



Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture
"Growing in Excellence"

Dr. William J. Kenworthy, Interim Chair, PSLA

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I always find that a new year brings an air of optimism. While watching the recent inauguration activities, there was a general sense of hope and optimism evident through the crowds which gathered to witness the historic start of the new administration. Similarly, as the new semester starts we remain optimistic for continued success in our efforts to serve our students and stakeholders even though the rather gloomy financial outlook will be a challenge.

It was great to see our December graduates walk across the stage and receive their degrees. We extend a special salute to Lauren, Brian, and Timothy whose grades ranked them among the top group of AGNR graduating seniors. Brian Hughes (BLA) challenged the 2008 graduates and guests during his commencement address to change our ways with our energy use and move toward more sustainable living. He encouraged the graduates to strive to be the best, because "the world needs all you can give!"

Our faculty are engaged in extension education programs across the state sharing our latest research results with our citizens and stakeholders. The turf conference brought many industry personnel to campus in January. Thanks to Dr. Mark Carroll for providing the leadership to make it happen. Congratulations, also, to Dr. Jose Costa on assuming a new leadership role among his peers in the wheat breeding community.

I hope you enjoy learning about our other PSLA activities. Read on!

Regards,
Bill Kenworthy



Plant Sciences Building

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PSLA Grad students Ray Pigati, Chris Ryan, & Richard Leshin at Turfgrass 2009

Newest News!..

PSLA is very proud of our students' accomplishments. We'd like to congratulate, again, those who graduated this past December. And, we'd like to give special recognition to three outstanding graduates: **Lauren Ann Peddicord**, Magna Cum Laude; **Brian Thomas Hughes**, Cum Laude; and **Timothy Patrick Madden**, Cum Laude. We also congratulate Brian Hughes on being selected as one of two students from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to give a Commencement Address.

We look forward to hearing about the continuing successes of all our graduates. Stay in touch!

Urban Forestry is an option within the Plant Sciences curriculum. This new and emerging field is rapidly growing and the PLSC curriculum prepares students for a wide range of careers. To answer the question, "What is Urban Forestry", students in one of **Dr. Marla McIntosh's** classes, assisted by **Ms. Shelly Pridmore**, created a video that can be seen on YouTube. We're proud to showcase our programs and excited that this video is now available online.

Be sure to check out our other programs on the newly designed Department of Plant Science and Landscape Architecture homepage at www.psla.umd.edu.



PLSC 253 students study an urban forest.

Statewide Turfgrass Conference Held at MD

The three day **2009 Maryland Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show**, know as Turfgrass 2009, was held in January at the Stamp Student Union. It was hosted by members of the PSLA Turfgrass Program and coordinated by our own, **Dr. Mark Carroll**.

The Conference educational program featured two first-time ever offered components—the Irrigation Workshop and the Professional Turfgrass Management Seminar.

PSLA members scheduled to present at the Conference were: **Dr. Peter Dernoeden; Dr. Karen Rane; Dr. Tom Turner; Mr. David Funk; and graduate students, Mr. Richard Leshin and Mr. Ray Pigati.**

Thank you to Dr. Carroll and all those PSLA faculty, staff and graduate students who were involved in this effort for creating a wonderful event.



More Newest News...

Research Greenhouse Activities...



On January 22, 2009, a group of high school students from the Young America Works Public Charter School in Washington, D.C. toured the Research Greenhouse Facilities. The high school students are learning about greenhouses and will be constructing a small greenhouse as a project. Assisted by Greenhouse Manager, Betty Morgavan; Facilities Manager, Shaun Faulkner; and Greenhouse employees, the group was given instruction on how a greenhouse operates and some of the items that are controlled in the facility, such as temperature, lighting, relative humidity, and carbon dioxide. The group also learned about different soilless mixes that are used in the Greenhouse and were shown the major crop plants currently involved in faculty research projects.

We've heard from Mr. Ed Amatetti, faculty member at the Young America Works Charter School, that, since the groups visit, a couple of the high school students are interested in internships here.

We're glad to pass on our knowledge to these high schoolers and look forward to the possibility of having these students join us as freshman in PSLA!

January: A good month for the Green Roofs Project

Lorelly Solano, Master Degree student in PSLA won second place with her research titled "Zinc Uptake in *Sedum* spp. in Various Ratios of Crumb Rubber-Amended Green Roof Substrate" during the North East American Society of Horticultural Science Conference in Newark, Delaware in January. Congratulations, Lorelly!!

Lorelly was also instrumental in assisting another student receive recognition for his green roof presentation. Eric Swartz, from Dallastown Area High School in Pennsylvania, was put in contact with the Green Roofs Research Team at UM through his Google search for "green roof plants" and Mr. Edmund Snodgrass of Emory Knoll Farms, Inc., green roof plant grower. Eric consulted with the Green Roofs Research Team, comprised of **Dr. Andrew Ristvey, Dr. Steve Cohan, Dr. John Lea-Cox, and Lorelly Solano**, in order to conduct a short term experiment for demonstrating the storm water mitigation properties of green roofs. He met with Lorelly about the research and materials needed to start his project.

Eric received first place in *The 49th Annual Dallastown Area High School/Middle School Science and Engineering Fair*. The judges also selected his project as the grand champion of the Jr. High Division (8th and 9th grade)! Eric's project will now be entered into the York County Science and Engineering Fair on March 9, 2009. Congratulations, Eric, Lorelly, and the Green Roofs Research Team. We hope Eric will join us as a student at UM for more green roof research!



Student Scholarship & Generous Donations from MCIA.... Article by Dr. Bob Kratochvil

On January 21, **Joseph Ikely**, PSLA undergraduate student in the Agriculture Sciences and Technology program received the James R. Miller/Maryland Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) scholarship at that organization's 102nd annual meeting held at the Community Center in Ruthsburg, MD. Joe is the sixth recipient of this scholarship established in 2004 to honor Dr. Miller, Chair of the former Agronomy Department from the early 1960's until the late 1980's.

A number of PSLA extension faculty, **Dr. Ron Ritter, Dr. Arv Grybauskas, and Dr. Jose Costa**, were invited to address the 60 attendees during this educational/business meeting that was emceed by **Dr. Bob Kratochvil**.

During the course of this meeting, **Drs. Kenworthy, Grybauskas, Costa, and Kratochvil** were presented with a check for \$24,000 to be used to support the Department's variety improvement and production research for soybeans and small grains.

Within The Ranks...



Dr. Jose Costa was recently appointed Chair of the Variety Development and Host Resistance US Southern Winter Wheat Coordinated Project Committee (CPC). His two year term began January 1, 2009. This committee is in charge of coordinating the research on breeding scab resistant varieties of winter wheat for VA, NC, SC, GA, AR, LA, and MD. As Chair of the CPC, Dr. Costa is also a member of the Steering Committee of the US Wheat and Barley Scab Initiative (USWBSI). The mission of the USWBSI is to develop effective control measures that minimize the threat of Fusarium head blight (scab). "Scab" is a serious disease affecting crop yields in at least 18 states and has attributed to combined losses to all steps in the food system. The cost to farmers alone since 1990 is estimated to exceed 3 billion dollars.

Looking Ahead...

Monday, March 16—Friday, March 20 — Spring Break, no classes

Monday, March 16—Tuesday, March 17 — Offices closed

Monday, April 13—Graduate Research Interaction Day (GRID) 2009, Colony Ball Room, Stamp Student Union