

Volume 6, Issue 1

Winter and Spring Seminar Series

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Upcoming Events:

Spring Plant Sale with the Horticulture Club & Hahn Horticulture Garden

April 24-26, 2008

4th Annual Garden Gala June 14, 2008

We are excited to offer another round of excellent speakers and interesting topics for the 2008 winter and spring seminar series. Last season's seminars were a huge success with record attendance (which resulted in record income for the garden)! Be sure to take note of the Special Friends of the Garden seminar on Saturday, February 9th. This seminar is FREE to members of the garden. It is not too late to join! We look forward to another exceptional seminar series. Hope you can join us!

Be sure to check out our web site at www.hort.vt.edu/hhg, the Current section of the Roanoke Times, or feel free to contact Stephanie at vtgarden@vt.edu or 540-231-5970 for more garden events. We will start our Friday morning Garden Walk Series again in spring. The walks are FREE and cover a variety of topics in the garden.

- Stephanie Huckestein, Education and Outreach Coordinator

Special Friends of the Garden Lecture! *Tough Plants for Tough Times*

Mark Weathington, Assistant Director, JC Raulston Arboretum, North Carolina State University.

With 100 year droughts, water restrictions, and record temperatures the garden can look more like a moonscape than a landscape. Learn about some unusual plants that can stand up to the harshest conditions and still

come out fresh as a daisy. \$20 general public or FREE Friends of the Garden members. Saturday, February 9, 2008, 10:00 a.m.-12:00

p.m. Location: Fralin Auditorium. Due to the short turn-around between this newsletter and the lecture, just give us a call or e-mail if you're planning to attend—vtgarden@vt.edu or 540.231-5783.



The Do's and Don'ts of Pruning Woody Plants

Dr. Eric Wiseman, Assistant Professor, Forestry, Virginia Tech, and ISA Certified Arborist

Often wonder when to prune this tree and how to prune that shrub? Pruning is a tricky practice and must be done properly to result in a healthy plant. Dr. Eric Wiseman will share with us proper pruning techniques, why you should/should not prune, the right time of year to prune, and other helpful pruning advice.

\$20 general public or \$15 Friends of the Garden members. Saturday, March 8, 2008 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. Location: Fralin Auditorium.



(Continued on page 2)

Winter Seminar Series (cont.)

Some Like it Hot: Tropical Plants for Temperate Gardens

Pam Baggett, garden writer, lecturer, and photographer.

There's no denying it: the East Coast rivals the tropics when summer temperatures soar. Popular tropicals like coleus and elephant ears provide months of dazzling color and bold texture, but there are many other, lesser-



known selections that can also give your garden that island look. From grasses and vines to radiant foliage and flowering plants, tropicals prove that heat and humidity are assets when you choose the right plants! \$20 general

public or \$15 Friends of the Garden members. Thursday, March 27, 2008, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Location: Fralin Auditorium

Digital Horticulture Photography

Robert McDuffie, Associate Professor, Dept. of Horticulture, Virginia Tech, and professional garden photographer.

Sorry, this class is now full. Let us know if you'd be interested in attending next year!

This course will cover the basics of digital photography. There will be time spent in lecture on the basics of composition and photographic techniques as they relate to digital photography. Participants should have a digital camera, as we will be shooting images in the Hahn Horticulture Garden and critiquing them afterward. In addition, we will discuss how images can be manipulated or improved in PhotoShop. *Must pre-register, limited to 30 participants. \$35 general public or \$30 Friends of the Garden members. Saturday, April 12 8:00 a.m. –3:00 p.m. (fee includes light lunch)

Location: Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion



Woodland Wildflowers—Jewels of the Forest

William Cullina, Director of Horticultural Research at the New England Wildflower Society, and nationally renowned speaker, writer, and expert on native plants.

Our woodland wildflowers are both captivating and mysterious, loved and misunderstood. There are no plants more beautiful than Lady-slippers, Oconee bells, trilliums, bloodroot, and hepatica, yet these slow-growing plants are far too rare in gardens. What is it that makes these plants so special, and especially fragile, and how can we establish some in our own gardens?

\$20 general public or \$15 Friends of the Garden members Thursday, May 1, 2008, 6:30 –8:30 p.m. Location: Fralin Auditorium



There are still 10 great reasons to join or renew as a *Friend of the Garden* for 2007-2008!

