

## Department of Horticultural Science Newsletter

Spring 2005

North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7609

[http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/hort\\_sci/](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/hort_sci/)

### NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

Julia Kornegay

After two repetitions, I can definitely say that January through April is an extremely busy time for the Horticultural Science department. When I joined the department in 2003, after six years in Florida and 14 years in Colombia, I thought that the winter/early spring months would be the ideal time for strategic planning, writing, and more contemplative activities, before the rush of end of semester, plantings and field days, and the summer annual professional conferences. How wrong I was! Spring semester is my most active season. This past year has been particularly hectic because of the large number of faculty positions being recruited, an important commodity overview, and our faculty retreat.

We recently completed the interviews of four candidates for the **Western NC Ornamentals Nursery Extension / Research Specialist position** and will soon announce the name of the finalist. Also in the recruitment pipeline are the Urban Horticulturist, Viticulturist and Director of the JC Raulston Arboretum positions. We're eagerly looking forward to having these positions filled and the new ideas, activities, and energy that the new faculty will bring to the department. For more information: [http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/hort\\_sci/hsassist.html](http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/hort_sci/hsassist.html)

On March 11, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences held a day-long **ornamentals overview** for representatives of the nursery and landscape industries and their associations: North Carolina Association of Nurserymen (NCAN) and NC Landscape and Grounds Management Association (NC-LGMA). The overview presentations were followed by a roundtable discussion with industry leaders on future needs and issues. Altogether, 24 CALS faculty (totaling to 19.5 FTEs), primarily in the

department of Horticultural Science (20 faculty and 11 staff), are involved in ornamentals research, extension and teaching activities. This totals to over \$2.5 million in salaries provided by NC State University, plus \$112,200 in graduate student stipends! In addition, the college provides over \$100,000 in operational support. The impact of this support to the industry has been enormous. Today, North Carolina ranks fourth in the nation after California, Florida, and Texas, with an annual ornamental/nursery industry value of over \$825 million for our state.

During spring break, the department held a **two-day retreat** at the JC Raulston Arboretum. It had been a few years since the faculty had met for strategic planning and review, but considering the rapid changes facing the department in terms of faculty retirements and departures, budget restrictions, and teaching needs, we decided that these issues would be best addressed in a more focused environment of a retreat. We concentrated our discussion on five programmatic areas: undergraduate education, graduate education, basic research, specialty crops, and organic horticulture. Dr. Lanny Hass from NC Cooperative Extension Service served as our facilitator. The programmatic presentations and resulting discussions were useful and informative, and I think we all gained a better understanding of the programs under discussion and their issues and future needs. There were also a number of great suggestions for next year's retreat. The departmental advisory committee now has the job of taking the discussion points and turning them into action items.

As the spring semester winds down, I look forward to spending some quality time in my garden and finding just the right plants for my new pond!

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## DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHT

Todd Wehner



Dr. **Gina Fernandez** runs one of the **small fruit research and extension** projects in the Department of Horticultural Science. Her work includes bramble (blackberry and raspberry) breeding, production research on small fruits, a course on small fruit production (HS 422), and extension information for interested growers and homeowners (see photo). There is a new website at <http://www.ncsu.edu/project/berries/>

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## FUND RAISING

Todd Wehner

The North Carolina Association of Nurserymen established the **NCAN Research and Extension Endowment** in 2003. Ron Gelvin (NCAN Executive Director) and Kevin Gantt (NCAN Past President) presented a check for \$17,585 to Julia Kornegay and Johnny Wynne for the endowment (see photo). The goal of NCAN is to grow the endowment to \$1 million.



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## ALUMNI NEWS

Todd Wehner

**Sergio Carballo** of Uruguay (1993 graduate with Sylvia Blankenship) and **Luz Reyes** from NCSU Hort Science (1991 graduate with Wanda Collins) at a recent Food Safety conference in Orlando, Florida (see photo). They are discussing NCSU's leadership in fresh produce food safety program for the Southeastern US.



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## INTERESTING WEB SITES

Mary Peet

The **Horticultural Science** department website has been rebuilt over the last few years to become an excellent resource for people interested in horticultural information. The

Google search engine now has our website on page one, if the key words 'horticultural science' are used for the search, and page three if 'horticulture' is used.

