

Department of Horticultural Science
Newsletter, Spring 2003
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7609
http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/hort_sci/

- News from the Department Head

by Thomas Monaco

I want to **welcome** all of you to the 2003 version of our departmental newsletter. We were very fortunate for many years (1996-2002) to have **Roy Larson** serve as editor of our newsletter that he published on a monthly basis. Roy was dedicated to the newsletter and there is no way we can replace his wit, humor, and charm. We cannot also meet a monthly publication as he did, so we have settled on a quarterly newsletter and I greatly appreciate the departmental newsletter committee, under the leadership of **Todd Wehner** taking on this task. I hope all of you will contribute to the newsletter when called upon to do so.

This will be **my last column** in our departmental newsletter as your department head. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the administration for allowing me to serve as head of our department for the past 15 years. It has been a great honor and privilege to do so. We have a great faculty and staff and I have been very proud to be part of this organization over the past 36 years. Thanks for the fantastic support I have received from you during my tenure as department head and I hope you provide the same level of support to the new leadership of the department.

I will not be leaving the college entirely as **I will continue** employment beginning June 1, 2003 in a 20% appointment to work with the Southern Region Small Fruit Consortium. **Bob Lyons** has been gracious enough to allow me to share his office at the McSwain Educational Center in the JC Raulston Arboretum so you will be able to find me there occasionally.

- Special Note

by Dennis Werner

A **signing ceremony** for the Thomas J. and Virginia S. Monaco Horticultural Science Graduate Fellowship Endowment for Diversity was held on Monday, February 17, 2003 at the JC Raulston Arboretum Education Center. In spite of the ice storm, nearly 30 people turned out for the late afternoon ceremony.

Tom and Jenny have set up this endowment in an effort to continue their support and affection for the Department of Horticultural Science. At a recent meeting of Dr. Monaco and Dr. Werner with the Horticulture graduate students, Tom shared with us the impact NCSU has had on the lives of his entire family. As many of you know, Dr. Monaco received his PhD degree from NCSU.

Tom also related to us that all three of his sons have bachelor's degrees from NC State University: Dr. Thomas J. Monaco Jr., BS in Biochemistry; Dr. Joseph W. Monaco, BS in Electrical Engineering; and Michael A. Monaco, BS in Computer Science. Additionally, all three of the Monaco's daughters-in-law have NC State BS degrees. Tom also related, that **NO**, the popular 1960s TV show *My Three Sons* was not based on his family.

NC State University has been very good to the Monaco family, said Monaco at the signing event. We established this endowment in honor of my career, and the diversity aspect of the award is in honor of my wife's career. This is a joint endeavor and we feel that the endowment in some small way pays back the institution for the educational opportunities afforded the Monaco family. Income from the endowment will be used to provide fellowship awards for graduate students enrolled in the Department of Horticultural Science at NCSU. The purpose of the award is to attract under-represented groups to the graduate programs in the Department.

Tom and Jenny, the Department and College sincerely appreciate your kindness and generosity in creating this endowment. Thank you very much!

- Departmental Highlight

by Todd Wehner

The **Pesticide Safety Education Program** is a partnership between federal and state agencies to provide growers, applicators and the public with information and training on the proper, safe and effective use of pesticides. Training provided through Pesticide Safety Education Program primarily targets those applicators that use or supervise the use of restricted-use pesticides. A pesticide bears a restricted-use classification because it can cause adverse effects in the environment or to human health, if it is used incorrectly. North Carolina farmers, foresters, nurserymen, and greenhouse operators must be certified as private applicators under the North Carolina Pesticide Law if they use restricted-use pesticides to protect their crops. Under the same law, commercial applicators are required to become certified and licensed before they apply any pesticide (restricted- or general-use) to the property of another for financial compensation.



As the Pesticide Education Specialist, Dr. **Wayne Buhler** is responsible for developing and distributing educational materials that are used for the certification and re-certification (continuing education) of private applicators, commercial applicators, and dealers of restricted-use pesticides. A network of 98 county agents (County Pesticide Coordinators) implements the Pesticide Safety Education Program at the local level. Training provided within this framework enhances personal contact between certified pesticide applicators and staff of NC Cooperative Extension. The NC Pesticide Safety Education Program provides training and continuing education for approximately 26,000 private and 13,000 commercial applicators.

