

Department of *Horticulture*

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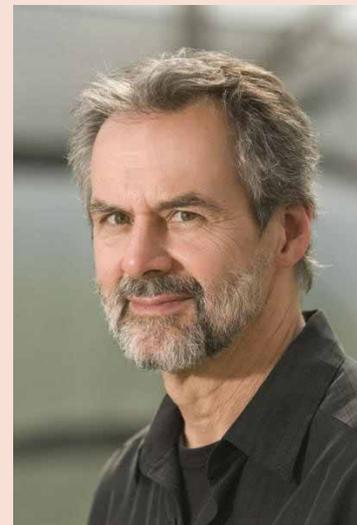


Dr. Richard Veilleux, Department Head

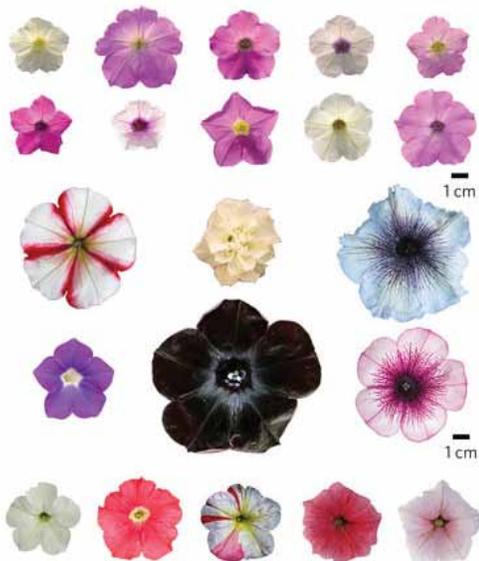
February 2018

Although we have not had much snow in Blacksburg this winter, for 20 of the first 34 days in 2018, we endured lower than average temperatures. The Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad reported a record number of ambulance calls due to the flu. I have seen a few daffodils poking their heads through the soil already but I think I saw some duck back down. That has not stopped us from forging ahead with planning for Horticulture’s role in SPES. Mike Evans, the final candidate to interview for the director position in December, was offered the position in December, made a return visit in early January and agreed to come in mid-April, so the search is over and we can work on the details of the merger. Mike is a Virginia native who was graduated with a BS in Horticulture from VT in 1985, so it will be a homecoming for him, of

sorts. We recently hired a new fiscal technician, Tetyana Early, who started working on the books in early February. Yeah! The budget numbers will come back into focus. For those of you sitting by the fireside for the rest of the winter and thinking about spring and summer plantings, the American Horticultural Society has just announced their 2017 Book Awards (<http://ahsgardening.org/about-us/news-press/2017-book-awards>) – lots of good pictures at least to remind you of warmer times ahead.



– Richard



Congratulations to Aureliano Bombarely

Nature Plants named Aure’s petunia paper “Insight into the evolution of the Solanaceae from the parental genomes of *Petunia hybrida*” one of the 6 most read since the publication was founded three years ago! Check out the story here: <http://tiny.cc/petunia>

Spring Seminar

The Hort spring seminar series will be starting up on Feb 6 and run on Tuesdays in Latham 311. Check on the Hort website homepage (<http://tiny.cc/hortseminar>) for the schedule of speakers.

Undergraduate News

It is Groundhog Day which means, of course, the Virginia Tech National Collegiate Landscape Competition (NCLC) team is preparing diligently for their annual trip to compete against schools and universities from across the country. Last year our team of 15 students and their faculty leaders flew to Provo, Utah to compete; however, this year we will be staying much closer to home. Alamance Community College in Graham, NC is the host institution for the 2018 National Association of Landscape Professionals NCLC Event on March 14-17. Our team of 24 students will return from Spring Break and immediately travel to join more than 600 students from over 70 other schools to attend this career-building week and compete in thirty Landscape and Nursery industry events.