10. Great discounts on our educational programs, plus a FREE Friends of the Garden lecture!
9. You get a cool membership card and decoder ring (just kidding about the ring).
8. You'll help pay our student workers and interns.
7. Free admission to more than 225 public gardens across North America as part of the American Horticulture Society's Reciprocal Admission Program.
6. Free admission to the Hahn Horticulture Garden (oh, wait...)
5. One complimentary call to the Director/staff for gardening advice, even if it's the middle of the night.
4. "Friends" discounts for our plant sales and other events.
3. Did we mention free admission to our Friends of the Garden Lecture?
2. The membership form is on our web site—just print it off and send it in! www.hort.vt.edu/hhg
1. Join at any level—you will be an important part of something wonderful—the Hahn Horticulture Garden at Virginia Tech!

Garden Interns Revisited!

Dr. Robert Lyons created the Hort Garden internship program in the late 80's, and over time, many a talented and hard-working student have spent their summers gaining hands-on experience in the garden. I'm happy to report that most have gone on to wonderful careers (actually getting paying jobs in our field). Periodically, we'll take a look back at what's become of them...



Sonya ponders a giant dragonfly at Inniswood Metro Gardens, Columbus, Ohio. (photo H. Scoggins)

Sonya Lepper served as a summer intern in 2004 as she completed her B.S. in Horticulture. Sonya was a superb student and an interesting combination of take-charge perfectionist and plant nerd. She went from our internship program straight into the Longwood Gardens/University of Delaware graduate program, now directed by Dr. Robert Lyons. The Cadillac of public garden graduate programs, the Longwood gig came with a complete fellowship, living expenses, paid travel to exotic places, and a research stipend. Sonya's research investigated "why do people give to public gardens as opposed to other non-profits or charities". She now works with big donors at her new job as a development officer at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

Paul Westervelt was one of the summer interns and the very first person I met at Virginia Tech when I came up to interview in June of 1999. After checking in to the hotel, I came straight over to the Hort Garden to see what the resources would be for teaching plant i.d. Paul was cleaning leaves out of the water garden with a beer pitcher. Never, ever shy, he welcomed me effusively, grilled me regarding my UGA plant connections, and

made me feel right at home. After wrapping up a B.S. in Horticulture, Paul worked on a plant nutrition project, completing his M.S. in the summer of 2004. He served as my teaching assistant for several courses and was an outstanding teacher. When you point out that he was in school for good bit of time, he simply states he was waiting on Sonya to come along. I guess that also explains why it took him more than a year to write his M.S. thesis. But I digress...

When Interns Meet (and Marry)

Long story short, Paul went head-over-heels for Sonya and apparently vice-versa. In the ultimate romantic act of horticultural-geekness, (and with the spirit of Vita Sackville-West looking down approvingly, I'm sure) he asked her to marry him in the castle tower overlooking Sissinghurst Gardens in the U.K. Did I mention they are unbearably romantic?

Now known as the "Leppervelts" by their friends, they live in Piney River, Virginia, where Paul is the Annuals and Perennials Manager at Saunders Brother's Inc. , a large wholesale nursery. They work hard, play hard, garden like fiends, love cigars, never miss a Hokie's football game, and continue to actively support the garden...you can catch up with them at the next Garden Gala!
- H. Scoggins



Paul prepares to shop 'till he drops at Park Seed/Wayside Gardens, Greenwood, S.C. (photo H. Scoggins)

For Your Winter Browsing Pleasure

So what if there's not much to look at outside—curl up with some cocoa in front of the warm glow of your computer monitor and commence shopping!!! I always urge gardeners to do everything they can to support local garden centers and nurseries. But with the advent of faster, cheaper shipping via FedEx and UPS, mail order has become an excellent way to get unusual plants that you can't find in your area.

Want to know what other folks have experienced? Customer reviews of 3,178 garden mail order companies (!) are posted on the Garden Watchdog under "Products and Sources" at www.davesgarden.com.

Aside from the larger, traditional companies you may already be familiar with such as Wayside Gardens and White Flower Farm, there are many other sources to serve your "niche" needs.

Example: Rex and fibrous-rooted begonias have moved out of the parlor and into the gardening limelight. Mainstream companies like Proven Winners offer several varieties, but go to the off-beat sites for weird, wild and wonderful begonias. There are more than one hundred species and cultivars of the wacky things out there—and once you start collecting them, you gotta get the whole set (it's like fine china but better). Glossy leaves, swirley leaves, black, red, green, spotted, gorgeous, ugly, you name it. For everything you ever wanted to know about begonias and more, try the basic but info-packed www.bradsbegoniaworld.com. Beware, the world of begonias seems completely unregulated, kind of like the opium trade. What one grower calls 'Maid of Northumberly' may be 'Dinky-doo' at another greenhouse.

Kevin Reiner's mail order-only nursery "Firmly Planted" is one of the most aesthetically-pleasing websites I've visited, horticultural or otherwise (www.firmlyplanted.net). Victorian graphics combine with cutting-edge web design and Flash photos for a real treat. Terrific plants, too!