- People in the News

by Todd Wehner

There is a section of the departmental web page dealing with **HS People in the News**. It is constantly being updated, and is available for you to browse.

- Faculty News

by Sylvia Blankenship

A national search for a new department head is underway. See the **position announcement**.

Mike Parker spoke at the SW Michigan Hort Days in Benton Harbor Michigan on February 5-6th on peach and apple production and at the North Alabama Fruit meeting on February 19th in Athens, AL on apple production in the SE. Sylvia Blankenship spoke at the Virginia Grown Conference and Trade Show in Richmond, VA on postharvest physiology of apples.

Joe Neal is on sabbatical leave in New Zealand until mid-September 2003.

The position previously held by **Dick Unrath** is now open. Interviews of two candidates will be held during the week of March 10th and March 24th.

Tom Monaco gave an outstanding presentation on the changes that have taken place in the department over the years at the 20th annual Eastern North Carolina Vegetable School in Kinston, January 24th. He indicated that many things have changed in the department, for example in the last 10 years our funding has gone from 50-50 state funds to grants to 17-83 state funds to grants. He thanked the growers for their support and encouraged them to expand the support both with the state legislature and through private funds. Bill Jester commented on the help Tom has been to the industry from his days of testing chemicals and new weed management techniques for vegetables and small fruits, to his presentations at grower meetings, teaching classes and graduate students and finally his leadership of the department and its relationship with industry service.

Tom Monaco's retirement dinner will be held Friday, April 11th, beginning at 5:15pm at the University Club.

Dennis Osborne, Doug Sanders and Donn Ward (Food Science) have been very busy educating the industry about food safety. They have made presentations at the Eastern and Western Vegetable Schools and displayed posters at both locations. They are also movie stars and have made a 12-minute video explaining the Good Agricultural Practices in Food Safety. Dennis won the Extension Blue Ribbon Publication Award at SR-ASHS. They also had a display at the Southeast Fresh Produce Food Safety Education Program at the United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association meeting in Long Beach, CA, February 21-24th.

Doug Sanders and Frank Louws (Plant Pathology) received a grant from NC Vegetable Growers Association for Demonstration of TSWV resistant tomato varieties.

Doug Sanders and Kirk Creel presented posters on their research results on Fresh Market Carrots: An Opportunity Crop for North Carolina and Long Day Onions: An Opportunity Crop for North Carolina at the Western Vegetable School in Asheville, February 19th and 20th.

At the American Society for Horticultural Science - Southern Region meeting, extension communication awards were given to **James L. Gibson** and **Lane Greer** for their website Retail Reflections ; to Richard Hassell and **Jonathan Schultheis** for their publication Seedless Watermelon Transplant Production Guide ; to **Barclay Poling** for his publication 2002 Preplant Meetings-Plasticulture Strawberries-Berry Agent ; and to **Dennis Osborne, Douglas Sanders** and coworkers for their publication Good Agricultural Practices for the Production and Handling of Citrus Fruit, Green Beans and Peas, Peaches, Fresh Carrots and Root Crops, Melons, and Tomatoes .

Karen Hardy has been hired as a Research Assistant to work with Dr. Jeanine Davis effective March 3, 2003. Karen will provide technical support for the NC Specialty Crops Program in western North Carolina. Karen earned her BS degree from Duke University.

Freya Hopswood was hired February 17 as a Research Assistant to work with Dr. Dennis Werner. She will be involved in Dennis' breeding and cultivar development of herbaceous and woody landscape plants. Freya earned her BS from our department in 2001.

Dr. **Yong Xu** began his research as a **visiting scientist** with **Todd Wehner** on Fusarium wilt and virus resistance in watermelon. He will be here from December through April. His office is 105 Kilgore Hall.

- Staff News

by Barb Amos

- Welcome to the Department!

New hire: **Tim Ketchie**, January 1, 2003, Agricultural Research Technician working with Brad Holland at the Horticulture Field Laboratory. Tim graduated in December with his BS degree in Horticulture from our department.

New hire: **Joel Mowrey** has been hired effective March 3, 2003 as an Agricultural Research Assistant to work with Dr. Tom Ranney. Joel received his associate degree from Hocking College in Nelsonville, Ohio.

New hire: **Jon Roethling**, December 9, 2002, Arborist working with Todd Lasseigne at the JC Raulston Arboretum. Jon also received his BS degree from our department.

