



# Arkansas HORTICULTURE News

A bi-annual newsletter from the Department of Horticulture

Volume 11, Number 1, 2007

## U OF A PROGRAM INCREASES DIVERSITY

Rena Ruffin, graduate of Alcorn State in Lorman, Mississippi, is interning in the department this summer as a participant of the George Washington Carver Project.

The George Washington Carver Project is an initiative of the University of Arkansas designed to increase the racial diversity of the graduate and professional student body. The Project, sponsored by the U of A Graduate School, seeks to recruit graduates of historical black colleges and universities, Hispanic serving institutions, and tribal colleges as graduate students.

Ruffin, who has a BS in Agriculture Economics, is working directly with faculty mentor Curt R. Rom creating a budget for an organic apple orchard to be planted at the horticulture farm. She will work on this project for eight weeks and this fall will be a graduate student at the U of A in international agriculture business. Asked how she found out about the Carver Project, she said she had a friend who interned with the project and is now a U of A graduate student. She said, "This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for me to get hands on experience in a field different from my major, but that relates to my major." She added, "After I finish my graduate degree, I want to join the Peace Corp to help economic development in underdeveloped countries, then I want to learn languages that will open other employment opportunities. Eventually I want to work in International Agriculture."



Rena Ruffin and Monique Fahri worked as interns in the Bumpers College this summer as part of the George Washington Carver Project. Ruffin, left, and Fahri, from Alcorn State have both been accepted as U of A graduate students this fall. Ruffin interned in the horticulture department and Fahri in Agriculture Business and Economics.

George Washington Carver was one of our nation's greatest educators and agricultural researchers. His work included improving soils, and growing crops with low inputs and using species that fixed nitrogen. His work was on the peanut and cowpea.

### Nominations Being Accepted

Nominations are being accepted for the 2007 Distinguished Alumni, Friend and Service Awards recipients to be presented at a reception in the fall. The Alumni Award nominee should be a graduate of outstanding record either in the horticulture industry or in academia. The Friend Award is to recognize support of the Department of Horticulture and/or support to horticulture in the State of Arkansas. To nominate someone you consider worthy of this recognition, please contact Marilyn McCord, 316 Plant Science, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, AR 72701; fax 479-575-8619; e-mail [mmccord@uark.edu](mailto:mmccord@uark.edu).

### "Horticulture Highlights 2007" Available

According to Extension Specialists the award-winning "Horticulture Highlights 2007" CD is packed with gardening information from the experts at the U of A Cooperative Extension Service.

The CD features questions and answers of Janet Carson, "Plant of the Week" articles and photos, publications on control of insects, plant diseases and weeds, and articles on plant diseases. It also includes hydrangea and crapemyrtle variety information and photos, articles about Champion Trees, gardening calendars, and lawn care tips and calendars. A tree identification key and a plant disease image library are also included.

Local county extension offices have the CD for sale or it may be ordered online from the Extension website: <http://www.uaex.edu/>.



## Students and Faculty Recognized

Twenty-five students graduating with either a BS or MS degree were honored at the end of the school year with a reception at the University House. Also honored were department award winners and newly initiated Pi Alpha Xi members. Dr. David Hensley gave the welcome and introduced John and Kaye Harris who are the benefactors of several of the awards.

The Vaile-Watts Award was presented to Scott McVey. This award is reserved for the outstanding senior in horticulture selected by the faculty and is named for Drs. Joe Vaile and Victor Watts. Vaile was a faculty member in the department from 1936-1969. His research was conducted on small fruits and grapes. He also taught fruit production. Watts served as a faculty member from 1927-1968. His research area was vegetable breeding and physiology.



Horticulture student Cody Howard is pictured with John and Kaye Harris. Howard received one of the John and Kaye Harris Internship Awards at the end of the year reception.

Johann Buck was presented the John and Kaye Harris Award for Outstanding Graduate Student in Ornamentals. Cody Howard and Clint Metcalf received the John and Kaye Harris Internship awards. The internship awards help pay for travel for summer internships. Howard is interning in Munich, Germany and Metcalf is at the Explorers Garden, Pitlochry, Scotland.

