



**HAMPTON ROADS AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER
VIRGINIA TECH**

Deep Roots

September 2024



Greetings From the Director

I hope your summer has gone well. It has been a busy summer at the HRAREC for our faculty, staff, and students, as well as the Master Gardeners and other volunteers that assist us. We wish our students who have returned to Blacksburg for classes as well as our summer interns who went back to school the best for the fall and spring semesters.

On June 27, 2024, the turf group at our station (myself, Adam Nichols, Alejandro Del-Pozo) led the 14th annual Turfgrass Field Day at the HRAREC. A total of 23 trials were on the program, including such topics as yellow nutsedge control, use of drones for herbicide application and for release of beneficial insects, weed control and insects in pollinator plantings, annual bluegrass weevil phenology, establishment of Bluemuda, overseeding with Sublime, and control of pennywort and ground ivy, among other studies. There were over 100 attendees at our turf field day.

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Greetings From the Director

September 2024



Speaking of the turf group at the station, the station's Turfgrass/Weed Science team defeated the Entomology team in a game of kickball. Thanks to Adam Nichols for lining out the field and to Rob Holtz and Colby Flanagan for bringing the watermelon as it was a hot day.

On July 25, 2024, we hosted the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association Field Day. We were able to complete the tour of our research just as the rain started. Adverse weather unfortunately limited our drone demonstration planned for the afternoon. It was good to see the nursery producers, landscapers, and vendors who attended the field day.

On July 31, Ms. Ana Agud came from campus to update us on Hokie Wellness, a program for Virginia Tech employees. We appreciate Ana's time and effort to explain the benefits of this program.

Station faculty have conducted several research and display garden tours this summer. We hosted faculty and graduate students from two Virginia Tech units (School of Plant and Environmental Sciences (SPES), and Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education), along with tours for Virginia State Senator Bill DeSteph, and Ms. Kate Lewis, Executive Director, National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board. Adam Nichols and I also took the SPES graduate students to a tour of the Bayville Golf Club in Virginia Beach. We appreciate Mr. Scott Mauldin, course superintendent, for leading the tour and sharing information on the technology and apps he uses to maintain that course.

Our display gardens look great, thanks to the all the effort by our Master Gardener volunteers and the oversight by Laurie Fox. If you have not been to the gardens recently, now is a good time to view the annual flower trials, the perennial gardens, and the woody arboretum. Work has begun on our newest greenhouse, with anticipated completion by the beginning of October. This is a joint project with Old Dominion University, and we appreciate the financial support from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) at Virginia Tech for this project. Work has also started on expanding Wifi access to most of the station property, with assistance from CALS IT.

Thank you for your support of the activities at the HRAREC.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jeff Deen".



Turfgrass Field Day

Virginia Tech, in conjunction with Virginia Turfgrass Council, hosted their annual Turfgrass Field Day on Thursday June 27. Nearly 100 turfgrass professionals and enthusiasts came out to learn how to incorporate cutting-edge research into their field management

The day started off with a guided tour of the research plots. Presentations by Virginia Tech's faculty emphasized the practical applications of their studies on turfgrass breeding, pest management, disease control and sustainable practices.



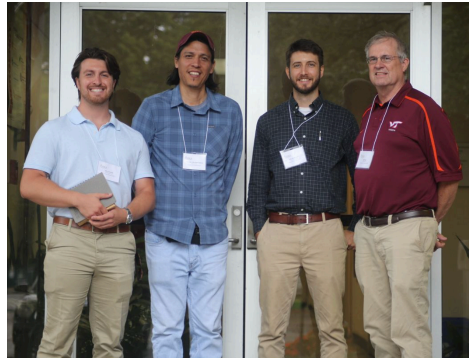
[Full Article](#)



