November/December 2013

Holiday and end-of-year greetings everyone! I want to extend a sincere wish for safe travels to everyone, especially to our students who are heading home for a much deserved break and some down time with their families. A special few will be traveling home with newly minted VT diplomas! We are very proud of our new alumni and wish them the very best in their new careers and other adventures. Alumni, please e-mail me (rharris@vt.edu) with an update that you would like to share in our annual newsletter, Seeds. The current edition of Seeds is now posted on our website. Please visit the Horticulture Department web site often for former Seeds editions and special departmental features. It is very helpful for us to know where our alumni have landed and how their careers have progressed. Please go to http://www.alumni.vt.edu/gateway/index.html and enter your data for us. We would be most grateful!

One good way to stay connected with VT is through the university YouTube 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. With kind regards,

Congratulations new Hort Hokie alumni!
Sara Auringer, EHRT and LCON; Dustin Brugler, EHRT; Angela Hancock, EHRT; April Hamilton, LCON;
Philip Beethoven-Wilson, LCON; Kaitlyn Hunter, LCON; Abigail Lorenz, LCON

Hort Club Members Whack a Snowman Santal! photos by Normand Adams
VT Horticulture is on Facebook! The Horticulture Department now has a Facebook page. Click on [https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaTechHorticulture](https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaTechHorticulture). Please “like” our page to get departmental information and updates.

Recent Publications:
Zhao, C., E.P. Beers, 2013. Alternative splicing of Myb-related genes MYR1 and MYR2 may modulate activities through changes in dimerization, localization, or protein folding. Plant Signal. & Behav. 8:11  [http://dx.doi.org/10.4161/psb.27325](http://dx.doi.org/10.4161/psb.27325)


Greg Welbaum is using his manufactured thermogradient tables in conjunction with Picarro Instruments gas exchange equipment to study soil properties at different temperatures in a year-round laboratory setting. Greg is currently on sabbatical leave at the University of California at Davis and is working on this project and others.

Cain Hickey was recently the featured graduate student on the CALS web site.

Oct. 29, 2013 - Cain Hickey has spent all but nine months of his graduate career at Virginia Tech working at the Alson H. Smith, Jr. Agricultural Research and Extension Center located in Winchester, Va. Hickey began his masters work with Tony Wolf in May 2010, earned his degree in May 2012, and continues to work with Wolf on his Ph.D. Hickey has been awarded several scholarships during his graduate studies, including three national and four eastern-section student scholarships from the American Society of Enology and Viticulture. Hickey has presented his research at technical conferences in each of the past three years.

Hickey’s main research interests include understanding environmental effects on vine growth and grape composition as well as optimizing common vineyard management practices to increase concentrations of grape compounds that positively impact wine sensory perception. After he is finished with his graduate work, he hopes to continue to work in viticulture by educating growers and students and conducting research at a university.

New Viticulture Minor: Did you know that Virginia is the 5th largest wine-producing region in the U.S.? With that in mind, our curriculum committee has been busy developing a new viticulture minor. Although housed in Horticulture, we envision this minor to provide an interdisciplinary learning experience in winegrape production, winemaking, and wine business and marketing. Stay tuned!
Spring Events

**Herbs 101 with Ellen Reynolds**
Saturday January 25, 10:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m. $15 Friends of the Garden/$20 general public
Have you always wanted to grow herbs but didn’t know where to start? Well, Herbs 101 will discuss how to choose, plant and harvest herbs for your cooking needs. In addition enjoy some tasty treats with simple herb blends, recipes will be available.

**Herbal Tea Time with Ellen Reynolds**
Saturday January 25, 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. $20 Friends of the Garden/$25 general public
Do you enjoy herbal tea and want to know how to blend the perfect cup of tea? Join us for a hands on program as we discuss herbs and their properties and create several different blends for a perfect cup of Herbal tea. You will make 2 different blends to take home and enjoy at a later date.

**China – Its Flora, Frustrations and Future Prospects for American Gardens with Richard Olsen of the United States National Arboretum**
Saturday February 15, 10:00—11:30 a.m. $15 Friends of the Garden/$20 general public
China, the Mother of Gardens, is the center of diversity for many species of plants cultivated in our gardens. With over 30,000 species, China is both storehouse and driver of genetic diversity, that modern day plant hunters and plant breeders tap to develop new ornamentals with novel traits and pest and disease resistances. Dr. Olsen will discuss his recent trip to China, the research conducted, the plant species seen, and the implications for American horticulture.

