Greetings everyone! I have returned from my 6-month walk down the Appalachian Trail and am glad to be back in the world of heated buildings, hot water, and regular meals. I finished the 2185 mile southbound trek by reaching Springer Mountain, Georgia on December 26. Thanks to all for your well wishes on my journey! I am very grateful to Richard Veilleux for his excellent service as Department Head during my leave. It is great to see new faces and new classes in the department. We welcomed two new faculty members, Ramon Arancibia at the Eastern Shore AREC and Aureliano Bombarely at the Blacksburg campus while I was away. Holly Scoggins offered an intensive, on-line greenhouse class during the new “wintermester” and Barbara Leshyn is currently offering a new advanced floral design class. Word from the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show in Baltimore is that business is great and everyone is looking forward to a very productive spring. It is a great time to be a horticulturist (but isn’t it always?).

- With kind regards, Roger

Undergraduate Updates

James Rockwell was featured in GPN magazine as the 2015 GPN/Nexus Intern of the Year. His internship was at Longwood Gardens in greenhouse production. His advisor, Nancy Kane said of him “His personality kind of showed through his application. The passion for horticulture is what really came through. He is a leader, and it was really interesting to watch him with the other interns and see how he kind of pulled them all together.” After graduation, James plans to attend graduate school and then go on to work in public gardens. He is interested in community outreach in horticulture and wants to find a career where he is not only producing plants, but also sharing knowledge with the public and engaging and getting them excited about this industry. He says, “I think that something that is kind of unique about horticulture is that it’s a very science-based industry growing plants, but then there is so much art behind it too.”

Read the entire GPN article here: [http://www.gpnmag.com/growing-passion](http://www.gpnmag.com/growing-passion)
Robert Nance was selected for an academic scholarship from Trees Virginia. Robert is involved in many VT clubs, serves as an ambassador for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and is vice president of Pi Alpha Xi (Horticulture’s Honor Society). Congratulations Robert!

Graduate Student Updates

Several graduate students presented posters at the International Plant and Animal Genome Conference in San Diego, CA.

- **Taylor Frazier:** Identification, Characterization, and Gene Expression Analysis of NB-LRR Encoding Resistance Genes in the Bioenergy Plant Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum* L.)
- **Hua Xiao:** Identification and Characterization of Iron-Related Genes in Andean Potato Cultivars
- **Parker Laimbeer:** Bulk Segregant RNA-Seq to Investigate the Production of Anthocyanins in Potato Corollas
- **Yi Liu:** Genetic and biochemical characterization of Ain3 in plant immunity
- **Jiamin Miao:** Identification and Characterize Switchgrass Histone H3 and CENH3 Genes

Dave Close attends the 2014 Korea Master Gardener International Conference

This past September, Dave attended the Korea Master Gardener International Conference. The conference involved more than 200 attendees from Germany, Japan, South Korea and the United States. While the majority of attendees were Master Gardeners from South Korea, 25 attendees represented several states from the US. While the Extension Master Gardener is relative young in South Korea, they have thriving and active programs working to meet the consumer horticulture needs in two South Korean provinces: Gyeonggi and Jeju Island. They currently place a lot of emphasis on urban agriculture, community gardening, and horticulture therapy.
The conference included several keynote sessions with concurrent breakouts as well. Our very own Debbie Dillion, ANR Extension Agent in Horticulture from Culpeper, gave a presentation on Building and Maintaining an Effective Master Gardener Program during one of the concurrent sessions.

While we were there, we were able to visit several community gardens throughout the city as well as the private gardens of two South Korean Master Gardeners. Our hosts were absolutely gracious the entire time we were there and their attention to every detail was impeccable. The cultural experience was irreplaceable. It was interesting to note that despite some language and cultural differences, the opportunities, barriers, and challenges faced by their Extension Master Gardener program are very similar to what we experience here in the United States. Likewise, the Extension Master Gardener program is alive and growing there the same as it is here. Agriculture, and specifically horticulture, truly is a universal and equalizing art and discipline.

Outreach
Joyce Latimer and John Ignosh organized and conducted a 1.5 day inservice training on greenhouse energy efficiency for VCE agents and energy audit professionals January 13-14, 2015. Gregg Gordon of Aaron’s Creek Farms in Buffalo Junction hosted the group. Guest speakers included Dr. A.J. Both, Rutgers University, and Dr. Jennifer Boldt and Adam Hall of USDA-ARS, Toledo OH.

Joyce Latimer along with Inga Haugen, our new Ag, Life Sciences, and Scholarly Communications Librarian, and Margaret Merrill, retired, organized and conducted a two-day Scientific Writing Workshop for CALS graduate students, visiting scientists, staff and faculty on January 15 and 16 in the Scaleup Classroom of Newman Library. Following the welcome by Dean Karen DePauw of the Graduate School, Eric Beers presented the “Introduction to Critical Thinking” kickoff lecture for our 63 participants. A committee of faculty from CALS departments, including Richard Veilleux, developed and conducted the writing exercises for the students.

Joyce Latimer organized and presented a VFGA Greenhouse Update for pesticide recertification credit in Henrico on January 21, 2015.

Joyce Latimer and Brian Whipker, NCSU, presented a 4-hour e-GRO PGR University Webinar on January 23, 2015 with 134 online attendees and 14 attendees at group broadcasts of the webinar.

Grants
Hannah Burrack, Entomologist, NCSU, and Jayesh Samtani were awarded $7500 from Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium for the proposed study: Assessing the impact of strawberry clipper in annual strawberry production.

Laura Strawn (Eastern Shore AREC), Monica Ponder (Food Science and Technology Dept.) and Jayesh Samtani were awarded Planning Grant $2500 (VT budget) for the proposal "Preharvest Microbial Safety and Control Measures of Water used for Irrigation and Frost Protection in Strawberry Production", by VT/NCSU collaboration grants program.
Publications


Hahn Horticulture Garden Events

*Visit [http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html](http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html) to register or learn more!*

- **Yoga in the Garden**
  - Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:15-6:15 p.m., beginning January 13, 2015.

- **Garden Talk: Two Plant Nerds: Sharing their summer trip to 3 of the best public gardens near Philadelphia - Elissa Steeves and Lisa Lipsey**
  - Wednesday, **February 25, 12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.**

- **An Essential Oils Double-header with Ellen Reynolds!**
  - Essential Oils 101 with Ellen Reynolds of Beagle Ridge Herb Farm
    - **Saturday, February 28, 2015 10:00-11:30 a.m.** (snow date March 7th)
  - Make Your Own Essential Oils! with Ellen Reynolds of Beagle Ridge Herb Farm
    - **Saturday, February 28, 2015 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.** (snow date March 7th)

- **Design Principals of the Pros That Can Be Applied to the Home Landscape with Dan Benarcik, Horticulturist and Artist at Chanticleer, A Pleasure Garden**
  - **Saturday, March 14, 2015 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.**

- **Garden Talk: 9 Ways to Grow More Food in Less Space with Debra Graff, Master Gardener**
  - **Wednesday March 25, 12:00-1:00 p.m.**
Blast from the Past!

Velva Groover found this page dedicated to the Horticulture Club in the 1950 Bugle (VT’s yearbook).