Turf Research Manager, Adam Nichols, sharing his trial summaries

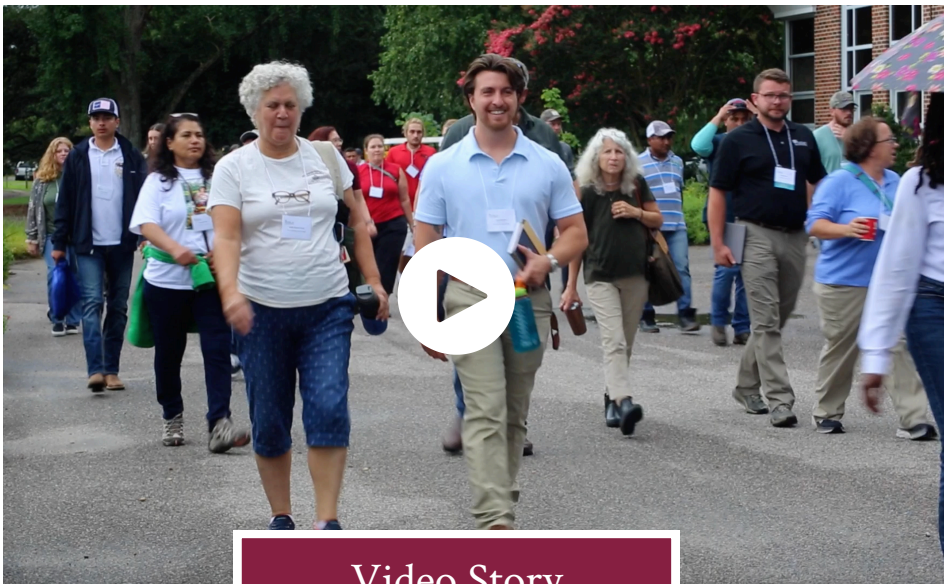
Virginia Nursery and Landscape Field Day

The Hampton Roads AREC hosted the Virginia Nursery and Landscape Field Day this year. Over 130 Industry professionals from across the state traveled to attend this event and learn about the latest research and techniques.



Our new Nursery and Production Specialist, Kris Criscione (far left) with our faculty

Designed to promote sustainability and resilience through business practices, nursery production, and landscape trends, the event offered an opportunity to learn about the latest research and techniques.



[Video Story](#)



Open House



Master Gardener Open House took place June 22. Over 90 people attended to explore the demonstration gardens during peak season and learn about the importance of native plant species. Tour guides led attendees through the 28 distinct gardens and answered questions. If you missed this event or are looking to come back we welcome visitors all year-round.

Updates

Hampton Road AREC Visitors



State Senator Bill DeSteph

Thank you, Senator for taking the time to tour and learn about our work on behalf of the Commonwealth. We look forward to continuing to work together to drive progress in our region.



ALCE

We recently had the pleasure of hosting The Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education (ALCE), a group within the College of Agriculture and Life Science (CALS).



We always enjoy welcoming fellow Hokies and look forward to their continued engagement!

SPES Tour of Bayville

Adam Nichols and Jeffrey Derr took graduate students from the School of Plant and Environmental Science (SPES) to visit Bayville Golf Club in Virginia Beach. Mr. Scott Maudlin, course superintendent, discussed how he manages irrigation, fertilization, and pest control at the course.



Pollinator Gardens

Jeffrey Derr is evaluating weed control options at planting and post-planting for establishing pollinator plantings. Alejandro Del-Pozo is surveying the various insect species coming to our research pollinator garden.

Laying the Ground Work

Construction has started on a new greenhouse at the Hampton Roads AREC. This facility will support research and educational programs by providing an updated space for studying plant growth and sustainable practices. The greenhouse aims to enhance the center's capabilities and contribute to local agricultural development. Keep an eye out for more updates as the project progresses.





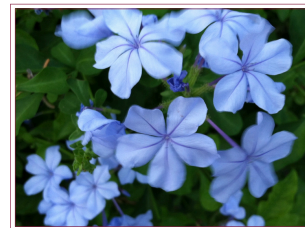
[Learn More](#)

Upcoming Events

Master Gardener Fall Festival



Get ready to celebrate the beauty of autumn at the Virginia Beach Master Gardeners Fall Festival! Enjoy hands-on workshops, explore a variety of plant and craft booths, and gather tips from expert gardeners to enhance your green space. With activities for all ages, delicious food, and plenty of fall flair, it's the perfect way to embrace the season.