For the second year, Bruce Dunn received the J.N. Moore Graduate Fellowship in Horticulture Plant Breeding and Genetics. Shortly after his retirement in 1999, Distinguished Professor Emeritus James N. Moore established the Fellowship to award excellence in plant breeding.

Recognized for receiving the 2007 John W. White Team Award for Excellence in Functional Food were faculty members John R. Clark, Teddy Morelock and Brad Murphy. Clark was also recognized for receiving the Southern Region-American Society for Horticultural Science Outstanding Research Award. Morelock was recognized for promotion to University Professor.

Seniors graduating with a BSA include: Kasondra Aguilar, Gabriel Allen, Andrew Beck, Stephanie Beeks, Kristin Brown, Sam Foster, Marie Golbski,

James Horton, Elizabeth Mattocks, Scott McVey, Ananda Moscoso, Guy Oyler, Joel Penix, Brock Pruett, Jacob Scott Richards, Zach Rundle, Robert Snyder, Sean Spyrer, Trey Talley, Jeremiah Wallace, Tracy Wallace and Kecia Wright

Students graduating with an MS are Hallie Dodson, John Kauffman and Andy Wycislo.

## Patton Fills Newly Created Extension Position



Newly appointed Turfgrass Extension Specialist Aaron Patton, lectures on turfgrass establishment at the Turfgrass Management Shortcourse held in Fayetteville.

Dr. Aaron Patton recently joined the Department of Horticulture as Turfgrass Extension Specialist. Patton, originally from Bloomington, Indiana, earned his BS from Iowa State University and his MS and PhD from Purdue University. In this newly created position, Patton will work with extension, research, and teaching faculty to provide leadership in the development of an interdisciplinary program to support both the turfgrass industry and county extension agents. "I will be designing and developing innovative training programs and materials for the turfgrass and landscape industries, county extension agents, and home audiences, and I will also interact with industry associations. This new position offers many great opportunities," stated Patton. He added,

"I work with a strong team and I am looking forward to serving turfgrass the industry in Arkansas."

Patton's research experience is in the area of bermudagrass and zoysiagrass establishment and the physiological aspects of zoysiagrass cold hardiness.

He and his wife and son moved to Northwest Arkansas in December.

### Arkansas HORTICULTURE News

ARKANSAS HORTICULTURE is a bi-annual newsletter for alumni, faculty, staff, students, and friends of the Department of Horticulture at the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences, and the UA Division of Agriculture.

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## New Ornamental Plants Released ... debuted at Horticulture Club plant sale

Through the efforts of Dr. Jon Lindstrom, associate professor, three new ornamental plants have been released by the University of Arkansas. The new plants are: Buddleja 'Asian Moon' butterfly bush, Trichostema 'Blue Myth' and Sinvana 'Mount Magazine' Gesneriad, which is related to the African violet.

'Asian Moon' butterfly bush is a symmetrical round shrub with light purple flowers. It is useful in landscaping and for attracting butterflies. It tested well over winter and is sterile, which results in an extended flowering stage.

'Blue Myth' blue curls was created from a cross by Bruce Dunn, a PhD graduate student. It is also a symmetrical, rounded shrub that is seedless and has an extended flowering stage.

'Mount Magazine' is best suited for use as

a landscape plant in frost-free areas. It has fragrant white flowers with lavender line in the throat. It is produced on a shrubby plant beginning in mid-summer and continuing through fall.

The plants were available at the April 21, 2007 Horticulture Club Plant Sale held at the University of Arkansas Agricultural Research Farm and are now available at commercial nurseries.



