

Greensville-Emporia Spring 2023

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Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

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Winter ANR Programs

Sara Rutherford

This winter the agriculture and natural resources program partnered with the Small Farm Outreach Program at VSU in December to hold the Cattle Management in Today's World program to provide cattle producers the opportunity to learn about the best ways to manage their herd, pastures and hay. Also in December, the master gardener volunteers held their annual wreath workshop. The wreath workshop was so popular we decided to hold an additional workshop at the Washington Park Community Center. It was great to gather, learn new skills and enjoy fellowship with one another. In January and February, we held our annual private and commercial pesticide applicator recertification courses and started preparing for spring programs.

Pictured below: Left- Cattle management program participants interact with Extension veterinarian Dr. John Currin. Right- Wreath workshop participants show off their fresh evergreen wreaths at the Washington Park Community Center.



What's that weed?

Sara Rutherford



Pictured above (left to right): cranesbill seedling, mature leaf and plant structure, discrete white flower, seed structure

Carolina cranesbill- *Geranium carolinianum*

Although usually biennial, the Carolina cranesbill can also be found as a winter or summer annual. It can be found in disturbed areas such as roadsides, gardens and pastures. It can also germinate in bare spots in lawns, gardens and along driveways and sidewalks. As a young plant, the leaves form a basal rosette, or a cluster of leaves that grow from the center of the plant. As the plant sets its erect flower stalk, the leaves grow opposite each other up the stalk. It produces small, five-petaled white to whitish pink flowers May through August. These flowers turn into a dark pink or red spike-like seed structure. Fruit are produced at the base of this spiked structure giving the appearance of a stork or crane's bill, hence the common name Carolina cranesbill or cranesbill geranium. For information on cultural or herbicide control of this weed, please contact our office for recommendations.

Upcoming Programs

March 1- Paraquat Certification Training at the Greensville/Emporia Extension office from 8:30 am until 10:00 am. Please call the Extension office to let us know you'll attend: 434-348-4223.

March 11- Building a Raised Garden Workshop at the Greensville/Emporia Extension office from 1:30pm to 3:30pm. Learn the benefits of growing plants in a raised garden while getting hands-on experience building a wood-framed raised garden bed. Registration deadline: March 3rd. Program fee: \$15.00. Credit card payments: <https://register.ext.vt.edu>. Cash or check payments can be made in person at the Extension office. Call 434-348-4223 for more information.

March 13- Dicamba Certification Training at the Greensville/Emporia Extension office from 12:00 pm until 1:00 pm. Please call the Extension office to let us know you'll attend: 434-348-4223.

March 21- Novel Fescue Renovation Workshop at VSU's Randolph Farm from 8:30am to 4:00pm. This one-day workshop focuses on managing tall fescue toxicity and integrating novel tall fescue varieties into a grazing system. Speakers include local producers, company representatives and extension specialists and researchers from across the country. Register online at <http://TallFescueVA23.eventbrite.com>.

April 15- Growing Cut Flowers at Home at the Greensville/Emporia Extension office from 9:00am to 11:00am. Learn which varieties make the best cut flowers, how to grow them and how to best utilize them as cut flowers. Registration deadline: April 7th. Program fee: \$15.00. Credit card payments: <https://register.ext.vt.edu>. Cash or check payments can be made in person at the Extension office, 105 Oak St. Emporia, VA 23847. Call 434-348-4223 for more information.

May 16- Getting to know insects: Insect identification at the Greensville/Emporia Extension office from 1:30pm to 3:30pm. Learn how to identify problematic and beneficial insects. Discover the best methods for protecting your plants and yourself. We will also discuss newly introduced insects of concern. Register for this free program by May 15th by calling 434-348-4223 or emailing Sara; srutherford@vt.edu.



Right plant, right place

Rita Malloy: University of Maryland Extension

Many plant problems in the landscape could be avoided by choosing the right plant for the purpose and the site. Many insects and diseases are opportunists, taking advantage of plants that are stressed and aren't healthy enough to fight back.