- Congratulations and best of luck to recent retirees of the department!

Retirement: **Don Brewer**, December 31, 2002, Facilities Maintenance Coordinator for the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research & Extension Center located in Fletcher, NC. Don transferred from the Research Stations Division to work with us in 1997.

Retirement: **Dennis Adams** retired January 31, 2003 with over 30 years of state service. He has been re-hired to work in Jonathan Schultheis program on a part-time basis. A retirement reception was held on February 18 at the McSwain Education Center at the JC Raulston Arboretum to celebrate Dennis retirement.

Retirement: **Newell Hancock** retired January 31, 2003 with over 30 years of state service. He is working with the sweetpotato breeding project for Craig Yencho.

- Farewell!

Farewell to **Mitzi Hole** who has been the Arboretum technician since 1996. She has gone to work for a private landscape firm in Raleigh.

- Other staff news

Dot and Sonny Duke have a new granddaughter. Her name is Lauren Grove, daughter of Hunter and Amy. Lauren was born around 10 am on March 6, and is 8 pounds. Mother and baby are doing fine.

- Undergraduate Programs

by Bryce Lane

- Student ALCA Team Heads for Mississippi

For the 13th straight year, NC State Horticulture students will be participating in the **Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) Student Career Days Event** March 12-16th. Thirty-two students will be traveling to Hinds Community College near Jackson,

Mississippi to participate in workshops, career fair and competitions. Companies representing many facets of the "Green Industry" donate their time and resources to sponsor these events. Following the competition, the team will travel to New Orleans for two days to tour botanical gardens, arboreta and other attractions. The event provides our students with a great opportunity to learn more about horticulture, the industry, and performing under pressure! More importantly, the **ALCA Team XIII has raised more than \$20,000** to cover the costs of their expenses for the whole trip. The team organized during the Fall semester and coordinated various fund-raising activities. They solicited donations from the industry with a letter writing campaign, designed and installed landscape jobs for residential customers, provided baked goods for the coffee cart, secured funding from NC State Student Government, and secured sponsorship for two team t-shirts that they will wear during the competition. The team will be flying out of RDU on Wednesday, March 12th and returning Wednesday, March 19th.

ALCA Team XIII Places Fourth

Thirty-two Horticultural Science students have returned back from Hinds Community College in Jackson, Mississippi where they competed in the 27th annual ALCA Student Career Days competition. ALCA Team XII participated in industry-sponsored workshops on Thursday, March 12th, a career fair on Friday and a competition of 13 different events on Friday and Saturday. When the dust settled on Sunday morning, the team placed fourth in the nation out of 51 schools and 750 students competing. The following students placed in their events:

- Tim Ketchie: First Place, Interior Plant ID
- Tyler Sime, Billy Carriker: First Place, Paver Installation
- Brad Rollins: Second Place, Woody Plant ID
- Lindsey Heise, Tony Williamson: Third Place, Land Surveying

A large number of students placed in the top ten of their respective events making for a strong overall showing as a team. Sunday afternoon the team left Jackson and traveled to New Orleans for a couple of days to tour gardens and other attractions in the local area. They arrived home Wednesday evening.

- Vance Whitaker Named Outstanding Student

Vance Whitaker, a Landscape Horticulture senior, was selected by the Teaching Faculty to be the NC State recipient of the ASHS Outstanding Horticulture Student Award. The American Society for Horticultural Science allows each university wishing to participate to select one outstanding student to be recognized in their newsletter as an outstanding horticulture student. The awardees name and photograph will be published in the Spring newsletter. Vance is a Park Scholar, double majoring in Agricultural Business Management. Congratulations Vance!

- Spring Graduation Approaching

Twenty-nine students will graduate this Spring on May 17th. University graduation ceremonies will be held at the RBC Center in the morning followed by our Departmental graduation ceremonies at the McSwain Education Center located at the JC Raulston Arboretum. There will be a luncheon after the ceremony for graduates, faculty, family, friends and staff. Betty Coleman will be sending out information about attending the ceremony and luncheon.

