



Summer Greetings from the Department of Horticulture

Hello to faculty, staff, students, alumni, friends, and family,

The 2025 summer has been a full one and is going by quickly. Extension faculty have been busy with stakeholders, and researchers have been carrying out experiments in the field, under controlled environmental conditions, and in the laboratory. Several departmental personnel have been participating in meetings, such as Cultivate in Columbus, OH, the International Turfgrass Research Conference in Karuizawa, Nagano, Japan, the American Society for Horticultural Science in New Orleans, LA, and several others. Field days have included the Blackberry Field Day in Clarksville in June and the Turfgrass Field Day in Fayetteville in August. Many of the department's undergraduate students were busy in internships or working in various positions among horticulture employers. Now that undergraduate students are back on campus, we look forward to the fall semester! We invite you to catch up with some of the latest happenings in the Horticulture Department in this summer newsletter. As always, thank you for your continued support of our students, staff, and faculty.

- Dr. Mary Savin

News & Upcoming Events

A Summer Abroad

From the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh to the historic beauty of Drummond Castle Gardens, our undergraduate horticulture students enjoyed an insightful study abroad trip to see Scotland and Europe's landscapes, culture, and innovation!

This study abroad trip was the first in many years to be hosted by the Department of Horticulture. Led by Dr. Curt Rom and Ms. Michelle Wisdom,

students of all backgrounds were able to participate in this interactive experience and earn three credit hours.

We are now planning for our next study abroad trip, which is to be in Italy. We look forward to a new adventure and learning opportunity for our students, so be on the lookout for more information as the school year begins.



Greenhouse Container Crops Course - Flower Sale

Dr. Ryan Dickson's Greenhouse Container Crops class will be hosting a flowers and poinsettia sale this Fall semester.

Students have already started planting in class and will be selling poinsettias, other ornamentals, and fall crops.

We are currently building a tab on our departmental website, horticulture.uark.edu, and on September 26, you can find more information about the sale and how to support the class.



Horticulture Garden Renovations Continue

Our Horticulture Gardens team was hard at work this summer, renovating our garden spaces on campus.

Among that team is graduate student Caleb Spry, who is incorporating his work in the gardens towards his thesis research, and undergraduate interns, Sophia Stoddard and Peyton Ketcher.

Renovations will continue as the semester begins and will be the prime focus of our departmental **Volunteer Day on October 3!**

Upcoming Events

August 18- First day of classes

August 26- Horticulture Fall Orientation

August 28- Bumpers Bash

August 30- Gameday with Bumpers

September 6- Bumpers Alumni Society Happy Hour

September 9- Muscadine Field Day

September 27- Bumpers Friends & Family Tailgate

October 2- Horticulture Alumni Awards

October 3- Horticulture Volunteer Day

October 13-24- Fall Break

October 23- Horticulture Fall Picnic

November 1- Bumpers Homecoming Alumni Tailgate

November 27-28- Thanksgiving Break

December 13- Commencement



Research & Extension Highlights



With spring rains, warm-season turfgrasses are at risk of a devastating disease called large patch, but a new article, featuring turfgrass science graduate student Samuel Kreinberg as first author, could help homeowners and turfgrass professionals alike deal with the problem.

[Read More](#)



After years of research, the verdict is in: There's no difference between turfgrass wetting agents marketed as "penetrants" and "retainers" for sand-based putting greens. Dr. Mike Richardson weighs in on a study conducted by turfgrass scientists.

[Read More](#)

Research Team Homes In on Genetics Behind Blackberry Thorns

With support from the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, scientists have pinpointed the location on a chromosome that carries the gene behind thornless blackberries.

[Read More](#)[Read More](#)

Horticulture Ph.D. Student Investigates Turfgrass Diseases Threatening U.S. Lawns and Fields

Sharandeep Singh Chahal is digging deep into turfgrass diseases that threaten lawns, athletic fields, and landscapes across the transition zone of the United States.

A turfgrass Ph.D. student in the U of A Department of Horticulture, Chahal is studying the characterization and management of Yellow Tuft — also known as Downy Mildew — caused by *Sclerophthora macrospora*, and Large Patch, caused by *Rhizoctonia solani* AG 2-2. These diseases are especially damaging to zoysiagrass.

