Greetings everyone! The annual spring floral display has been truly outstanding around Blacksburg this month. Students are getting their final class projects in and are preparing for finals now, so there is a distinct bustle in the spring air. The Horticulture club plant sale is "in the books", so summer must be around the corner. We will be welcoming 21 new graduates to our alumni family this spring. It is a great group of enthusiastic horticulturists and we certainly wish them the best! I am very pleased to report that our new Translational Genomics of Horticulture Crops position will be filled by Dr. Aureliano Bombarely this August. Dr. Bombarely is from Spain and comes to us from a post-doctoral position at Cornell University. We will feature Dr. Bombarely in a later newsletter. I hope to have some good news on our Horticultural Crops position at the ESAREC in Painter by May's e-newsletter.

With kind regards,

Roger

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 help by going to http://www.alumni.vt.edu/gateway/index.html to 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. We are now on Facebook! Please "like" us and check out news, links to scholarships, new course announcements and all sorts of other departmental information at https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaTechHorticulture -

Congratulations new Landscape Contracting and Environmental Horticulture alumni!

Kelly Althoff - LCON
Alexandra Cantwell- LCON
Ned Harm - LCON
Michael Quesenberry- LCON
Anna Rakes- LCON
James Ulmer- LCON
Mimi Adams - EHRT

Colleen Beard- EHRT
Skyler Byrd- EHRT
Lindsay Day- EHRT
Jacob Dombroski- EHRT
Tyler Edwards- EHRT
Chelsea Gusler- EHRT
Gage Hagen- EHRT

Benjamin Harder- EHRT
Izak Khani- EHRT
Allyssa Mark- EHRT
Mark McNees- EHRT
Clinton Thackston- EHRT
Travis Wagoner - EHRT
Joshua Wilson- EHRT
Spring in Blacksburg! Left photo = Saunders Hall from the Ag Quad. Right photo = a swarm of bees invade Jerzy Nowak’s home garden (both photos courtesy of Jerzy).

The 10th annual Garden Gala will be June 14th. Don’t miss this fun-filled celebration of Horticulture! It promises to be a fantastic evening.
Recent Publications


Cain Hickey recently held a very popular consumer preference test of his viticulture treatments on wine made from his research vineyard. Cain's research was featured in the April 17th edition of the Winchester Star. Nice work if you can get it!
Joyce Latimer and Karen Gehrt recently hosted the Multistate Working Group for Community, Local & Regional Food Systems in Blacksburg. Dave Close and Amber Vallotton also participated in the meeting. The goal of the working group is to unite Extension education and impact in gardening, nutrition, agriculture profitability and community development to support a safe, healthy, affordable and accessible food supply.

Colleen Beard is our outstanding senior of the year. Colleen, an Environmental Horticulture major, is shown above presenting her research poster, titled "Substrate Volumetric Moisture Content Affects Growth of Containerized Succulents", at the 12th Annual VT Undergraduate Research Conference. Colleen was advised on the project by Holly Scoggins, with help from Margaret Aiken. Congratulations Colleen!

From James Rockwell, Horticulture Club president for this past year......The new officers for the 2014-2015 school year were announced at the recent spring banquet. These students are excited for the year to come and the opportunity to carry on the long standing history of the Horticulture Club! Thank you to everyone who has helped the club to be the success it was this year!

The officers for next year are: President- Elizabeth Wilson; Vice President- Lauren Nance; Secretary- Christa Bush; Treasurer- Normand Adams; Social Chairs- Amy Puckett and James Rockwell; Plant Sale Chairs- Laura Yuhase and Nate Inman; Historian- Lauren Maletto; Service Chair- Bobby Nance; Webmaster- Chris Gore
Jayesh Samtani recently received a $9500 grant for Blackberry cultivar evaluations from the Virginia Agriculture Council.

Holly Scoggins was awarded the Gamma Sigma Delta Teaching Excellence Award at the annual initiation and awards reception. Gamma Sigma Delta, the Honor Society of agriculture, recognizes outstanding students and faculty for scholarship and their contributions to agricultural education. Congratulations, Holly!

Nate Foust-Meyer recently had his abstract accepted for the University of Vermont Food Systems Summit. Nate will present on the biophysical constraints panel in June. The presentation is titled: High Tunnels Growing the Local Food System: globally increasing localized production.