- Important Dates

April 12-13: PAX/Horticulture Club Plant Sale, JCRA

May 2: Horticulture Club Spring Banquet, Ruby McSwain Education Center

May 16: Agricultural Institute Graduation, Stewart Theater

May 17: Graduation Ceremonies

- Graduate Programs

by Dennis Werner and Rachel McLaughlin

Six new graduate students joined the department in spring, 2003. We welcome these new students, and wish them well in their academic pursuits:

Juliana Buckelew. Juliana was born in Davenport, Iowa. She received her BS from Iowa State University majoring in Horticulture. Specific work experiences have included internships evaluating and caring for Mediterranean-climate plants at Longwood Gardens Research Greenhouses, Kennett Square, PA and consulting home gardeners on the Iowa State Horticulture Extension state-wide toll-free help line. Her job positions have included Special Gardens Coordinator at Seed Savers Exchange in Decorah, IA and Horticulture Research Technician for Oregon State University at North Willamette Research and Extension Center located in Aurora, OR. Juliana will be working on her MS degree with David Monks with a weed science concentration.

Margaret Peg Godwin. Peg was born in Lubumbashi, Zaire. She received her BS from NCSU majoring in Horticulture in 1981. Since graduation, and because of her husband's career, she has worked at a wide variety of jobs across eastern NC. She has worked for a large garden center in Raleigh, a small nursery with a landscape business near Albertson in Duplin County and heading up the grounds crew for an ocean front condominium in Carteret County. She is currently an Agricultural Extension Agent in Lenoir County. Peg will be working on her MHS degree with John Dole with a cut flower production concentration.

Brian Krug. Brian was born in Pella, Iowa. He received his BS from Iowa State University majoring in Horticulture. His studies focused on greenhouse management and floriculture production. While at Iowa State, he spent two semesters out of the classroom on

internships. The first was at DeJong Greenhouses, Inc. in Pella and Oskaloosa, IA, where responsibilities included assisting in geranium propagation and the production of many other Spring crops such as hydrangeas, begonias and cyclamen. The second internship was completed at Yoder Brothers in Parrish, FL. He was involved in chrysanthemum, aster and poinsettia propagation, as well as caring for impatiens stock plants. After graduation, Brian returned to DeJong Greenhouses, Inc. as Manager and Head Grower of the Oskaloosa facility. Brian will be working on his MS degree with Brian Whipker with a focus on plant nutrition.

Jennifer Leonard. Jennifer was born in Princeton, New Jersey. She received her BA from UNC-Wilmington majoring in Anthropology. After graduating, she moved back home to Belle Mead, NJ. Her first job was working for Boca Inc. -- a company that imported roses and other flowers from Ecuador. While working with Boca, she decided she wanted to change fields and do something that would make use of her artistic talents. So she took a class in landscape design at a local community college. She also was accepted to the Landscape Architecture program at Rutgers University. The summer of 2000 brought Jennifer to North Carolina and she began taking horticulture classes at NCSU. Jennifer will be working on her MHS degree with Will Hooker focusing on small-scale design.

Brian Singleton. Brian was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. For most of his life he wanted to be a doctor. As Brian said, In a way, this is kind of what I want to do now, except instead of people as my patients, I want to look for cures to ailments involving the use of plants and land scenarios that are not utilized to their full potential. He received his BS from Wake Forest University majoring in Biology. He originally began his MLA degree in the College of Design at NCSU Fall semester, 2001. Brian has transferred into our graduate program and will be working on his MHS degree with Pat Lindsey with a concentration on residential design, plant propagation and nursery management.

Carroll Williamson. Carroll was born in Darlington, South Carolina. He received his BS from the University of the South located in Sewanee, TN, majoring in Natural Resources. His employment experiences include Infantry Platoon Commander in the US Marine Corps (1998 to present), an Assistant Manager at Oaklyn Plantation Nursery in Darlington, SC, and an Urban Forestry Project Manager in Franklin County, TN. Carroll will be working on his MHS degree with Ted Bilderback focusing on native species.

Two of our graduate students won awards at the American Society for Horticultural Science - Southern Region meeting: **Danielle Treadwell**, working with **Nancy Creamer**, received the Warren S. Barham PhD Graduate Student Award (first place) for their paper Sweetpotatoes Under Cover . Third place award was

given to **Jeffrey A. Adkins**, working with **Dennis J. Werner**, for their paper Comparative Molecular Analysis of Floricaula/Leafy Homologues in *Buddleja davidii* and *B. lindleyana*.

