



Important Upcoming Dates:

Staff Meeting—TBA, 12:00 -1:00pm at 311 Latham

Donut Tuesday—TBA, 8:30am at 311 Latham

Faculty Meeting—TBA, 3:00-4:15pm at Fralin Auditorium

Graduate Student Lunch with Director-TBA, 12:00-1:00pm at 311 Latham

SPES Social—TBA, 4:00 - 6:30pm at Rivermill

Announcements/News:

In response to increased interest in home gardening related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Extension Master Gardener program has a new series of educational videos for home gardeners created in collaboration with VSU. Check out our April 23 installment featuring Alex Hessler of Homefield Farm! <https://www.facebook.com/VCEMasterGardenerProgram/live>.



Graduate Student Awards:

Ph.D. student, Kelsey Reed, Bargmann Lab, Fulbright U.S. Student Award to Israel. Kelsey will be spending 4 months in 2021 in Dr. Idan Efroni's lab in Jerusalem, Israel working to improve heirloom tomatoes using protoplasts.



Master student, Lindsey Bowers, has been chosen to take the Certified Crop Advisers exam, a voluntary certification program to ensure high standards for crop advisors. The CCA certification was established in 1992 to provide a benchmark for practicing agronomy professionals in the US. The purpose of a certification program is to protect the public and the profession. CCA's have demonstrated commitment, education, and experience. Being certified adds credibility.

The Mid-Atlantic Certified Crop Advisers presents a scholarship to undergraduate, Wade Reiter of North Dinwiddie, VA for \$1,000. The scholarship funding is provided by the Mid-Atlantic Certified Crop Advisers Program with the purpose to provide financial support to students interested in pursuing a career that would lead them to become a certified crop adviser (CCA) or certified professional agronomist.



Grants:

David Holshouser, Applied Soybean Production Research for Virginia, Virginia Soybean Board, \$59,640



New Employees:

Dr. Nicholas Santantonio (ns722@cornell.edu) has accepted the position of **Assistant Professor in Small Grains Breeding and Genetics**. Dr. Santantonio will officially begin at Virginia Tech August 10, 2020.

Publications:

Samarah, N.H., AL-Quraan, N.A., Massad, R.S. and Welbaum, G.E., 2020. Treatment of bell pepper (*Capsicum annuum* L.) seeds with chitosan increases chitinase and glucanase activities and enhances emergence in a standard cold test. *Scientia Horticulturae*, 269, p.109393. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scienta.2020.109393>.