'Asian Moon'



'Blue Myth'



'Mount Magazine'



### New Turfgrass Website

The new turfgrass website can be accessed at <http://turf.uark.edu>

We encourage everyone to visit the website and use it to access information for your company and your clientele. The website features information about the following: turf help, turf tips, do-it-yourself extension publications, soil testing information, educational programs, calendar of events, short course, turf and landscape seminars, field day, professional extension publications, current research projects, previous research reports, digital image analysis, course offerings in the Turfgrass Science curriculum, sample plan of study, personnel, alumni, news and updates, links, and information about the U of A turf program. The website should answer the most commonly asked questions and contains commonly needed information that is easy to find. The website is attractive, created with new technologies. Overall, our goal is that the website should be reflective of the quality of the turfgrass science program at the University of Arkansas.

### Anderson Repeats Visit to Department

George Anderson, retired Head of the School for Horticulture, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh Scotland, was a keynote speaker at the 2007 International Master Gardener Convention held in Little Rock in May. The biannual event was hosted by Janet Carson and the Arkansas Master Gardeners. More than 1200 people were in attendance and hundreds of local Master Gardeners volunteered to assist with the three-day event which included lectures, displays, and tours of local gardens.

Anderson, in full kilts, spoke about the variety of gardens in Scotland. The geography of Scotland supports semi-tropical as well as temperate plants making for spectacular garden displays.

Anderson is President of the Royal Caledonian Horticulture Society, and a board member of the Royal Horticulture Society. He has visited Fayetteville in the past providing lectures to students and local gardeners and has assisted more than a dozen UA Horticulture students in finding rewarding internships at Scottish botanical gardens. He has devoted most of his professional life to the training and education of horticulturalists.

### Ten Initiated into Honor Society

Ten new members were initiated into the Alpha-Omicron Chapter of Pi Alpha Xi, which is the National Honor society for Floriculture, Landscape Horticulture and Ornamental Horticulture. Initiated were Barbara Bethel, John Kauffman, Clint Metcalf, Mallory Mounce, Kara Oney, Tim Rogers, Ryan Rolfe, Regina Trollingier and Tracy Wallace. Department friend and scholarship benefactor, Betty J. Swope was initiated as an honorary member. The purpose of the organization is to recognize high scholarship, to foster good relationships among its members, to promote or to facilitate the exchange of ideas among members of the professions, and to establish cordial relations among students, educators and industry members. Alpha-Omicron is the first chapter organized in the State of Arkansas.

## The “Why” Behind the “How” Emphasized at Turfgrass Shortcourse

In cooperation with the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, the U of A Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service hosted the Arkansas-Oklahoma Turfgrass Management Shortcourse. Turf science faculty at the U of A and OSU organized and sponsored the course. Approximately 65 participants from Arkansas and Oklahoma attended the educational event. The workshop, held annually alternates locations in Oklahoma and Arkansas.

According to the U of A turfgrass team composed of Mike Richardson, Doug Karcher and Aaron Patton the concept of the course was to emphasize sound research-based fundamentals of the “why” behind the “how” turf is cared for in Arkansas and Oklahoma. The workshop was designed to benefit turfgrass managers in lawn, grounds, or athletic field care who have not had a formal turf management course.



Kim and Mark Robinson owners of Hollytree Landscape and Gardening of Grove, Oklahoma, along with employee Bobby Apperson attended the Arkansas-Oklahoma Turfgrass Management Shortcourse held in January at the University of Arkansas.



A workshop designed to be a refresher course on pest management, economics, cultivars, and basic cultural practices for blueberry/blackberry growers or those interested in growing was presented by Elena Garcia. Garcia, Extension Fruit Specialist said, “This was a very successful meeting with approximately 25 people attending. Although there was very little fruit to see because of the freeze damage, we still had a farm tour for growers to see our research plots.” Presenters for the department included Dr. Curt R. Rom and Dr. John R. Clark. The workshop was held in June at the Fruit Research Substation in Clarksville. Picture is Clark speaking to the attendees.



Keisha Smallwood, (left ) and Barbara Bethel are working on plant material for the Horticulture Club annual plant sale that was held April 21 at the horticulture farm. According to Hort Club faculty sponsor, Jon Lindstrom, the sale was financially successful. Featured were Lindstrom’s new ornamental releases.