- News from Around North Carolina

- Horticultural Crops Research Station (Castle Hayne)

by Susan Rooks

The 37th Annual Open House of the **North Carolina Blueberry Council** was held in Clinton, NC on January 13-14. We had an attendance of 178 growers and vendors. There were a total of 36 vendors represented at the trade show. The North Carolina Blueberry Council voted to fully fund all the research requests submitted. Research project leaders funded were Dr. Jim Ballington, Dr. Mike Mainland and Ms. Susan Rooks (Horticultural Science), Dr. William Cline and Dr. Zvezdana Pesic-VanEsbroeck (Plant Pathology).

The North Carolina Blueberry Council also voted to give an **Endowment** to the Department of Horticultural Science in Research and Extension. The signing ceremony occurred February 26th with Mr. Ralph Carter, Jr. (President) and Mr. Willie Moore (Secretary-Treasurer) from the NC Blueberry Council in attendance.

Four blueberry cultivars were released this year by Dr. Jim Ballington and Susan Rooks from the NC State Horticultural Science Blueberry Breeding Program. These were 'Columbus', a rabbiteye, 'Craven', 'Lenoir', and 'Pamlico', all southern highbush. In the last 15 years, 20 cultivars have been released from the Horticultural Crops Research Station in Castle Hayne.

A **Strawberry Field Day** is planned for May 8th at the Horticultural Crops Research Station. Mr. Jamie Driver from Plant Pathology will promote it. A **Blueberry Field Day** is being discussed for May but is still in the planning stages.

- JC Raulston Arboretum (Raleigh)

by Robert Lyons

Welcome to the first installment from the JC Raulston Arboretum within the Departmental Newsletter! Each issue I'll try to update readers on all facets of JCRA activities, news, and upcoming events. Perhaps the first item on my list this time is to encourage you to **visit our web site** for many more details about the **JCRA**. Here you'll find membership information, programmatic specifics, highlighted plants, and one of our most important offerings, the ability to search for plants within our collections inventory. We've got lots of photos and an easy way to sign up in the Lyons Den, our free email service which sends out timely, periodic JCRA news items to help you keep our calendar of events front and

center in your email box. Click on the Updates section along the left margin of our homepage and head to the Lyons Den. Most announcements go out via this service first and can often mean the difference between getting into a workshop and getting on a waiting list.

The recent past most definitely includes a winter that just won't quit! Ice storms, cold temperatures, and downpours have been our way of life for the past few months, and we've dealt with it all with one of the most capable staffs around. And perhaps the most exciting has been the advent of **new plantings** around the Ruby C. McSwain Education Center. A magnificent Japanese maple, an under story of bulbous species, and an assortment of new woodies have all made an appearance. It will take some time to complete our new beds but we're excited about the initiation with no completion date in sight.....watch us grow.

While in the area, **drop by the McSwain Education Center** for brochures, orientation information, timely self-tour guides, and for a walk around our offices and educational space. The book and gift shop has limited hours, so check the door if it's not open during your first visit.....and JCRA members get 10% off all purchases. In closing, there is increased security at the JCRA and our parking lot gate is closed on the weekends. Not to worry, just park along Beryl Rd. and walk through the pedestrian gate. And in case you think you're caught inside the parking lot after dark, just drive up close and it will open automatically, closing shortly thereafter on its own.

- LCPTRS-Cunningham Research Station (Kinston)

by Bill Jester

We have a new part-time secretary, **Lisa Barrow**, who started on March 3rd. Lisa has a wealth of experience to share with us and we are glad to welcome her to our team.

So far this year, we have had 6.28 inches of rain. The last 48 days have been **cold and wet** and it appears there is more rain to come. The lettuce trials that were planned for February 15th have not been planted as of March 3rd.

On January 21st, the **Eastern NC Vegetable School** was held at the Cunningham Research Station.

Nick Augostini and Keith Tyson attended 'United 2003' in Long Beach, CA and toured Melissa's Fresh Fruit and Produce.

On January 20th, **Bill Jester** attended the Annual Convention of the American Farm Bureau Federation. The Specialty Crops Program was chosen to exhibit at the 'Meet the Researcher' Forum during the convention. The title of the presentation was 'The Specialty Crops Program: Fast-tracking Niche Crops to the Market.'

In February, **Bill Jester** gave presentations at alternative crop schools in Whiteville, Concord and Monroe, NC and a snap bean production presentation in Holland, VA.