Saturday, September 28

1444 Diamond Springs Road Virginia Beach, VA

Spotlights

Staff

Julie Brindley serves as our senior entomology research specialist where she works alongside Dr. Alejandro Del-Pozo. She is a natural thinker. **“I know it sounds nerdy, but I love the scientific method. From start to finish every step works towards an objective conclusion,”** Julie shares. She applies her scientific expertise beyond the lab, even helping her husband refine his grilling technique using systematic approaches. She is dedicated to building strong relationships with local growers, who rely on her accurate research to make informed decisions on their farms. Julie values the trust and connections she’s formed with these growers, as well as the camaraderie within her team. She emphasizes the importance of being meticulous and thoughtful, understanding that their work directly impacts the growers. Dependable, hardworking, and kind, Julie gets it done at the Hampton Roads AREC and we thank her.



Master Gardener

Growing up on a farm as the youngest of 13, Ron Nesbitt was no stranger to hard work and the joys of tending to plants. After a distinguished 30-year Navy career and a successful run in home repair, Ron Nesbitt found himself with an amount of free time that a go getter like himself he wasn’t quite sure what to do with. When his wife needed a hand in her garden, Ron turned to Master Gardeners for advice, and what began as a simple hobby quickly grew into a deep passion. Drawing on his background in the Navy, Ron applies the same leadership and dedication to his gardening. Now a proud Tree Steward, Ron continues to cultivate his love for gardening while helping others grow their green thumbs. Beyond the soil and plants, he cherishes the social interactions and friendships he’s developed. **“If you don’t include anything else please mention Dr. Fox. She always has something to teach us which is one of my favorite parts of master gardening. She is so humble. I don’t know what we’d do without her,”** says Ron.



TURF TIPS

Brought to you by Jeffrey Derr and Adam Nichols

Sep. Edition

As our temperatures decrease as we move into fall, there are several items to consider for lawn maintenance. Winter weed control, fertilization in cool-season lawns, overseeding of both warm and cool-season lawns, and fall fungicide applications of warm-season lawns are topics to consider this time of year.

Once temperatures cool in September, coupled with rainfall to trigger germination, winter annual weeds will start to emerge. One weed of concern is annual bluegrass, often called poa due to its scientific name *Poa annua*. F One way to address control of annual bluegrass would be to apply a crabgrass preventer prior to annual bluegrass germination. In most cases, though, one would not be able to overseed the lawn.



Another advantage of applying a crabgrass preventer in late summer or early fall is that they will also control certain winter annual broadleaf weeds like common chickweed and henbit. One winter annual broadleaf weed that has increased in the area is lawn burweed (*Soliva sessilis*), a weed that produces sharp spines.



Fall is the best time to establish and strengthen cool-season lawns. Starting in mid-September through early November, tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass, and fine fescue can be seeded or overseeded. At the time of seeding, these cool-season turf species can be treated with products containing mesotrione for weed control.

When overseeding a bermudagrass lawn for winter color, perennial ryegrass is the recommended species. Neither preemergence products nor mesotrione should be used at the time of overseeding bermudagrass lawns.

Fall is the time to fertilize cool-season turf such as tall fescue. Fall is not the time to fertilize warm-season grasses like bermudagrass, zoysia, and St. Augustine.

When maintaining a warm-season lawn, fall is the best time to apply needed fungicides to prevent and cure the worst diseases that affect these turf species.



This article is a
summary. Click below
to read the full article.

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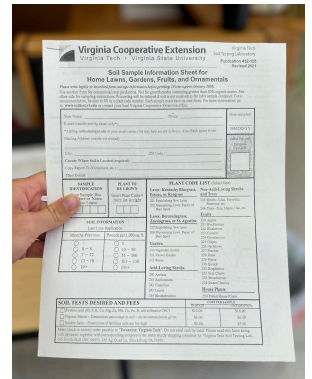
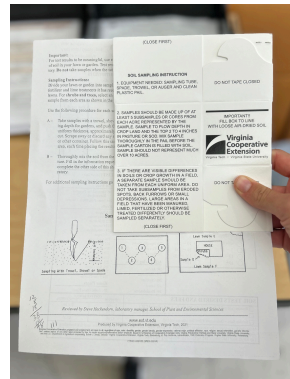


Soil Testing Procedure

Visitors to our station commonly ask about soil testing. Here is the procedure for having soil tested by Virginia Tech.