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### FACULTY NEWS

David Monks

**Tom Ranney** received the 'Research Friend of Extension' award for 2004, and was recognized at the NC extension conference in the spring of 2005.

**Kim Powell** received the Landscaper of the Year from NC-LGMA; the award will be named in his honor starting in 2006.

**Gary Pierce**, extension agent in Harnett County, alumnus, and one time technician in our department, has won the Lois G. Britt Award for Outstanding Achievement in Extension. He also is this year's recipient of the Outstanding Agricultural Agent for North Carolina.

At the Southern Region ASHS meeting in February, **Frank Blazich** won the LM Ware Distinguished Teacher award, **Barclay Poling** won the Covington Extension award, **Todd Lasseigne** won the Excellence in Doctoral Research award, **Peter Dittmar** won second place in the Norman Childers graduate student M.S. paper award, **Richard Olsen** won first place in the Warren Barham Graduate Student PhD paper award, **Wayne Buhler, Erv Evans**, and coauthors won the Extension Publication Blue Ribbon award for the bulletin "Ornamental and Turfgrass Pest Management", C.D. Safley, **Barclay Poling** and coauthors won the Extension Publication Blue Ribbon award for "Producing and Marketing Strawberries for Direct Markets", and **Mary Peet** and coauthors won the Extension Publication Blue Ribbon award for the video "IPM for Controlling Insect Pests and Diseases in Greenhouse Tomatoes and Organic Nutrient Management for Greenhouse Tomatoes".

**Katie Jennings**, research assistant professor in the Department of Horticultural Science, became President of the Weed Science Society of NC at their recent annual meeting in March.

**Tom McKemie**, an alumnus from our department and employee of BASF, recently received the distinguished service award from the Weed Science Society of NC.

**David Monks** was recently elected vice-president of the Southern Weed Science Society. He will become president elect in 2006-2007 and president in 2007-2008.

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### UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

Bryce Lane

After a week-long spring break, our undergraduate students are ready and raring to finish out the spring semester.

We have 28 students participating in the **AKCA student career days** event at the University of Maryland, March 18-22. They will visit Longwood Gardens, Scott Arboretum and the National Arboretum before returning Thursday in time for the Easter break!

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### GRADUATE PROGRAM

John Dole and Rachel McLaughlin

**Juliana Buckelew**, M.S. student with **David Monks**, was recently named Outstanding M.S. Weed Science Student by the Weed Science Society of North Carolina at their recent annual meeting in March.

### **Graduate students starting this spring**

**Vikramjit Bajwa**. Vikramjit was born in Basarpur, India and in his words, "I hail from a family that has been in farming for generations." He received his BS degree from Punjab Agricultural University in India majoring in Agricultural Sciences. In 2004 he received his

MS degree from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, majoring in Horticultural Science. His MS focused on a project to identify and characterize potential blossom thinning agents for apple. His research work and course work at the University of Arkansas oriented his interest towards the field of plant molecular biology. Vikramjit will be working on his PhD degree with **Steve Clouse**.

**Ji-young Oh.** Ji-young was born in Seoul, South Korea. She received her BS and MS degrees from Chonbuk National University majoring in Horticultural Science. Ji-young worked as an assistant researcher at the Chonbuk National University. She began working on her PhD degree at Chonbuk National University but was not able to finish due to her husband's studies at West Texas A&M University. After he received his MS degree, he was accepted at NCSU for his PhD degree. Ji-young will be working on her PhD degree with **Todd Wehner**.

**Jon Roethling.** Jon was born in New Rochelle, New York. He received his BS May 2002 from NCSU majoring in Horticultural Science. He worked with Tom Ranney as a summer intern in 2001 and became familiar with research protocols in the fields of plant breeding and propagation. After graduation, Jon began work in our Department as an Agricultural Research Technician for the JC Raulston Arboretum. Jon will be working on his MS degree with **Tom Ranney**.