In January and February, **Bill Jester** spent time interfacing with area lenders concerning the new crops that area farmers are now producing.

Irish potato trials were established at Tull Hill Farms that consisted of a cultivar evaluation and a nitrogen fertilization evaluation.

Many **trials are being planned** for the coming year. Highlights of these trials include:

- On-the-farm testing and marketing of a new purple-skinned, yellow-flesh Irish potato line from the USDA
- Evaluation of several edible gourd and squash varieties for economic feasibility
- Cantaloupe variety evaluations
- On-the-farm market evaluations of various colored snap beans for consumer-friendly, microwavable packaging
- Evaluations of new varieties of seedless 'personalized' watermelons
- Specialty melon screening trials

- Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center (Fletcher)

by Thomas Ranney and Laura Walters

Jeanine Davis gave a presentation on organic production of medicinal herbs at the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention in Hershey, PA in early February. There she had the opportunity to visit Chocolate World and the Hershey Museum with Jonathan Schultheis and his family. Jeanine Davis and her research associate, Jackie Greenfield, are directors of the brand-new NC Natural Products Association. This organization was initiated in response to demand from this growing industry in North Carolina. A three-day conference is being planned for late October at the NC Arboretum in Asheville.

Tom Ranney and his staff at Fletcher have been working with John and Danny Allen of Shiloh Nursery to release a new weeping river birch named 'Summer Cascade'. The tree, which was discovered by the Allens, is a dramatic form of our native river birch - it's easy to propagate, fast to produce, very adaptable, and pest resistant. 'Summer Cascade' is ideally suited for production in North Carolina and has worldwide market potential. A patent has been applied for and licensing will be handled through the North Carolina Foundation Seed Producers. There are currently



15 licensed growers producing 'Summer Cascade'. A portion of the royalties will be returned to support research at NC State. Assistance in marketing and releasing this plant was provided from the North Carolina Specialty Crops Program, the Golden LEAF Foundation, and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture.

- Small Fruit Program (Morganton)

by Andy Allen

The **North Carolina Winegrowers' Association** held their Annual Conference on February 15 at the Airport Marriott Hotel in Greensboro. There were 268 in attendance. Concurrent sessions were held in viticulture, enology, and marketing. Andy Allen moderated the viticulture session and gave a presentation on early results of the vineyard research being conducted at the Upper Piedmont Research Station in Reidsville.

The **North Carolina Grape Council** held their annual retreat on February 21 and 22. The Council voted to approve the grant proposal to continue funding of the vineyard research projects at Reidsville.

Interest in **winegrape production** is continuing to grow. On February 6, a multi-county meeting for prospective growers was held at the Cooperative Extension Office in Lexington. Speakers included horticulture agents Amy-Lynn Bartel of Randolph/Davidson Counties, Greg Hoover of Davie County, Jack Loudermilk of Yadkin County, and Andy Allen of the Department of Horticulture. Over 80 people braved the rain (which quickly turned into snow and ice) and came out to learn about the prospects for vineyard production in the central Piedmont region.

- Vernon James Research and Extension Center (Plymouth)

by Gina Fernandez

So far, 2003 has been extremely **wet and cold in eastern NC**. The Tidewater Research station recorded 6.06 inches of rain February 2003 compared to only 2.13 inches in 2002. Monthly average high/low temperatures for January were 56/35F in 2003 and 47/29F in 2002.

Construction on State Highway 64 has begun at the Tidewater Research Station. Road crews are constructing a four-lane highway that will pass just 600 ft behind the James Center. For those of you who have not been out this way lately, the four-lane highway is completed up to Williamston. The road will continue on its current path through Plymouth and then pick up as a four-lane highway again near the Tidewater Station, and continue on as a four-lane road to the Outer Banks. The entire project is should be completed by 2005.

Mark Clough and Craig Yencho are gearing up for **potato planting** season. Wet soils have already postponed one

planting date. Strawberries are waiting for warm weather to start growing. In the past we have been close to full bloom by mid-March.

