

# Department of Horticulture

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Dr. Roger Harris, Department Head

## October 2015

Greetings everyone! Fall is perhaps the most beautiful season here in the mountains. Hints of color on the hillsides and cooler weather abound and pumpkins are beginning to show up in unexpected places. October promises to be an exciting month for us. The fall bounty of local produce is always a joy and a true celebration of horticulture. Please enjoy a fresh Virginia apple today! We are eagerly looking forward to the Fall 2015 Connection Job Fair, which will be held on Tuesday, October 20 in the Squires Student Center. This major event is the best way for our students to connect with internship and career opportunities. The job fair is also a homecoming of sorts since company representatives are often our own recent graduates. These alumni were sitting in the same seats as our current students a short while ago and they are a wonderful resource for advice. We recently said goodbye to Ashley Wills, our Financial Administrator. Ashley and her family have moved to Kentucky because of a job transfer for her husband. We are very happy to welcome Hannah Neuse as our new Financial Administrator (see below). The development of the new School of Plant and Environmental Sciences is proceeding as planned. The planning committees will have their reports to Dean Alan Grant in December. See <http://news.cals.vt.edu/spes/> for more information. Comments concerning the school can be made by clicking on the link within the "We Want Your Feedback" section on the left sidebar. I hope you enjoy this edition of our e-newsletter. Please pass it on! **-Roger**



### Welcome Hannah Neuse, our new Financial Officer!

We give a warm welcome to Horticulture's new Fiscal Officer, Hannah Neuse (pronounced "noisy"). First things first, her favorite plants are peonies and dahlias. She has a great interest in all things horticulture, especially nutrition, gardening, and local foods. She has lived in the Christiansburg area for most of her life and is an alumna of Radford University ('08), where she studied Studio Art. An active artist, she enjoys 3d and sculpture mediums the most. She also likes painting and jewelry design. Keep an eye out in future newsletters for her upcoming Etsy store!

She serves the community as a youth leader to high-school and middle-schoolers at the New River Valley Community Church. She affectionately calls the teenagers she leads her babies. Besides her babies, she has a cat named Nullah. She likes to keep healthy and practices weight training twice a week and also does cardio. Stop by and say hello to her in 301B Saunders!



## PAX Bulb Sale!

Pi Alpha Xi (PAX) - the honor society for Horticulture

Homecoming Bulb Sale October 23, 9 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., at Greenhouse/Garden complex on Washington Street and October 24, 9 a.m. to 1 hour before game time, on lawn of Litton Reeves (with Hort Club mum sale)

Try some spring-blooming tulips in Hokie colors - buy and plant now for a beautiful show in spring! Preorder by October 21 for pick up on October 23 or stop by and shop our sale.

Bulbs offered:

**Princess Irene** (top) - orange brushed with plum - 25 bulbs for \$14.95

**Hokie Blend** (2<sup>nd</sup> from top) - a combo of deep maroon Queen of the Night + orange Lighting Sun) 25 bulbs for \$14.95

Also, two daffodils! Sturdy, deer-proof blooms.

**Narcissus Professor Einstein** (3<sup>rd</sup> from top) - pure white petals surround reddish-warm cup. Brilliant! 15 bulbs for \$14.95

**Narcissus Tahiti** (bottom) - fully double flowers of soft yellow accented by tufts of coppery orange. 15 bulbs for \$14.95

For preorders contact [bulbsale@vt.edu](mailto:bulbsale@vt.edu). Cash or check accepted at time of pick up.

Proceeds go towards PAX service projects and scholarships. Call 231-5783 for further information.



## Congratulations Jude!

Jude Moon (Mark Williams) completed her PhD. The title of her dissertation was *Selective accrual and dynamics of proteinaceous compounds during pedogenesis: testing source and sink selection hypotheses*.

## A New Horticulture Hokie

Congratulations to Tomas and Gitta Hasing Rodriguez! Little Teo arrived September 18<sup>th</sup> - 7 lbs. and 11 oz.



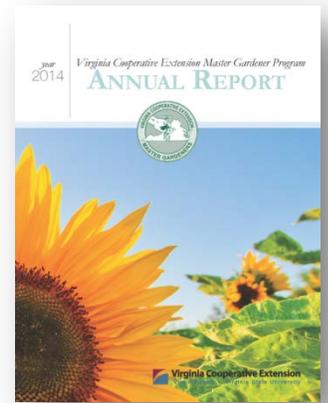
## Governor's Agriculture and Industrial Biotechnology Conference

Bing Yu and Scott Lowman attended and presented at the Governor's Agriculture and Industrial Biotechnology Conference on Sept. 9, at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research in Danville ([http://www.vabio.org/events/event\\_details.asp?id=650046](http://www.vabio.org/events/event_details.asp?id=650046)). Governor Terry McAuliffe was there and gave a short talk.

Bing Yu's talk was titled "Genetic Improvement of Switchgrass for Biomass Production and Environmental Remediation" and Scott Lowman's talk was "Endophytes for Agricultural and Biotechnology Applications"

## Outreach

It's here! The Office of the State Master Gardener Coordinator is pleased to announce that the 2014 Annual Report is officially available online (<http://blogs.lt.vt.edu/mastergardener/current-master-gardeners/sample-page/annual-report/>). This extensive report covers all the changes and updates that have been made to the program over the past several years, including an in-depth look at the strategic planning process. The report also covers each of the 62 units from across Virginia with the information given by the units on their 2014 accomplishments and highlights. This year, printed copies of the report will go out to Extension Stakeholders across the state with the Virginia Cooperative Extension 229 report.



