Greetings everyone! It has been a beautiful month around Blacksburg. Cool spring weather has slowed down the usual rush of spring flowers so we have been treated to an extended display of stunning beauty. We are all starting to “feel” the end of the academic year as students are finishing final projects and taking end-of-semester exams. We will welcome 23 new Hort Hokie graduates into our alumni family at graduation (see below). The development of the new School of Plant and Environmental Sciences is proceeding, with committees still being formed to study the best structure for the school and how to implement the reorganization. Please see http://news.cals.vt.edu/spes/ for more information. Comments can be made by clicking on the link within the “We Want Your Feedback” section on the left sidebar. Don’t forget the Garden Gala on June 13!

- With kind regards, Roger

Congratulations to the Horticulture Class of 2015!

Environmental Horticulture
Normand Adams         Sonya Hodges           Amy Puckett          Heather Truax
Allison Bowden        Samuel Markwith        James Rockwell      Katharine Truxel
Emily Depew           Lauren Nance           Shane Stallard      Gregory Strosnider
Elizabeth Harper      Victoria Neff

Landscape Contracting
Aaron Burns           Christopher Gore          Carl Simmons
Matthew Cox           Michael Isaacman          Joshua Wilson

Graduate Degrees
Nate Foust-Meyer; MS
Erika Lyons; MS
Shuchi Wu; PhD
Undergraduate News

The Ornamental Plant Production and Marketing class (HORT 4614), enjoyed an early-April tour of six nurseries, greenhouses, and garden centers - with this year's trip focusing on the upper-middle part of Virginia. Each spring semester, plants grown by our class are sold wholesale to the Hort Club for their Spring Plant Sale - effectively paying it forward for next year’s students to enjoy a two-day learning experience at virtually no cost to them.

The 2015 "Horticulture Rocks!" tour included grower-retailer Milmont Greenhouses in Waynesboro, retail garden center Ivy Nursery in Charlottesville, tree nursery Grelen Nursery and Market in Somerset, Battlefield Farms, the mega-greenhouse in Rapidan, and Shreckhise Nurseries in Grottoes. We very much appreciate all who took time out of their busy spring work week (right before Easter) to show our students the amazing diversity of systems opportunities when it comes to growing and selling ornamental plants.

Awards and Grants

Congratulations to Normand Adams for being recognized as the top Pi Kappa Phi senior in CALS!

Emily Zhou, PhD student and teaching assistant for Indoor Plants, was honored with the Graduate Student Teaching Award from the North American Colleges and Teachers of Agriculture. Congratulations, Emily!

Jeb Fields received the 2015 G. A. Harris Research Instrumentation Fellowship, provided by Decagon Devices for his research in “Water Conservation in Containerized Production via Engineering Soilless Substrates for Increased Available Water”. Read more about it here.

The Virginia Agricultural Council funded a proposal from Holly Scoggins entitled “Growing for the future: building a research hop yard at Virginia Tech”. The first year funding of $8,900 will go towards construction of a trials and research hop yard at the Urban Horticulture Center. Roanoke Times story here.
New Seminar Series

In the fall 2015 semester, 4 CALS departments including Horticulture, will be cohosting a seminar series called Agriculture and the Environment. It will be held Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:30. Students can sign up for the seminar for one credit as ALS 5984 or HORT 5984.

In the News

Greg Peck and his graduate student, Ashley Thompson, were featured in the Northern Virginia Daily for investigating organic orchard fertilizers. Read the story.

Outreach and Travel

The e-GRO (Electronic Grower Resources Online, e-gro.org) Team came to Virginia to tour our greenhouse operations March 30-31. We visited seven operations over two very full days: Fresh Tulips USA, Fresh2o Growers, Color Orchids, Battlefield Farms, Bloomaker USA, Inc., Stover Shop Greenhouse, and Shenandoah Growers, Inc. The photo below was taken at our last stop, Shenandoah Growers where one of our hosts was Tamman Serage a Virginia Tech alumni from Horticulture, B.S. 1990 and M.S. 1993. Thanks for the great tour, Tam!

Jerzy Nowak traveled to Tel Aviv, Israel, as a Member of the Virginia Delegation of Agritech Experts between April 24 and May 1. The trip included participation in Agritech Israel 2015, The 19th International Exhibition & Conference (http://www.agritech.org.il/program) and meetings with potential commercial partners under the umbrella of Excellence and Commercialization with Israel.

Mark your calendar for the Hahn Gala!!

Saturday, June 13, 2015 5:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Join us in celebrating the garden! Food, drinks, and music will help guide you through the garden, the many silent auction items, and the ever spectacular live auction. It’s the best garden party around! Registration is required and includes $80/guest for admittance. After June 1, the cost is $90/guest, so go register soon! More information at: http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/gala.html
Congratulations to Maura Wood and Alex Niemiera for 25 years at VT!!! Time flies when you are having fun!

Greenhouse Manager, Jeff Burr with a blooming *Amorphophallus*!