Every year, students from the Dept. of Horticulture, Agricultural Technology, and beyond have the opportunity to network, make friends, speak with industry leaders, and engage potential future employers as part of the Annual Career Fair



and Trade Show. The excitement surrounding competitions, such as Hardscape Installation, Wood Construction, Arboriculture Techniques, and Landscape Installation, grows every year. Hokies are always loud and proud, and represent Virginia Tech and Virginia's Landscape and Nursery industry with excellence and professionalism!

We are taking advantage of the close proximity of this year's event to include more students. Our ability to provide this opportunity to as many students as would like to attend is because of donations that keep the cost to the students as low as possible. None of this could happen without the generous support from so many of our alumni and industry leaders. The NCLC faculty leaders and all of our students would like to THANK YOU! And we look forward to making all of you proud! GO HOKIES!!



Horticulture's Outstanding Senior: Casey Hoff!

Each year, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences honors one outstanding senior from each department in the college. For the 2017-2018 academic year, the Department of Horticulture has selected Casey Hoff for this recognition. Casey will graduate this spring with a B.S. degree in Horticulture along with a minor in Civic Agriculture and Foods Systems (CAFS). During her tenure at Virginia Tech, Casey has excelled in academic scholarship, co-curricular and extracurricular engagement that has included multiple experiential learning projects, both domestic and abroad, all focused on gaining more knowledge and experience in sustainable food systems. For Casey's CAFS capstone project, "*Seeding Explorers: Expanding Educational Opportunities at the Hale-YMCA Community Garden*" done in partnership with the Hale Y Community Garden and Montessori School (K-4 grade) in Blacksburg, she developed a curriculum focused on gardening for health that she will teach at the Y Community Garden this spring. Her central career goal is to pursue community-based work in the sustainable food systems realm. To that end, after graduation Casey heads to Hustontown, in south-central Pennsylvania for an apprenticeship at New Morning Farm (<https://www.newmorningfarm.net/>) to gain more hands-on experience with sustainable farm management and organic crop production. Congratulations Casey!



We are excited to announce that Kyle Brolis has joined the team as assistant manager for the Dining Services Farm at Kentland. Kyle hails from New Jersey and holds a B.S. in Environmental Science. Kyle has worked on vegetable farms for several years, most recently at N.C. State's Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Small Farm Unit.

In addition to assisting at the Dining Services Farm, Kyle oversees a hydroponic demonstration project inside Owens Dining Hall. Kyle technically works for Dining Services, but his office space, and his heart, are in Horticulture!

Extension News

The 28th Annual Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference was held January 24-25, 2018 at the Eastern Shore Community College, Melfa, VA, with approximately 250 farmers and industry representatives attending. Ed Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension at Virginia Tech presented an update of our College of Agriculture & Life Sciences. Ramon Arancibia presented his work on 'Potato Pre-harvest Treatments & Timing of Vine-kill to Improve Skin Set' and 'Rowcovers in Vegetables, Beyond Season Extension'. Dr Shukla from the University of Florida presented his work 'Compact Bed Geometry for Improved Environmental and Economic Sustainability.'

Samantha Taggart and Ramon Arancibia were awarded travel scholarships to attend and present their work at the SARE/NCAT 'Our Farms, Our Future Conference' in St. Louis, Missouri on April 3-5, 2018.

Sam is presenting her work from the project 'Living Soil for a Sustainable Future: Assessing the Effects of Cover Crops and Tillage on the Soil Microbial Community and Health'

Ramon is presenting the team work from the SARE LS16-268 project 'Integrating row covers into sustainable production systems to strengthen the sustainability of specialty crops farmers' that includes the work of Hort graduate student, Tej Acharya.

Jayesh Samtani, Kim Lewers (USDA, Beltsville, MD), and Dave Liker (Gorman Farm, MD) had a workshop that was approved for the Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture conference titled 'Cultivate the

Chesapeake FoodShed' that was held Jan 11-18, 2018 at College Park, Maryland. The title of their workshop was 'Growing Great Strawberries in the Mid-Atlantic.'