If you're feeling adventurous and have some time to kill, visit www.glasshouseworks.com. They carry some very rare and hard-to-find



Must...have it...aaargh....*Begonia luxurians* is the palm-leaf begonia at the top. *Begonia* 'River Nile' is the crinkly-edged cultivar below. (Photo H. Scoggins)

plants, mostly tropicals. The site is very weird—loaded with bizarre fonts and animated images, it is functionally a nightmare, especially if you have a dial-up connection. Having visited Glasshouse Works nursery near Athens, Ohio, I must say it's an accurate reflection of their operation [this is a whole article unto itself...one day...]. It's very difficult to locate something in particular, but you'll stumble across some fabulous finds in the process. Another good source of tropicals with a more easily-navigable website is Logee's Greenhouse (www.logees.com).

Tony Avent's Plant Delights Nursery near Raleigh, N.C. has an excellent reputation for quality plants and great customer service. Whether leafing through the print catalogue or browsing on-line (www.plantdelights.com), you'll get a kick out of Tony's fun and irresistible plant descriptions that will leave you stoked for spring (and possibly penniless).

Virginia's own Brent and Becky's Bulbs is not just for spring flowering bulbs like daffodils and tulips (though they have a ridiculously extensive selection of those in their fall catalogue). Their "warm season" catalogue, available on their website and in print form, span selections from *Alocasia* to *Zingiber* (www.brentandbeckysbulbs.com).

Finally, I leave you with some gardening wisdom from Brent Heath of Brent and Becky's Bulbs... "Justifying the cost of a tropical plant, bulb or perennial that may not be winter hardy but will be glorious during the summer is something with which we wrestle, at times. Then we consider the cost of going out to dinner and to a movie - 4 hours of entertainment. Then we compare that to the pleasure one of the tropical plants, bulbs or one of the perennials will bring us ALL SUMMER LONG—and it's a no-brainer!"

Heck yeah! - H. Scoggins

WARNING: TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE JOKE AHEAD

Every year a very nice lady would come to the greenhouse and buy anemones. She loved those flowers. Last year when she came, we were sold out of anemones, so we showed her some very nice ferns that we had. She loved them and bought several pots. She was so pleased with the ferns that she exclaimed, "With fronds like these, who needs anemones?!".

Acknowledgement (or blame) goes to plantsman Chris Baker of Baker's Acres.

2008 Winter & Spring Seminar Series Registration – Hahn Horticulture Garden

Pre-registration is required for hands-on workshops and recommended for seminars! You may also pay at the door for seminars.

STEP 1: FILL IN YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION		
name		
address		
address line 2		
city	state	zip
home telephone*	work or cell telephone*	e-mail*

*phone/email needed so we can contact you in the event of a weather-related cancellation.

STEP 2: SELECT COURSES			
Seminar or Workshop	Number attending	Cost	\$Totals
Special Friends of the Garden Lecture! Tough Plants for Tough Times with Mark Weathington Saturday, February 9, 2008 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.		\$20 General public	
		\$FREE to Friends of the Garden*	
The Do's and Don'ts of Pruning Woody Plants with Dr. Eric Wiseman Saturday, March 8, 2008 10:00 a.m.– 12:00 p.m.		\$20 General public	
		\$15 Friends of the Garden	
Some Like it Hot: Tropical Plants for Temperate Gardens with Pam Baggett Thursday, March 27, 2008 6:30-8:30 p.m.		\$20 General public	
		\$15 Friends of the Garden	
Digital Horticulture Photography with Robert McDuffie Saturday, April 12 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.	This class is full! Thanks!		
Woodland Wildflowers—Jewels of the Forest with William Cullina, Thursday, May 1, 2008 6:30 –8:30 p.m.		\$20 General public	
		\$15 Friends of the Garden	
		TOTAL AMOUNT of CHECK:	

STEP 3: MAIL THIS FORM WITH CHECK TO:	Make checks payable to Treasurer, Virginia Tech. If you've followed all three steps , consider yourself registered! We will only contact you if an event is filled or cancelled. For more information on these seminars or other Garden events, call (540) 231-5970 or e-mail vtgarden@vt.edu. Hands-on workshops fill quickly, please call to check on space if registering close to the event date.

***It's not too late to become a 2007-2008 Friend of the Garden!** Get the Friends of the Garden member's discount rate along with other benefits! Go to our website at www.hort.vt.edu/hhg to print off a membership form. Mail it to us with this registration form but please make a separate check out for the membership to the *Virginia Tech Foundation*.



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Snow-capped *Echinacea purpurea*, Hahn Horticulture Garden. Photo: H. Scoggins