

RICH'S REFLECTION

During the past few years I have thought a lot about the future of Land-Grant Universities. As public funding for higher education and especially for the Land-Grants has declined, universities have had to change. One of these changes has been hiring priorities. Thirty or forty years ago departments in Colleges of Agriculture hired faculty based on qualifications to teach courses required for the major and to perform research and extension education related to commodities that were important to the state or region. Funding to support these activities came from the state, federal and county governments. Public funding today is no longer adequate to support research and extension

activities, so researchers and extension workers must generate external funding to support their activities. Today one of the considerations for deciding which positions to fill is the potential for external funding. Administrators are unlikely to invest salary dollars in areas where there seems to be little opportunity for external funding. Unfortunately this game of chasing money sometimes is not successful in the long run because funding priorities change. Another issue is that there is often a disconnect between where the needs are and where the money is.

During the past two decades we have seen a decline of Horticulture positions around the country. Pomology is probably the

most extreme example, and I am very familiar with it. When I was a graduate student there were about 22 faculty members in the mid-Atlantic region working on tree fruit, but today there are only six. When I was an undergraduate there were 11 Pomologists in New England; now there are only three. The same thing is happening at the county level. In a recent discussion with my Dad, a retired county agent, he told me there are now more retired county agents than employed agents in New England and the number of agents in his county office has declined from 8 to only 2. I think the primary reason for this decline is the lack of funding to support our programs. There are no large federal programs,

ADVISING CENTER NEWS

By: Paige Thomas

This is my farewell song. It isn't very long.

It has been a pleasure for me to have been an employee in the Department of Horticulture since fall of 1982. I sincerely appreciate all the ways the faculty, staff and students have supported me. You are all collectively THE BEST!



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Calendar of Events:

- July 4—Holiday
- July 18—Last date for summer graduate to upload final thesis or dissertation to eTD Web Site

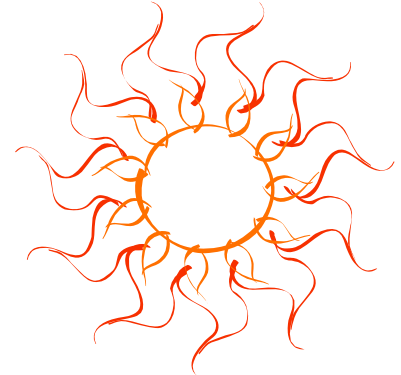
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equivalent to NIH and NSF that fund research on horticultural crops so we have had to rely on industry support. Ironically, the need for information on horticultural crops is increasing. The public is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of fruits and vegetables in their diet, public demand for locally-grown produce is driving the resurgence in small farms growing horticultural crops, and home owners are discovering that a well maintained landscape adds value to their property. Some entomologists, weed scientists, and plant pathologists have been able to obtain enough small grants and gifts from agricultural chemical companies to support their programs, but agricultural chemical companies provide much less funding to horticulturists. We are fortunate in Pennsylvania because our fruit and vegetable commodity groups have been very supportive of our programs. They depend on

our research and extension programs to remain competitive and they are willing to invest in our programs. Unfortunately the amounts of funding they provide have not kept pace with inflation so the impact of these funds is declining.

Most of the faculty hires within the college during the past decade have been co-funded, so the college does not pay the full salary for the position. Most of the positions have been co-funded by one of the Institutes on campus, but we have an instructor in our department and the college just hired a new enologist with industry co-funding. One approach to ensuring that we retain faculty positions in the future is to obtain co-funding from our commodity groups. Two years ago I initiated conversations with members of the fruit and vegetable industries about the possibility of endowing programs. This is a major cultural change for the industries but they were willing to listen

to me. This year's state budget debate may provide a sense of urgency that did not previously exist and I am hopeful that they will start to consider strategies for developing endowments for future positions as well as program support. Hopefully we can work with our commodity groups to develop a plan to permanently fund applied programs independent of public funding.



There are currently no scheduled Department Meetings during the summer months. Regular Department Meetings will resume in the fall.



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Trees, shrubs, flowers allow gardeners to 'paint' a landscape

University Park, Pa. -- Many homeowners live in envy of those neighbors who seem able to turn a few trees, flowers and even rocks into an inviting outdoor scene. But you, too, can do it by following a few basic guidelines, according to a horticulturist in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

New or veteran homeowners hoping to enhance the look of their properties can use sustainable practices to express creativity, create habitat for wildlife and define special-use areas with year-round interest, said James Sellmer, associate professor of ornamental horticulture.

"If you consider your landscape to be like a painting, then you can picture trees, shrubs, groundcovers and herbaceous flowering plants as the 'paint' and 'color' elements that bring life, vibrancy, depth and structure to the masterpiece," he said.

"You can place trees to provide shade for seating areas and to reduce heat on the house with placement on the south and southwest areas of the property. Similarly, conifers can provide a windbreak against cold winter winds on the west, northwest and northern side of most properties."

To read more on this story, please visit <http://live.psu.edu/story/53895>.



Placement of shrubs such as this lilac bush can personalize any home landscape.

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Garden of delights: The Arboretum at Penn State

The [Arboretum at Penn State](#) is a peaceful place with lily pads floating on flat-water ponds; delicate flowers flanking curved walkways; and young leaves stretching out from the branches of graceful trees. But the arrival of 300 fourth-graders on April 29 changed the mood from serene to spirited.

The children -- from Park Forest Elementary School, Grays Woods Elementary School, and Radio Park Elementary School -- visited the garden to learn about pollination, tree identification, sapling growth and planting, and even tree climbing as it pertains to tree maintenance. The annual Arbor Day event, which was held for the first time last year, is part of an outreach effort sponsored by the Arboretum at Penn State and faculty and staff of the [College of Education](#), the [College of Agricultural Sciences](#), and the [School of Forest Resources](#).

“The Arbor Day event is a wonderful opportunity to reach out to young children in the [State College Area School](#)

[District](#) and teach them about the importance of trees and their various roles in the ecosystem,” said Heather Zimmerman, assistant professor of education in the [instructional systems](#) program, who participated in the event.

During the event, faculty and staff led children through a variety of hands-on learning stations. For example, Zimmerman, along with Associate Professor of Education Susan Land and a team of six education graduate students, led a station titled, “Tree Investigators,” in which they used iPads and iPods (provided by Penn State’s Educational Technology Services) to give the kids an in-depth lesson on how to identify trees.

To read more on this story, please visit <http://live.psu.edu/story/53752#nw63>.



Michael Mohny, a doctoral student in instructional systems and an instructor of landscape contracting, shows elementary-school children how to use an iPad to look up information about trees.



This publication is available in alternative media on request.

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Department Birthdays

July 2—Mike Mohny
July 7—Martin McGann
July 8—Lena Sheaffer
July 9—Xiohang Yang
July 10—Larry York
July 11—Rob Crassweller
July 12—Majid Foolad
July 17—Jen Landry
July 19—Amanda Scott
July 20—Nicholas Niemenak
July 21—Landon Lose
July 23—Albert Dreibelbis
July 24—Patompong Saengwilai
July 28—Ben Hoover
July 31—Bob Cameron