We have soil sample boxes and instructions at the table near the main entrance of our station (by the large classroom room 125).

Those interested in soil testing should take a box for each area they want tested. For example, use one box for the front yard and one for the back yard as the soil may differ between those two areas. Use separate tests for vegetable gardens, shrub beds, and lawn areas. There is an excellent Virginia Cooperative Extension bulletin on the method for home gardeners to take a soil sample: [Here](#)



The soil sample will need to be mailed to the soil testing lab in Blacksburg as we do not do soil testing at our facility. Make the check or money order payable to "Treasurer, Virginia Tech". Do not send cash by mail. Please send the form along with payment, together with corresponding samples to:

Virginia Tech Soil Testing Lab
145 Smyth Hall (MC 0465)
185 Ag Quad Ln
Blacksburg VA 24061.

Soil testing results will be emailed back to you so make sure your email address is legible. The soils lab turns around results quickly, usually within a week after receiving a sample.

For homeowners, include a check to cover the costs - \$10.00 per sample for the basic test, \$2.00 per sample for soluble salts testing, and \$4.00 per sample for determining the organic matter level. There is a different fee structure for commercial operations - fees and forms for both homeowners and commercial personnel are listed: [Here](#)

Complete a separate form for each sample. The form for homeowners: [Here](#)

For many, the basic soil test will be sufficient as it will determine soil pH (and any need for lime application) along with nutrient levels. A soluble salts test could be conducted if one suspects over application of a fertilizer or saltwater intrusion and an organic matter test could be conducted if you are interested in seeing that number.

Meet the Team

Faculty



Dr. Jeffrey Derr
Director
Professor of Weed Science



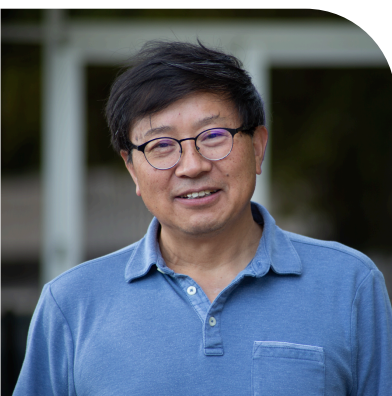
Dr. Alejandro Del-Pozo
Entomologist



Dr. David Sample
Biological Systems Engineer



Dr. Laurie Fox
Horticulture Associate



Dr. Chuanxue Hong
Plant Pathologist



Dr. Eric Stallknecht
Greenhouse Specialist



Dr. Jayesh Samtani
Small Fruits Specialist

Meet the Team

DIRECTORY

FACULTY	TITLE	EMAIL
Alejandro Del-Pozo	Entomologist	adelpozo@vt.edu
Jeffrey Derr	Station Director and Weed Scientist	jderr@vt.edu
Laurie Fox	Horticulture Associate	ljsmith@vt.edu
Chuanxue Hong	Plant Pathologist	chhong2@vt.edu
David Sample	Biological Systems Engineer	dsample@vt.edu
Jayesh Samtani	Small Fruits Specialist	jsamtani@vt.edu
Eric Stallknecht	Greenhouse Specialist	ericjs3@vt.edu
STAFF	TITLE	EMAIL
Ava Borden	Administrative and Office Specialist	aborden@vt.edu
Julie Brindley	Entomology Research Specialist Senior	julie12@vt.edu
Colby Flanagan	Trades Technician	fcolby@vt.edu
Rob Holtz	Farm Manager	rholtz@vt.edu
Alana Martin	Communications Associate	alanak@vt.edu
Lelia Milner	Entomology Lab and Research Aid	milnerlk@vt.edu
Adam Nichols	Turf Research Manager	adnichol@vt.edu
Aman Rana	Lab Research Specialist	amanrana@vt.edu
Patricia Richardson	Research Senior Specialist	paricha2@vt.edu
Thomas Wilchynski	Mechanic	maxumsc@vt.edu



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