**Seed Starting Workshop with Dr. Holly Scoggins**
Tuesday March 4, 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. $15 Friends of the Garden and Hale YMCA Gardeners/$20 general public.
Join us for an info-packed seminar on how to get the most out of your vegetable and flower seeds. Holly will cover seed saving and storage, strategies to enhance germination, and care of seedlings. Bonus: take home seeds and other goodies to get started! Holly is an Associate Professor, teaches courses in the Dept. of Horticulture and is the Director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden. [Must preregister; attendance limited to 25]

**Small Hoophouse//Cold Frame Building at the Hale YMCA Community Garden**
Tuesday March 4, 1:30-3:30 p.m. $15 Hale YMCA Gardeners and Friends of the Hahn Garden/$20 general public. Come to the Hale YMCA Community Garden to build a small cold frame/hoop house to start your seedlings. You’ll take home/or place in your community garden plot. An excellent follow-up to Seed Starting and Saving with Holly Scoggins. Tools and materials will be provided.

**Garden Flow with Karen Rexrode**
Saturday March 29, 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. $15 Friends of the Garden/$20 general public
Have you ever wondered how a garden can seem to fit around a home, like the perfect piece in a puzzle? When the house and landscape flow together, you feel very comfortable in that space. For many years Karen has found this concept intriguing. Questions arise, is it a personal thing? a naturalistic thing? a lack of mastery or someone’s great attention to detail? After years of studying the concept, Karen has come up with some thoughts on the art of garden flow. She ties the 2 movement and visual queues into a lecture that will help you understand what makes a person feel comfortable in your garden.

Lunchtime Learning - Free Wednesday Garden Walks and Talks Held on various Wednesdays (not every Wed.). All start promptly at 12:00 noon and run from 30 minutes to one hour. Meet at the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion. No registration required. Parking passes available at Pavilion for Visitors only, or stop at the Visitor’s Center on Prices Fork to pick up a pass. F/S must park in designated F/S spaces.

January 8 12:00-1:00 p.m. "Indoor Plant Propagation" with Stephanie Huckestein, Instructor, Indoor Plants and Education & Outreach Coordinator. We’ll cover different techniques of propagating indoor plants in this hands-on class.

February 5 12:00-1:00 p.m. "New Plants" with Dr. Holly Scoggins.

Pavilion Happenings
The Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion was a happening place this past year! Events included everything from football tailgate parties to holiday events to retired faculty breakfasts. There were over 50 different events in the Pavilion in 2013. The Pavilion is most commonly used by Virginia Tech departments for meetings, retreats, dinners, and receptions. Virginia Tech units receive a small discount in the rental fee (which changes depending on the length of use, day of the week, and time of the year).

The Garden and Pavilion are lovely when set up for weddings! There were nine weddings in 2013 and we’re really starting to get booked for 2014. The wedding season runs from late May until mid-October (home football games really interfere with fall wedding dates). Couples that married at the Garden have been very pleased and just loved the space!

We’ve had some rather unusual events here too. There was a seven day wilderness first-responder training class held in January. It was quite exciting to walk out in the hall and find the participants being treated for burns and gashes that were created with actor’s makeup! And to find bodies in and laying around the stream garden while their rescuers wrapped the victims with hypothermia blankets! The Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion has been an incredible asset to the Garden! We receive many compliments on what a lovely space it is for events. Though it is used regularly by Virginia Tech units, it is available for groups or individuals not associated with the university. The rental rates are reasonable, there is a parking lot right in front of the building, and it is such a lovely space inside surrounded by the beautiful Garden. You can’t find a much better place for an event!

The Hahn Garden "Art in the Garden" gallery’s current installation is works by Radford art professor and local artist Knic Umstead. The opening reception is Wednesday, December 18th, 5-7 pm and the show up will be up until mid-February.
If you have not been to the Hahn Horticulture Gardens lately please treat yourself and see what is new. Keep up with all of the exciting new events such as the ones listed below by clicking here: Hahn Horticulture Garden

Halloween Characters

Happy Holidays! View of main office in Saunders 301. Maura Wood in background.