Jayesh Samtani was awarded the Young Researcher Travel Scholarship from the North American Strawberry Growers Association (NASGA) to attend and present at the 2018 NASGA Annual Meeting and Conference held in New Orleans, Louisiana from January 21-24, 2018. The title of Jayesh's talk was 'Evaluating Newer Strawberry Varieties for Fruit Yield and Quality in an Annual Plasticsulture System.'

Jayesh Samtani moderated the Horticulture Crops Section at the 2018 Weed Science Society of America Annual Meeting Conference held from Jan 29 to Feb 1, 2018 in Arlington VA. Jayesh also served as a judge for the graduate oral presentations and presented a talk titled 'An Alternative Approach to Preplant Fumigation with Paper Pellet and Mustard Seed Meal in Annual Strawberry Production'.



Grants

Mark Williams was awarded a grant with eight collaborators at the University of Georgia from USDA, titled "Microbiome approach to reducing the resistome in poultry litter amended soils." The total budget is \$853,000 with \$233,603 for Mark's program.

Publications

Petzold, H.E., B. Chanda, C. Zhao, S.B. Rigoulot, E.P. Beers, A.M. Brunner, 2018. DIVARICATA AND RADIALIS INTERACTING FACTOR (DRIF) also interacts with WOX and KNOX proteins associated with wood formation in *Populus trichocarpa*. Plant J. DOI: 10.1111/tpj.13831.

Hahn Horticulture Garden News

Sign Crowdfunding!

Be on the lookout for the Hahn Horticulture Garden's upcoming fundraising campaign on VT's Jump crowdfunding website! Our campaign is scheduled to take-off on March 27th, 2018 and we will be raising funds to design, manufacture, and install a collection of six interpretive sign panels throughout the garden. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to learn more as our launch date approaches and keep up-to-date of our progress.



Save the Date!

Please save the date for the 14th annual Garden Gala. This year's Gala will be on **June 9th, 2018** at the Hahn Horticulture Garden from **5:30 -9:30 pm**. This year's theme – inspired by Pantone's 2018 color of the year – is Ultra Violet. People can visit www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/gala for more information or contact Lisa at llipsev@vt.edu with questions.

Upcoming Events at the Hahn:

Workshops

Thursday, February 15, 2018 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Seed Starting Workshop with Holly Scoggins. Register by 2/12/18!

Saturday, February 17, 2018 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

Home Fruit Production Workshops with Barry Robinson. Register by 2/13/18!

Thursday, March 1, 2018 6:00 - 7:30 am

Bizarre Botanicals with Alexandra Cantwell of Norfolk Botanic Garden (and Hort alumna!)

Saturday, March 3, 2018 10:00 - 11:30 am

Plant to Preserve with Barbara Pleasant. Register by 2/28/18!

Learn at Lunch (FREE)

Wednesdays noon to 1 pm

- **Feb 21** *Super Tough Wildflowers* with Ian Canton
- **Mar 7** *Behind the Scenes at Stonecrop Farm* with Gwynn Hamilton

Visit <http://www.hort.vt.edu/hhg/events.html> to learn more about upcoming events!

Art in the Garden

- **Jan. 1 to Feb 28th:** Paintings by Nathan Popp in the Hahn Pavilion.

The 2018 Simply Elemental Outdoor Art Exhibition is currently accepting artist applications. Application deadline **April 2, 2018**. More information at <http://tiny.cc/18elemental>

THE
HORTICULTURE CLUB
PRESENTS
OUR ANNUAL
ROSE SALE

There is no better way to show your sweetie how you feel than with roses!
Buying your Valentine's day gift through the Horticulture Club will help to
support a fellow student organization.

- Red and mixed color assortment roses are available
- Roses come with greenery and baby's breath
- ***On campus delivery** available upon request for \$3.00*
- **Pickup will be located in Saunders Hall on February 13 & 14 from 1:00pm to 7:00pm**
- Order by emailing rosesale@vt.edu

	Wrapped	Arranged in a Vase
1 Rose	\$3	\$5
3 Roses	\$6	\$10
6 Roses	\$18	\$20
1 Dozen	\$30	\$40