

Department of Horticulture

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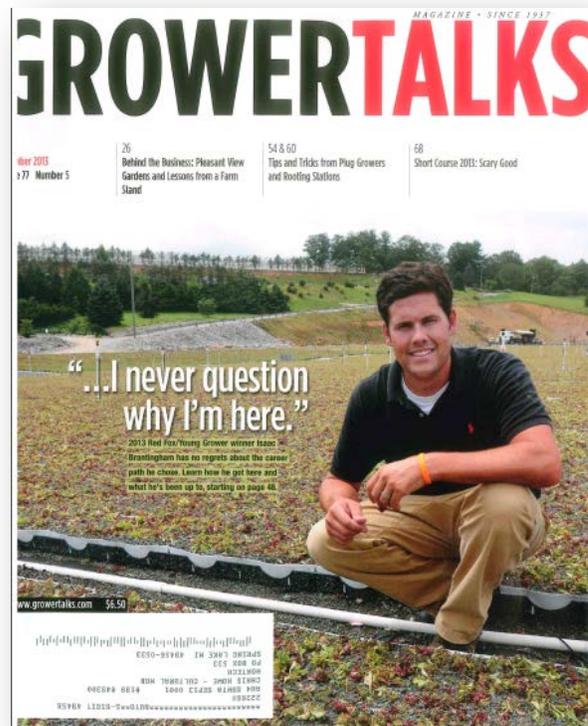


Roger Harris, Department Head

September 2013

Greetings everyone! Fall semester is now well underway and we are finally seeing clear signs of the change in seasons here at the end of the month. Nights are starting to occasionally dip down in 40s and the leaves are starting to put on their show. A wonderful time of year in Blacksburg! We are anxiously awaiting the Fall Career Focus on October 10. This important event serves as a great way for students to make contacts for future employment and for internships. 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](http://www.hort.vt.edu) 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 [You Tube](#) 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, *Roger*

Isaac Brantigham, BS Horticulture 2006, was recently featured on the cover of *Grower Talks* as the Young Grower of the Year for 2013. Isaac began working with Riverbend Nursery in Riner as a section grower soon after graduation and was promoted to head grower in 2011. Congratulations Isaac!





The Career Days Practicum class is in progress for this fall. The practicum class is designed to give student hands-on experience in a variety of jobs that they will likely encounter out in the landscaping industry. The class is a combined class of two-year and four-year students, taught at the Urban Horticulture Center. Students learn many practical landscape applications, such as how to operate a zero turn mower, a backpack sprayer, a backpack blower, weedeater, and the safety and operation of a skid steer loader (right photo) and a compact excavator. Safety and maintenance of these machines are also covered. **Matt Cox**, Landscape Contracting major, recently taught the class how to lay pavers (left photo). Matt grew up in the business and last year his father, owner of Indian Creek Hardscaping, taught the class and donated all the materials. This year the pavers were donated by Chandler Concrete of VA. We welcome guest speakers and always appreciate donations of materials for the class. The class is team taught by **Barbara Leshyn**, **Tom Martin**, and **John James**.

Adventuras Agricolas! Spain, Spanish and Agriculture. **Barbara Leshyn (Kraft)** has developed a study abroad program for January of 2014. Barbara, assisted by **Susan Day**, will lead a group of students on an agricultural tour of Spain. Mornings will be spent in Spanish class learning target language for that afternoon's tour. If the students are going to visit an olive orchard, they will learn vocabulary geared towards orchards, trees, pruning etc. That afternoon they will be encouraged to use their newly learned vocabulary while on site. The class will be visiting a nursery operation, a sheep dairy, a pig farm, orange groves, olive groves, a winery and botanical garden. They will travel to Barcelona, Valencia and smaller towns in both of those regions. Contact Barbara at barbaraleshyn@vt.edu for more information.

Laurie Fox and colleagues David Sample and Greg Evanylo recently held a classroom and site visit workshop for Virginia Cooperative Extension agents on urban water quality and stormwater management. Seats that were not filled by agents were filled by VCE Master Gardener Water Steward volunteers from SE Virginia.

Joyce Latimer recently returned from the Ohio Floriculture Association's Disease, Insect and Growth Conference in Vancouver WA where she presented several talks.

Recent Research Publications:

Plumb, P., **S.D. Day**, T. Wynn-Thompson, and J.R. Seiler. 2013. Relationship between woody plant colonization and *Typha L.* encroachment in stormwater detention basins. *Environmental Management* 52:861-876.

Norma C. Manrique-Carpintero, **James G. Tokuhsa**, Idit Ginzberg, Jason A. Holliday, and **Richard E. Veilleux**. 2013. Sequence Diversity in Coding Regions of Candidate Genes in the Glycoalkaloid Biosynthetic Pathway of Wild Potato Species. *G3: Genes|Genomes|Genetics* 3:1467-1479.