Whether your landscape plants are having issues with insects, diseases, lack of blooming, or just overall poor performance, chances are that they were not suited for the location in the first place. Improper planting practices or other non-biological factors can also contribute to problems.

Plant Selection Is the Key

What function do you want the plants to do in your landscape AND what are the site conditions? Answer these two questions to help resolve existing problems and help select the best plants for the job. Plants that are appropriate for the site require a lot less maintenance. Consider the following conditions of your site when choosing plants:

- Available space
- Available sunlight
- Plant hardiness zone
- Soil conditions and soil test results

Visit your local garden center to see what is available. Then search your library, the internet or ask your local Extension Master Gardeners to confirm the plant's basic requirements and mature size. It is best to evaluate your entire property instead of reacting to problems on a plant by plant basis. Mark up a copy of your property plat plan with your landscaping ideas. Your plan will be a combination of existing features in your landscape, plants to be retained, and new features and plants to incorporate. You can request a copy of your plat at your local county or city government office.

Size Matters

Mature plant size is one of the most important factors to consider when evaluating an existing landscape or selecting plants for a new site. Always consider the full grown height and width of a plant when making your selection. The full grown plant should fit well within your property line. It should not extend over sidewalks or driveways or touch structures like houses or sheds. When an existing plant has grown too big for the location and continuous pruning makes it look less than desirable, what should you do? Remove it and replant with something more appropriate for the location.

When planting specimens along the foundation of a house, the distance of the planting hole from the house should be at least 1 foot greater than the radius of the expected mature width of the plant. If the plant can grow to 25 feet wide, dig the hole at least 13.5 feet away from the house.

When possible, select plants that are native to the planting region. Natives adapt better, require less maintenance, support native pollinators, and look more natural in their native region.

Visit the Maryland Grows Blog for more from this article: <https://marylandgrows.umd.edu>.

Virginia Cooperative Extension has a new director

Zeke Barlow- VT CALS Communicatons Director



Mike Gutter, who has an extensive track record of developing and funding partnerships and programs that benefit local communities, has been named the director of [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#) and an associate dean of the Virginia Tech [College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#). Gutter, formerly a professor, specialist, and associate dean of Extension at the University of Florida, started his new role on Nov. 1, 2022.

“I’ve always been a believer in Cooperative Extension’s mission of sharing the knowledge of our land-grant institutions to help advance the well-being of all communities,” Gutter said. “I can’t wait to join Virginia’s team of agents, specialists, and staff who work so hard to address and help solve the most pressing issues in their communities.”

As an integral part of both Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, Virginia Cooperative Extension works in communities across the commonwealth to share knowledge, support businesses, and implement research that helps all Virginians. Extension operates from the campuses and out of 107 county and city offices, 11 Agricultural Research and Extension Centers, and six 4-H educational centers across the commonwealth. Extension also has specialists in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, [College of Natural Resources and Environment](#), and the [Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine](#).

Gutter earned his bachelor's and doctoral degrees from The Ohio State University, where he received his Ph.D. in family resource management studies. He was an assistant professor and Extension specialist at the University of Madison-Wisconsin for seven years, followed by 15 years of progressively larger roles at the University of Florida.

“Mike has both the experience in leading extremely successful Extension programs and the vision to ensure Virginia Cooperative Extension is a force for positive change across the commonwealth for years to come,” said Alan Grant, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, under which Extension is administered.

His appointment follows the retirement of Dr. Ed Jones, who was the director for nearly a decade and leaves the organization with an increased number of agents across the state, increased funding, and an array of new programs that touch upon everything from agricultural issues to opioid addiction. Gutter said he’s excited to build upon that success and help Extension grow into a larger presence on campus, in Virginia, and around the globe. He wants to help everyone on the Virginia Tech campus realize the value of Extension partnerships to achieve their own goals. He was drawn to Virginia Tech because of its Ut Prosim (That I May Serve) motto because his own ethos of service has been imbued in his Extension work.

“Extension is all about furthering the notion of service and meeting people where they are to help them improve their lives,” he said. “I want to engage the entire campus to help us fulfill our core motto at Virginia Tech. Cooperative Extension is the front door to the land-grant university in every county and every community in Virginia.”

