



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF PLANT AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES  
VIRGINIA TECH.

# E-NEWS



## Important Upcoming Dates:

**Staff Meeting**—February 10, 12:00 -1:00pm at 311 Latham

**Donut Tuesday**— “Mark Williams”, February 4, 8:30am at 311 Latham

**Faculty Meeting**— February 14, 3:00 - 4:15pm at Fralin Auditorium

**SPES Social** —February 28, 4:00 - 6:30pm at Rivermill

## Announcements and News:

David Schmale’s 1.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation provides new research opportunities for underserved students. David and Shane Ross, a professor in the Kevin T. Crofton Department of Aerospace and Ocean Engineering, plan to launch an NSF Harnessing the Data Revolution: Data Science Corps program which offers opportunities to underserved biology and engineering undergraduate students who are able to bring their own perspective to the field of data science. It will be a three year program partnering with Morehouse College, Morgan State University, Bennett College and Hampden-Sydney College. Read more about it in the VT News article: [https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2020/01/FLSI-Schmale-Ross-NSF-Grant.html?utm\\_source=cmpgn\\_news&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=vtUnir elNewsDailyCMP\\_010620-f%2Fs](https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2020/01/FLSI-Schmale-Ross-NSF-Grant.html?utm_source=cmpgn_news&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=vtUnir elNewsDailyCMP_010620-f%2Fs)





Wet weather contributes to decline in Virginia's oak tree population. "Did you notice an aging oak tree that seemed to rapidly decline or die this fall? Many people across the commonwealth noticed an increase in apparent oak mortality this year. In this VT News feature, VCE agent Adam Downing explains why this may be happening. This story is part of a new Extension Master Gardener series highlighting timely horticultural issues." Read more about it in the VT News article: <https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2019/12/ext-is-something-killing-virginia-oak-trees.html>

## Faculty Awards:

Jacob Barney was awarded the Outstanding Educator Award from the Northeastern Weed Science Society at their annual meeting on January 7, 2020 in Philadelphia, PA. The Outstanding Educator Award was established to recognize outstanding contributions to outreach education or resident instruction in Weed Science and weed management. Accomplishments that may be considered include (but are not limited to) excellence in Cooperative Extension education, resident instruction, or other educational programs; or the development of novel and effective educational resources in Weed Science.



## Graduate Student Awards:

At the Northeastern Weed Society Annual Conference on January 7, 2020 in Philadelphia, PA, Michael Flessner's recent graduate, Lucas Rector won the Robert D. Sweet Outstanding Graduate Student Award at the Masters level. Shawn Askew's graduate student, John Brewer won the Robert D. Sweet Outstanding Graduate Student Award at the PhD level. The Robert D. Sweet - Outstanding Graduate Student Awards were established to recognize outstanding NEWSS students at the M.S. and Ph.D. levels for their work and contributions to the field of weed science in research, teaching, extension, and to the society.

Vasiliy Lakoba, PhD student with Jacob Barney, was awarded Honorable Mention for his presentation "*Ecotypic stress response differences are driven by home climate and habitat*" at the Northeastern Weed Science Society at their annual meeting on January 7, 2020 in Philadelphia, PA.



## New Employees:

### Welcome New Employees!

Dr. Philip Brown, located on the 4th floor of Smyth Hall. Dr. Brown is an Extension Specialist in Soil Science and Septic Systems.



Dr. Carl Niedziela, located at the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) in Danville, VA. Dr. Niedziela is a Greenhouse Controlled Environment Research Associate.



Dr. Josh Kardos, located on the 3rd floor of Saunders Hall. Dr. Kardos will have primary responsibilities for teaching a number of our horticulture courses including Plant Propagation, Greenhouse Management, Greenhouse Crops, Herbaceous Plant Materials and Indoor Plants.