Recent Extension Publications:

Deer: A Garden Pest. 2013. <https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/HORT/HORT-62/HORT-62.html>

Care Sheet for *Sabal minor* or "Dwarf Palmetto" in Virginia Landscapes. 2013.

<https://pubs.ext.vt.edu/HORT/HORT-60/HORT-60.html>

Jarrad Farris, **Greg Peck**, and Gordon Groover. 2013. Assessing the Economic Feasibility of Growing Specialized Apple Cultivars for Sale to Commercial Hard Cider Producers.

<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/AREC/AREC-46/AREC-46.html>

Susan Day and her colleagues Eric Wiseman and John McGee will be directing a multi-state project, "A regional approach to understanding the urban forestry workforce and building its capacity through collegiate programs." The project is funded by a \$265,988 grant from the USDA Forest Service—National Urban & Community Forestry Advisory Council Challenge Cost-share Grant Program.

Greg Peck, two agricultural economists and an oenologist on his team recently received a \$30,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. This is the third grant Greg has been awarded for studying hard cider production. The project is titled "Developing Research-based Resources on Hard Cider Apples for Virginia's Commercial Orchards and Cider Makers."

Jeff Derr, **Jayesh Samtani** and Aman Rana at Hampton Roads AREC were recently awarded \$26,752 through USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant for their proposed work "Developing Soil Solarization and Microwaves for Pest Management in Annual Plasticulture Strawberry Production."

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences with the CALS Staff Association recently hosted an all-day staff retreat. Horticulture was well represented. Attendees enjoyed a variety of interesting and useful workshops and presentations. They also had the opportunity to get to know staff from other departments in the college. **Velva Groover** was on the planning committee and organized creation of teacup sedum and succulent arrangements for table centerpieces, which were given away as popular door prizes.

Master Gardeners featured at Dulles International Airport: Award panels which highlight work by local Extension Master Gardeners were recently unveiled. If you are at Baggage Claim 10 at Dulles, take a look!



Parker Laimbeer, Ph.D. candidate in the Molecular Plant Sciences program, working under the direction of Richard Veilleux, visited Michigan State University to visit grant collaborators for intensive training in bioinformatics skills that he will use in his dissertation centered on potato genomics.

Nan Lu is a new PhD graduate. His dissertation is titled "Transposon Tagging in Strawberry and Potato and Characterization of Representative Strawberry Mutants." Congratulations Dr. Lu!

Brenda Arnold is a new MS graduate. Her thesis is titled "Identification of candidate genes for self-compatibility in a diploid population of potato derived from parents used in genome sequencing." Congratulations Brenda!

Andreas Ntoulis is a visiting scientist from Greece and is working with Richard Veilleux's research group. His office is on the first floor of Saunders, in Richard's old lab. Andreas will be with us for approximately one year. Welcome Andreas!



Greg Peck recently dropped off a mother lode of beautiful and delicious Virginia Apples in Saunders Hall. These apples were from the research orchards at the Winchester AREC. **Megan O'Rourke** arrived a bit late and is shown scavenging some of the remaining bounty. Thanks Greg!



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](#)

OKTOBERFEST! Tuesday, October 8, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Yes, it's a Tuesday, but it's FREE. Enjoy the highly entertaining Sauerkraut Band in the beautiful Hahn Garden Amphitheater (behind the Pavilion). No admission! Delicious grilled sausages with side dishes will be available for sale by the Food Science Club. Beer will be for sale by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Association (CALSA). Net proceeds from food and beverage sales support scholarships, service projects, and the CALS Award of Teaching Excellence. Come get your oompah on! Note: Stormy weather cancels. Check our website, facebook page, or call 540-231-5970 if in doubt.

Art in the Garden is a new program featuring the work of local artists on display inside the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion. Currently on display: "Alcohol Inks" by Diane Relf.

Lunchtime Learning - Free Wednesday Garden Walks and Talks are 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 you may stop at the Visitor's Center on Prices Fork to pick up a pass. F/S must park in designated F/S spaces.

NEXT UP:

October 9, 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Fall Color "Woodies" Walk! Join Dr. Alex Niemiera for a garden walk emphasizing some trees and shrubs that really strut their stuff in the autumn! Dr. Niemiera is an Associate Professor in the Dept. of Horticulture, the garden's Woody Plant Curator, and teaches the Woody Landscape Plants courses (among others).

October 30, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Weed Walk with Michael Cox of the Dept. of Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science. Michael will share tips on how to identify cool season weeds and ways to prevent them from overwintering.