Launching of New Website entitled “Reducing Antibiotic Resistance from Farm to Fork” As part of the extension outreach for the USDA NIFA Food Safety Challenge grant, “Identification and Management of Critical Control Points in the Spread of Antibiotic Resistance from Animal Manure to Raw Produce”; a new website was launched in early September. Amber Vallotton, Fresh Produce Food Safety Coordinator, worked closely with Dr. Amy Pruden (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering) and Sarah Gugercin to develop content and create the new website, housed on the Department of Horticulture web pages. The challenge of antibiotic resistance is a critical global health issue. This interdisciplinary and integrative project seeks to identify critical control points for antibiotic resistance transmission from manure to produce, evaluate corresponding mitigation strategies, and engage in education and extension efforts aimed at disseminating this knowledge to targeted stakeholders. Please check out the new website at: <http://www.hort.vt.edu/args/index.html>.

## Grants

Megan O'Rourke recently received notice that USAID will be funding a \$1.75 million research and training award for vegetable and mango Integrated Pest Management in Southeast Asia. Focus countries will be Bangladesh, Nepal and Cambodia. Dr. O'Rourke is a co-PI with collaborators at Virginia Tech, Penn State, and the Ohio State. The award will last for 3.5 years and focuses on technology transfer, developing novel pest management techniques, and student training opportunities.

Dave Close and Jayesh Samtani are part of the team that has been awarded USDA NIFA Capacity Building Grant titled “From Food Deserts to Agrihoods: Transforming Food Insecure Neighborhoods with Comprehensive Urban Agriculture Education”. The project is led by Leonard Githinji at Virginia State University and includes other VSU faculty members. Greg Evanylo is leading the VT efforts. The team has been awarded \$350,000 for a three year budget.

## Publications

Duran I, Csukasi F, Taylor SP, Krakow D, Becerra J, Bombarely A, Mari-Beffa M (2015) Collagen duplicate genes of bone and cartilage participate during regeneration of zebrafish fin skeleton Gene Expression Patterns. DOI:10.1016/j.gep.2015.07.004 (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1567133X15300089>)

Han Q, Zhou C, Wu S, Liu Y, Triplett L, Miao J, Tokuhisa J, Deblais L, Robinson H, Leach JE, Li J, Zhao B. (2015) Crystal Structure of *Xanthomonas* AvrRxo1-ORF1, a Type III Effector with a Polynucleotide Kinase Domain, and Its Interactor AvrRxo1-ORF2. Structure. S0969-2126(15)00325-1. doi: 10.1016/j.str.2015.06.030. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26344722>

Liu Y, Zhang X, Tran H, Shan L, Kim J, Childs K, Ervin EH, Frazier T, Zhao B. Assessment of drought tolerance of 49 switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) genotypes using physiological and morphological parameters. *Biotechnol Biofuels*. 2015 Sep 22; 8:152. <http://www.biotechnologyforbiofuels.com/content/8/1/152>

Soliman SSM, Greenwood SJ, Bombarely A, Mueller LA, Tsao R, Mosser DD, Raizada MN (2015) An Endophyte Constructs Fungicide-Containing Extracellular Barriers for Its Host Plant. *Current Biology* DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2015.08.027> ([http://www.cell.com/current-biology/abstract/S0960-9822\(15\)00998-7](http://www.cell.com/current-biology/abstract/S0960-9822(15)00998-7))

## Hahn Horticulture Garden Events

Now through October 31st 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 a.m.

### **Art in the Garden: Quilt Art by Gwen Goepel**

Come view the numerous, beautiful quilts designed and hand-crafted by Gwen Goepel. Each piece has many aspects to enjoy from full colors, textures, and embellishments, to various shapes and dimensions. Free.



Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

### **Gardens of Southern England with Director, Robert McDuffie**

Everyone knows that England is a great place for gardens and plants. In southern England, when you travel from east to west, it just gets better and better. That's exactly what Robert McDuffie's tour group did this past summer, traveling from Canterbury to Cornwall, hitting as many gardens as possible. Also along the way, they were able to sneak into some extraordinary private gardens that only the well connected can enter. Enjoy the ride as Robert takes us on narrow roads between hedgerows to some of the best gardens in the world. Free.

Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

### **4th Annual Pumpkin Mania - Floral Design Class**

Come learn how to make your own pumpkin centerpiece. If you are new to the class we will teach you a couple floral designs to choose from. If you are a returning pumpkin flower artist, come enjoy the evening and choose between the designs being taught or explore your own design. We will have a few designs for you to look at and get ideas. Bring a friend and enjoy a relaxing evening of wine, cheese, and fall flower arranging! \$40 payable by cash or check on night of event. Cost includes pumpkins, materials, and instruction. To sign up contact Barbara Leshyn at [barbaraleshyn@vt.edu](mailto:barbaraleshyn@vt.edu).

Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup> 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

### **Holiday Wreath Workshop with Richmond Floral Designer, David Pippin**

Make your own holiday wreath with the instruction of David Pippin, talented floral designer from Richmond. David will guide us through our creations using evergreen foliage cut from the garden as well as materials he will provide. The workshop is limited to 20 participants (minimum 10). Cost is \$55 general public/\$45 Friend of the Garden members. Prepayment is required. Fee includes instruction and supplies to make one wreath. To register, contact Stephanie at [vtgarden@vt.edu](mailto:vtgarden@vt.edu) or (540) 231-5970. Must pre-register by November 24.