Beyond the lure of Extension, Gutter said he was attracted to Virginia's mountains and the four seasons Virginia has – both of which are a big change from Florida. He said when he’s not cheering on the Hokies from the stands or playing acoustic guitar, he and his wife, Jessica, will be hiking in the mountains with their 14-year-old daughter and spending time with their rescue cat and dog, Miss Kitty and Chloe. They also have a 19-year-old son who is staying in Florida for college. “We are really excited to be part of the Hokie Nation and to help Virginia Cooperative Extension continue to be make a difference in communities across the commonwealth,” he said.

Programs & Reminders

Virginia State University's College of Agriculture offers many educational programs, online webinars, Facebook live events, workshops and field days. To find out more, visit: <https://ext.vsu.edu/calendar>

There is a \$50.00 fee for all returned checks.

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in Extension activities, please contact the Greenville-Emporia Extension office, (434) 348-4223, during the business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations at least 5 days prior to the event. *TDD number is (800) 828-1120.



The health of your soil is important! Routine soil sampling is encouraged for lawns, ornamental and vegetable gardens, row crops, specialty crops and pastures. Soil sample boxes and forms can be picked up at the Greenville/Emporia Extension office Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Spring Honey Bee Management

[Dr. Christina Grozinger and Kate Anton- PennState Extension](#)

As outdoor temperatures rise and spring flowers bloom, bees will begin foraging for nectar and pollen. Typically, bees forage when outside temperatures are above 16°C/61°F and it is not raining. Early spring can be a perilous time of year for the honey bee colony. The nutritional requirements of brood are energetically costly, and weather conditions can be volatile. Sometimes days or weeks of warm temperatures and abundant flowers are followed by snow or freezing temperatures that slow or stall nectar flows. Once brood rearing begins, the colony can rapidly exhaust stored resources and risk starvation.

Beekeepers, especially those in cooler climates, must monitor their colonies regularly at this time of year to make sure they have adequate resources to feed their young and keep the colony warm. Brood diseases such as Chalkbrood, Sacbrood, and European Foulbrood are most likely to appear in the spring, particularly when floral resources are inconsistent.

As freezing temperatures become less frequent, more flowers bloom, and honey bees begin foraging more intensively. The many flowering trees in the spring provide substantial amounts of nectar and pollen, which drives a rapid increase in brood rearing and colony population. This rapid increase leads to swarming behavior later in spring.

Swarms are very docile and, if the swarm is within reach, the beekeeper can shake the swarm into a cardboard box and bring it to their apiary and install it in a hive. If the swarm is not installed into a hive with comb and pollen/honey resources, it is a good idea to provide them with supplemental syrup.

For the complete article about seasonal honey bee management, visit this PennState Extension link <https://extension.psu.edu/honey-bee-management-throughout-the-seasons>.

2023 Extension Summer Internship- Emporia, VA

The Greenville/Emporia Extension office will be hosting a paid, 10-week summer internship for college students exploring careers in nutrition, agriculture, environmental science, natural resources, family and consumer sciences or community and youth development. The primary goal of this internship is to ensure the intern learns about and understands the breath of Virginia Cooperative Extension programming. The intern will participate in monthly staff meetings and attend other important Extension meetings that arise to learn about all components of Virginia Cooperative Extension. The intern will have the opportunity to experience the various delivery modes of Extension programming during their internship. This will also be a hands-on internship in which the intern will learn how to research, plan, prepare, implement and evaluate their own 4-H youth program in a program area of their choice. The intern will learn about the history, mission and goals of Extension, as well as the connection between Extension and the two land-grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State University. The intern will primarily work with the 4-H agent in youth development programs, however he/she will also have the opportunity to participate in Agriculture and Natural Resources and Family and Consumer Sciences programs and tasks as they arise. Visit our website to learn more and apply for this position <https://ext.vt.edu/internship/apply.html>. Please spread the word about this internship opportunity with college students in your area!

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments. Its programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, military status, or any other basis protected by law.