March 2012

Greetings everyone! It has been a glorious early spring around campus. Cherries, Crabapples, Juneberries, and Redbuds have all been stunning and we know that dogwoods will be in full flower in a few days. More and more teachers can be heard exclaming, “Let’s go outside for class today!” We are all looking forward to the upcoming Hort Club banquet and the spring plant sale, and graduating seniors are beginning to actually see that light at the end of the tunnel. Alumni, we would love to hear from you. Please e-mail me 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. Please visit the Horticulture Department web site often for special departmental features. Enjoy! With kind regards, Roger

HortHokies win ACC!
The VT HortHokies finished 9th overall out of 60 competing schools from around the country and topped all of the ACC schools at the recent Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) competition, held this year at Kansas State University. Our team of 27 students was accompanied by Barbara Kraft, John James, and Tom Martin and Robert McDuffie did considerable planning before the airplane lifted off to Manhattan. Highlights include Billy Yuhase’s landscape design that was in the top 5 showcase and Brianna Swanson and Mennen Middlebrooks both winning $1000 scholarships. Way to go HortHokies and thanks to all of our sponsors and everyone whose encouragement, hard work and moral support made this a great event!
Spring Break 2012 Copantle, Honduras
As part of Civic Agriculture and Food Systems (CAFS) minor, Susan Clark, along with thirteen others led a study abroad over spring break 2012 to Honduras in partnership with Heifer International, a worldwide NGO/humanitarian organization that uses everything from livestock to greenery as a conduit to promote just and sustainable community development to alleviate poverty and hunger while caring for the environment. According to Susan, “This study abroad trip provided us with an unprecedented, profound real-world experience. We worked side-by-side with members of the Copantle community and built a biodigester which will provide methane fuel to cook, laid the foundation for a farm school, and also performed various garden tasks. We saw firsthand how this community used Heifer’s holistic development model to improve their land, food security, and family income.”

From VA Tech: Susan Clark, Caitlin Miller, Laurel Heile, Lisa Hill, Stephanie Myrick, Sarah Abbott, Amanda Karstetter, Rial Tombes, Laina Schneider, Nate Foust-Meyer, Mark Sumner, Steve Hodges; North Carolina State University: Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, Angel Cruz

Greg Welbaum will be representing Virginia Tech and the Crop Science Society at the National Science and Engineering Festival at the Washington DC Convention Center April 27 to 29 http://www.usasciencefestival.org/. Greg will be working at the Crop Science Society of America display booth at the festival along with several hundred other corporate and university exhibitors. According to Greg, “We will be exhibiting my aeroponics system as well as some of Richard Veilleux’s potatoes. This is the premier K-12 science expo in the country and I would like to encourage others to attend.”

Nick Higgins, a senior in Senior in Civil Engineering has been doing Independent Study projects on hydroponic greenhouse lettuce production with Greg Welbaum during the past year. The lettuce that Nick produces in his greenhouse in Blacksburg is sold at the Blacksburg Farmers’ Market year round. You can view a YouTube video describing Nick’s project at: Greenhouse Lettuce. Lettuce grown in the VT greenhouse by Nick is being used in collaboration with the Food Science Department to study the potential for biological contamination.
**New Landscape in Front of Saunders Hall**
The Saunders Hall landscape is getting a face lift! The Hort club is installing a dry stream bed and water feature. Plants used in the landscape were generously donated by Hort Alum Don Middlebrooks of Tidewater Landworks. Looking good!!

The Horticulture Alumnus of the year for 2012 is Mickey Hayes (left), BS 1964, and the Young Alumnus of the year for 2012 is Brian Jackson (right), PhD 2008. Thanks Mickey and Brian for making the rest of us look good!

**New Publication**
Coming soon at the Hahn Horticulture Gardens and the VT Greenhouse Complex: A VT Horticulture Club event in conjunction with the Hahn Horticulture Gardens:

**Annual Spring Plant Sale April 26-28, 2012 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Hahn Horticulture Gardens Happenings**

April 11 12:00-1:00 p.m. “Spring Weed Walk” with Angela Post, Manager of the VT Weed ID Lab - Free!

**Fruit Tree Grafting Workshop**
Saturday April 14, 2012 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m., Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, $15 for all participants (includes materials), must pre-register by calling Smithfield Plantation at 540-231-3947. 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 trees.

“The Designer's Eye: Assessing and Organizing Your Outdoor Spaces” with C. Colston Burrell - Saturday April 28, 2012 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, $30 Friends of the Garden/$40 general public; must pre-register, limited number of participants *almost full*

**Creating New Plants for Fun and Profit - A BEAUTIFUL GARDENS® WORKSHOP - Plant Breeding.** Thursday May 10, 2012 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, $15 Friends of the Garden members/$20 general public; must pre-register