabitha met Tater the pardoned turkey at the Staff Association's Dean and Department Head luncheon.

Publications

Ferraro, N., Bosch, D., Pease, J., and Owen, J.S. 2017 Costs of Capturing and Recycling Irrigation Water in Container Nurseries Hortscience Vol. 52(2): 258-263

Majsztrik, J.C, Fernandez, R.T., Fisher, P.R., Hitchcock, D.R., Lea-Cox, J., Owen, J.S., Oki, L.R., and White, S.A. 2017 Water Use and Treatment in Container-Grown Specialty Crop Production: A Review. Water Air Soil Pollution 228:151 DOI 10.1007/s11270-017-3272-1

Shanmugam, S.G., Magbanua, Z.V., Williams, M.A., Jangid, K., Whitman, W.B., Peterson, D.G. and Kingery, W.L., 2016. Bacterial Diversity Patterns Differ in Soils Developing in Sub-tropical and Cool-Temperate Ecosystems. Microbial ecology, pp.1-14.

Wu, S. and Zhao, B., 2017. Using Clear Nail Polish to Make Arabidopsis Epidermal Impressions for Measuring the Change of Stomatal Aperture Size in Immune Response. Methods Mol Biol. 1578:243-248. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4939-6859-6_20.

Hahn Horticulture Garden Events

- The Horticulture Club Plant Sale will take place April 20-22nd!
 - Thursday April 20 8am-6pm
 - Friday April 21 8am-6pm
 - Saturday April 22 8am-2pm
- Mark your calendar! The Garden Gala will be Saturday, June 10, 2017 5:30 to 9:00pm! More information here: <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/gala.html>
- Currently on display in the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion: *Watercolors with Sidra Kaluszka*.
- **Simply Elemental** invites artists to submit a proposal for their next installation! Submission deadline is April 15th. To learn more, visit <http://tiny.cc/elemental17>

Learn at Lunch **Wednesdays noon to 1pm** at the Hahn Pavilion- FREE!

- April 12th, Community Food Forests with Catherine Bukowski
- April 19th, Plant Sale Preview with Lisa Lipsey and Holly Scoggins
- May 3rd, Body-friendly Gardening Techniques with Carol Beliveau

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