## Dr. Garcia Uses Knowledge to Benefit Others

*Below is a personal account of Dr. Elena Garcia's volunteerism with Winrock International. Winrock International is a non profit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to increase economic opportunity, sustain natural resources, and protect the environment. The organization links local individuals and communities with new ideas and technology to increase long-term productivity, equity and responsible resource management to benefit the poor and disadvantage of the world. It was created in 1985 with the merger of three institutions: the International Agricultural Development Service, the Winrock International Livestock Research and Training center, and the Agricultural Development Council.*

By Elena Garcia

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Kyrgyzstan (Karagay Bulak Kurchin village) as a volunteer with Winrock International. Kyrgyzstan is a beautiful, landlocked county located in Central Asia and a former Soviet Republic. Kyrgyzstan borders Kazakhstan on the north and northwest, Uzbekistan in the southwest, Tajikistan in the south, and China in the southeast. About 95 percent of the country is mountainous, with the Tien Shan mountain range covering most of the land. One of the highest peak of these mountains reaches 24,400 feet and is considered by geologist (not by mountaineers) to be the northernmost peak in the world. Another geographical feature is Lake Issyk-Kul located in the northwestern part of the Tian Shan Mountains. It is the largest lake in Kyrgyzstan and the second largest mountain lake in the world after Titicaca. Because the country's predominantly mountainous terrain, less than 8% of the land is cultivated, and this arable land is concentrated in the northern lowlands and the fringes of the Fergana Valley (southwestern region).

Culturally and ethnically Kyrgyzstan is a very diverse country. The Kyrgyz group is the largest group, but other groups include Russians, Uzbeks, and Tartars. The Kyrgyz people have by tradition been semi-nomadic herders. This tradition continues today as a seasonal event with herding families returning the high mountains during the summer months to tend to their herds (mostly sheep, horses, and yaks). While in the mountains, people live temporary round tents called yurts. Kyrgyzstan is a bilingual



Winrock International volunteer Dr. Elena Garcia, third from left, is pictured with workers at a fruit research station in Kyrgyzstan

country with its people speaking both Russian and the Kyrgyz language.

Kyrgyzstan's economy is based on agriculture, with cotton, wool and meat being the main agricultural products produced. However, most villagers have some few fruit trees (apricots, apples, pears, and cherries) in their yards. Until recently, income derived from selling fruit has been supplemental, but because these villagers see a greater potential for income in the sale of fruits, several new fruit cooperatives have formed and new trees are being planted.

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*Living in a Kyrgyz village  
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My assignment as a Winrock volunteer was to work with villagers in the northern region to increase apple production and improve fruit quality. According to the Executive Summary sent to me, the following situation was stated: "Every other apple harvest is very poor. We need an expert to give trainings on best varieties for the climate, how to raise and grow them, how to prune or graft them, best methods of pollination, and everything else. There is no knowledge currently in the community"

The first thing one must do as a volunteer in under-developed nations is to recognize the assets and limitations facing these farmers. I

visited the local bazaar to determine the quality of apples available in the market place. The apples there were in poor condition given that these fruits were stored in cellars under ambient conditions, but pest damage was relatively low. Fruit size was small, fruit color was poor, and there were many misshapen fruits. Given that these farmers have limited resources as far as pesticides and synthetic fertilizer inputs and that there is a general lack of knowledge in basic horticultural practices among fruit growers, my activities and assistance was concentrated in teaching and demonstrating cultural methods to improve production and fruit quality that are sustainable and require few, if any, outside resources.

Most of the time I was in Kyrgyzstan, I stayed with a host family. Living in a Kyrgyz village in an immersed situation was a very fulfilling experience for me. My host family integrated me into their daily life and through them, I was able to see first hand some of the problems and situations encountered by farmers in villages, and how these problems or situations were solved or handled. Village people were very friendly and generous towards me. I was invited to family celebrations, including a wedding. Culturally, the Kyrgyz village people are very different from Americans and understanding and embracing these differences can only result in a greater friendship among individuals. I would like to thank Winrock International for giving me this great experience.