**Antonia Tetteh.** Antonia was born in Tanzania. She received her BS degree from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana, majoring in Biochemistry. Antonia received her MS degree from McGill University, Canada, majoring in Food Science and Agricultural Chemistry. She also received a diploma in Vegetable Crops Production and Research from Asian Vegetable Research and Development Center - The World Vegetable Center in Arusha, Tanzania. She has been involved with university teaching and research since 1992 in the Department of Biochemistry at Kwame Nkrumah University of

Science and Technology, where she has taught Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Food Processing and Preservation courses at the undergraduate level, as well as Sensory Evaluation, Quality Assurance and Food Product Development at the postgraduate level. From 2003 until December 2004, Antonia was a partner with the Center for Biodiversity Utilization and Development in Kumasi, Ghana. After completing her studies at NCSU, she will return to Ghana to continue her position as University Lecturer. Antonia will be working on her PhD degree with **Todd Wehner**.

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### NEWS FROM AROUND NORTH CAROLINA

#### **Horticultural Crops Research Station (Clinton)**

Allan Thornton

It has been a busy winter meeting season. The highlights were a **cucumber downy mildew** program and **regional watermelon** meetings. These programs reached nearly 200 growers with new educational materials.

#### **JC Raulston Arboretum (Raleigh)**

Kim Powell

The search for a **new director** is underway. Upcoming events include the **Pi Alpha Xi plant sale** on April 9-10, and the **Gala in the Garden** on May 1. For more information, go to the arboretum website and click on the highly detailed **calendar of events** at <http://www.ncsu.edu/jcraulstonarboretum>

#### **Cunningham Research Station (Kinston)**

Bill Jester

The **Specialty Crops** program has been cooperating with several growers and a pharmaceutical company to develop drying facilities for the SP1 pepper. Facilities at Dimon in Farmville did not work for drying pepper. The company and the growers are planning to install their own equipment for drying peppers. Mike Boyette and associates have been valuable

resources in this process. **Lettuce trials** are underway. The first planting was made on February 15 and was severely stressed by 70 mile an hour winds several weeks ago. We are preparing the **greenhouse** for summer cucurbit transplants. Hot peppers were seeded 5 weeks ago.

**Edith Garrett**, a freshcut vegetable consultant, will be visiting Specialty Crops on March 31 to advise us on freshcut snapbeans and vegetables. We will be visiting the growers in Hyde County.

**Dole representative Norman Schiffman** will be visiting the Specialty Crops program on March 29 to review the potential of lettuce production in the Carolinas.

### **Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center (Fletcher)**

Tom Ranney

**Dick Bir** is a Grandpa: Andrew Nathan Bir, Andy, was born on February 21, 2005. He was 8 lbs. 15 oz., 22.25 in. long. All the Greensboro Birs are doing well.

### **Vernon James Research and Extension Center (Plymouth)**

Mark Clough

**Mark Clough** spoke at the SE agriculture agents meeting in Craven county in December on potato production in North Carolina, and to discuss some of the most common pests. In January, Mark Clough went to Beltsville to get experimental clones from the USDA. In February, Mark Clough spoke to tobacco growers in Bakersville NC about growing potatoes. Mark Clough spoke to the Master Gardeners in Pasquotank County in February about potato production and breeding, and to meet potato growers in that area.

### **WISH LIST**

Julia Kornegay

Because of on-going budget restrictions, the horticulture department can no longer purchase all the items needed by our programs. We hope that our alumni and collaborators will review this list and **help us obtain these items**.

#### For **Kilgore Hall**

- stove and extraction hood
- poster printer (HP 1055CM)
- digital camera (5-8 Mpixels)

#### For the **greenhouses**

- two golf carts with rear utility beds

#### For the **graduate student office**

- double sided printer
- six replacement computers (Win, Mac)
- computer desks and chairs (8 - 10)

### **HORTICULTURE FACILITIES**

David Monks

Kilgore Hall is receiving some **air conditioning** upgrades with a replacement of the cooling tower (formerly on the Kilgore roof), and a replacement of drains for the units in many of the offices.

### **Departmental Newsletter Committee**

- Editor: **Todd Wehner**
  - Assistant: **Rachel McLaughlin**
- Send items for the newsletter to Todd Wehner ([todd\\_wehner@ncsu.edu](mailto:todd_wehner@ncsu.edu))