Two New Varieties of Muscadine, a Southern Grape Species, to See Release This Fall, Expand Growing Season

Two new varieties of muscadine not only promise a longer growing season but also recall two Arkansas icons: Altus™, the state's wine capital, and Mighty Fine™, a name that describes its flavor and a favorite phrase of retired fruit breeder John Clark.



Dr. Bowden Gives Tour of Gardens in Hope

This summer, Dr. Anthony Bowden hosted the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Unit Heads for a tour of his beautiful display gardens at the Southwest Research & Extension Center in Hope, AR, during their administrative meeting.



Dr. Bertucci and Graduate Students Conduct Summer Tomato Trials

Dr. Bertucci's research group was busy with tomatoes this summer! Claire Plassmeyer, M.S. student, oversaw tomato trials in Fayetteville and in Kibler that assessed 15 commercial varieties for Arkansas production. Varieties were submitted from 5 commercial seed companies, and included heirloom purple tomatoes, large slicing tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, and Roma-types. Graduate student Rachel-Woody Pumford oversaw a tomato trial conducted in Goshen to determine the effect of compost as a soil amendment and the ideal rate for applying compost. This work will inform grower practices at upcoming field days and in educational programming.

Tomatoes are a fantastic crop to study because they scale for commercial production but are also suited to home gardens. Further, the South Arkansas vine-ripened pink tomato is the official state fruit and the official state vegetable of Arkansas! We are proud to work on the official fruit and vegetable crop of the Natural State! Dr. Bertucci and his research will continue their research into 2026 to verify the 2025 trials.



Events & Activities

June

- Blackberry Field Day- Clarksville, AR
- CAFF Open House- Fayetteville, AR
- CAFF Farmers For Tomorrow- Fayetteville, AR
- UAEX Summer High Tunnel Workshops- Little Rock, AR
- Getting to the Root of Crop Health Webinar- online
- Bumpers College New Student Orientation- Fayetteville, AR

July

- Cultivate (AmericanHort)- Columbus, OH
- International Association for Food Protection Annual Meeting- Cleveland, OH
- American Society for Horticultural Science Annual Conference- New Orleans, LA
- International Turfgrass Research Conference- Karuizawa, Nagano, Japan
- Getting to the Root of Crop Health Webinar- online
- 4-H O' Rama College and Career Fair- Fayetteville, AR

August

- Turf Field Day- Fayetteville, AR
- Getting to the Root of Crop Health Webinar- online
- Bumpers College Open House- Fayetteville, AR

Blackberry Field Day



Blackberry Field Day was hosted in Clarksville, AR, at our Fruit Research Station.

Researchers met with local producers to share research and best practices for blackberry production.



International Association for Food Protection Annual Meeting

(Dr. Amanda Philyaw Perez)



International Turfgrass Research Conference

(Will Green)



American Society for Horticultural Science Annual Conference

(Isabella Vaughn, Rhys Brock, Amanda Lay-Walters)

Turfgrass Field Day



About 200 participants attended this year's Turfgrass Field Day and learned the latest research and technology to help keep their golf courses, lawns and sports fields in top shape.

[Read More](#)

Helpful Resources



Discover More

Want to read the latest news on our research and extension efforts? Check out the UADA pages for more stories, highlights, videos, and podcasts.

Click on the links below:

[Arkansas Agricultural Experiment Station](#)

[Commercial Horticulture in Arkansas](#)
[Arkansas Master Gardeners Program](#)
[Center for Arkansas Farms and Foods](#)

[Arkansas Turfgrass Information Page](#)

[The Arkansas Garden](#)

[The Department of Horticulture](#)

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Department of Horticulture

Alumni Information



Stay Connected

To connect with our alumni and maintain communication of departmental research, extension, educational activities, and awards, please click on the link below and provide your contact information.

[Hort Alumni Survey](#)

How You Can Support Us

Want to help support our program? You can donate to our department by clicking the button below. Any donations are appreciated and help support our students, academic programs, study abroad efforts, garden renovations, research and extension programs, and more.

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