Drs. Fernandez and Yencho continued **tag team parenting** during the months of January through March. Some of the more interesting meetings they attended included trips to Mexico and California. In January, Craig hosted the NE 184 (Potato collaborators meeting) in the Research Triangle Park. At the end of that meeting, possession of children was transferred to Craig in a hotel room in Raleigh. Gina set off early the next day for Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. She attended the North American Bramble Growers Association annual meeting as Program and Research Committee Chair. Mother Nature acknowledged her arrival with a 5.6 earthquake that was centered about 150 miles south of PV. In February, Craig was off to California to visit with Bodger Seed Company. In between trips they celebrated Yvonne's 5th birthday. She is by the way, doing extremely well and continues to be a great source of joy to her parents, as is her little sister Anya.

- Graduate Student Feature Story

by Megan Weddington

- PAX Initiation Banquet

On February 28th, new members were inducted in the Iota Chapter of Pi Alpha Xi. Members and guests enjoyed a birds-eye view of downtown Raleigh from the banquet held at the Clarion State Capital Hotel. The initiation ceremony followed the national guidelines explaining the historical meaning of our name and the goals of the society. New members included 1 faculty member, 17 undergraduates, and 10 graduate students. Tony Avent, PAX member (1977) and local horticulturist, addressed (and entertained) the attendees by relating his personal observations and experiences with regard to the use of ornamental plants in the landscape.

- New PAX Initiates 2003

Jeff Adkins, Lee Barnwell, Nancy Brill, Douglas Bryant, Kristen Cook, Michael Lee Davis, Jeremy DeLisle, Adam Gardner, Gabriele Gusmini, Alice Hinman, Jeff Jones, Wendy Kanable, Kristen Keenan, Seth Levkoff, Amy McBryde, Per McCord, Denise McKinney, Sara Millar, Raquel Nielsen, Jim Owen, Dr. Mary Peet, Melissa Pline, Jenni Reaves, Shirley Rodgers, Nick Sagan, David West, Tina Wilkinson, and Jennifer Yarbrough

- PAX Plant Sale

Already many of the new initiates are involved in organizing the Spring Plant Sale that will be held April 12th, 8:00 to 4:00 pm, and Sunday, April 13th, 10:00 to 3:00 pm. The sale, featuring over 400 species of traditional and unique woody ornamentals and perennials, will be held at the JC Raulston Arboretum. Profits from the plant sale are distributed among horticultural scholarships, area charities and school programs. For more information, including a list of available plants, visit the **website: <http://www.ncsu.edu/project/pialphaxi>**

- Horticulture Facilities

by Sylvia Blankenship

Kilgore improvements this past year have included a renovated elevator, renovated bathrooms, a new air conditioning system and a new alarm system to go with the new ceiling installed in previous years. With the ramp at the northwest entrance, the new elevator, and the new bathrooms, Kilgore Hall is now handicap accessible.

The **Kilgore greenhouses** will be taken down when the new greenhouses are built on the other side of the new Undergraduate Science Teaching Laboratory building south of Kilgore. The biology and pathology greenhouses south of Kilgore greenhouses were already taken down to make room for the new USTL building.

The **greenhouses at Method Road** have been renovated and expanded as well to make room for faculty being moved from other North Campus departments. **Todd Wehner** moved from Method Road greenhouses to the new greenhouses at the Horticultural Field Laboratories. Also, 11 faculty moved from Kilgore greenhouses to the new HFL greenhouses: **Jim Ballington, John Dole, Bill Fonteno, Helen Kraus, Bob Lyons, Paul Nelson, Ken Pecota, Mary Peet, Dennis Werner, Brian Whipker, and Craig Yencho.**

- Other Notes

by Todd Wehner

The Horticultural Science **departmental web pages** have been expanded over the last year to make them more useful. The web site has gone from 4 Mb size in 2001 to 119 Mb today. Please visit the site and browse through some of the new areas. You may want to look at the **departmental history** area that was expanded with assistance from the graduate students taking HS 801 (Seminar Techniques and Technology).

We are also in the process of updating the look of the web pages. The **new HS web page design** will be wider and squarer to work better with large computer displays. It will expand to fit different display sizes, and have more categories to help guide visitors.

- Departmental Newsletter Committee

- Editor /Webmaster: Todd Wehner
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- Graduate Student Feature: Carrie Judge
- Location News: Susan Rooks (Castle Hayne), Robert Lyons (Arboretum), Bill Jester (Kinston), Tom Ranney (Fletcher), Andy Allen (Morganton), Gina Fernandez (Plymouth)