From Horticulture Club co-advisor Sarah Gugercin….. The Horticulture Club Plant Sale and Spring Fling at the Hahn Horticulture Garden (April 24-26th) was a great success. In addition to the plant sale, there was a plant sale preview, microtalks on various gardening subjects, and a local garden tour co-sponsored by Friends of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library. Lauren Nance and Elizabeth Wilson were the plant sale co-chairs and they did a great job! Money raised from the plant sale goes towards student scholarships and other club activities. A special thanks to the Hahn Horticulture Gardens (Holly, Lisa, Stephanie, and Paul), the VT Greenhouses (Jeff), Lisa and Velva for the hypertufa guidance, all the plant sale volunteers, and the beautiful weather on Thursday and Saturday!

Did you know…. Besides serving as a Horticulture Club faculty advisor, Sarah is our communication specialist. She designs and maintains our awesome web site and is the creative genius behind many of our recruitment and extension efforts. In her spare time, she works her magic with various organizations. Check out her recent work as Design Director for VT’s LGBT magazine, the Interloper http://issuu.com/theinterloper.

Joyce Latimer and Dave Close participated in the recent Urban Agriculture Summit in Lynchburg. The program included an introduction to a broad variety of local and regional programs involved in urban agriculture as well as a tour of Lynchburg Grows.
2014 Hort Club Plant Sale

Photos by Chris Gore. Collage by Sarah Gugercin.
Upcoming Events at the Hahn

Note space is limited and pre-registration is REQUIRED - contact Stephanie at vtgarden@vt.edu or call 540.231.5970 to let us know you’re coming.

The Color of the Native Plant Palette...and Other Related Thoughts - Dr. Robert E. Lyons, Professor and Graduate Program Director, University of Delaware/Longwood Gardens
Tuesday, April 29, 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.*, FREE for Friends of the Garden/$20 general public.

A wide array of suitable native species and derived cultivars will be discussed in this presentation, highlighting those plants with qualities that are frequently considered colorful and visually appealing by landscapers and gardeners alike. Attention will also be given to highlighting and discussing aggressive natives and the sensible inclusion of non-native, non-invasive plants that contribute to successful landscape performance, visual interest, and function within a low maintenance philosophy. Making smart plant selection decisions with an open mind will be stressed throughout this presentation."

*Note it’s a school day/time - if you can pick up a visitor’s pass at the Price’s Fork visitor center on your way in, it would help us out, plus you can park wherever there’s an empty space. The Pavilion lot will fill up quickly.

Fruit Tree Grafting Workshop with Barry Robinson (Register through Smithfield!)
Saturday, May 3, 9:00 a.m.—11:30 a.m. $15. Pre-registration is required by contacting Smithfield Plantation at 540-231-3947 Join Historic Smithfield Plantation and the Hahn Horticulture Garden for grafting class. 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 rootstocks.

Hypertufa Workshop with Lisa Lipsey and Velva Groover. Saturday May 10th from 9 - 12noon. $30 Friends of the Garden/$35 general public; maximum of 20 people; pre-registration required. This will fill up FAST! Don’t miss this fun, hands-on workshop with Hahn Garnden Horticulturist, Lisa Lipsey, and Horticulture Dept. Research Assistant, Velva Groover. They’ve become experts in the art of Hypertufa...a mix of components that creates a durable, porous material that makes for an outstanding planting container or trough. Participants will
create a uniquely designed planting container to take home. This is a messy process, so wear old cloths or bring an apron. Please bring a pair of sturdy rubber gloves. We will supply the mold, materials, instruction, and fun. Feel free to bring materials to personalize your container with -small seashells, stones, etc.

Innovative Home Composting. Saturday, May 24, 2014 from 10 - 11:30 am. $15 Friends of the Garden/$20 general public; please register in advance by contacting Stephanie at vtgarden@vt.edu or 540-231-5970

Based in Floyd, Virginia, Barbara Pleasant is "one of America’s most trusted garden writers" (Cheryl Long, editor-in-chief of Mother Earth News magazine). A six-time winner of Garden Globe awards given by the Garden Writers Association, Barbara has written numerous books on subjects ranging from vegetables to weeds. Her book, The Complete Compost Gardening Guide, has helped move thousands of compost piles from the shadows to the heart of the garden. A contributing editor for Mother Earth News, Barbara blogs at GrowVeg.com and her own website, barbarapleasant.com.

Scene from the Horticulture club plant sale - published in Roanoke Times

Matt Cox of the Virginia Tech Horticulture Club looks over a greenhouse full of flowering plants for sale.