Tomorrow’s Horticulturists: Who Will Teach Them and How Will They Learn?

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My background:

- Degrees in Biology, Botany and Plant Physiology and 5 year post-doc in Botany at Duke University.
- 29 years at NCSU in Hort. Science
- Teaching, research, extension
- DE coordinator for Department
- Teach 2 courses, 1 DE
- Immediate Past-President, American Society for Horticultural Science
ASHS Concerns

- Fewer Graduate Students
- Fewer or smaller Horticulture Departments
- Lack of Federal & State Funding
ASHS Concerns

- Fewer and smaller Hort Depts.
- Demographics (retirements)

Reduced courses, mentoring advising for all students
T(H)ARP PROGRAM

- TROUBLED (HORTICULTURAL) ASSETS RECOVERY PROGRAM
**Positive Trends**

- Specialty Crops Research Initiative
- Economic stimulus programs
- More appreciation for broad-based, applied research
- Interest in where food comes from and how produced (speaker requests)
  - Local (home garden)
  - Organic
- Opportunities to recruit students
T(H)ARP Components

• Increase Undergrad Enrollment
  - Recruitment and partnering with community colleges
  - On-campus recruiting
  - DE courses to non-traditional audiences

• Increase/maintain courses?
T(H)ARP COMPONENTS

- More Graduate Students
- More State and University Support
- More Federal Funding
T(H)ARP COMPONENTS

- Better Education
- More State and University Support
- More Federal Funding
T(H)ARP CONUNDRUM

Less time to mentor, advise, teach

Better Education?

More competitive Federal Funding 'Big Science'
Survey says: Threatened Hort. Curricula:

- Production, especially fruits and vegetables
- Applied, hands-on courses
- Plant breeding
- ‘Service’ courses in other departments
Survey says: Needed Hort. Curricula:

- Organic, sustainable
- Pest management
- Propagation
- Practical experience and training (internships)
- International experiences
- 68% say challenges can be overcome with additional resources
Survey says: Solutions

- Shared courses between institutions
- Academies, short courses at different universities
- 88% see more DE in undergraduate education (but many reluctant)
- 75% see more DE in graduate education (but hate idea of online Ph.D.)
“Good luck at the conference. Try to make sure that horticulture doesn’t slip into oblivion at the Pathology meeting”

“We educate too many students in biotechnology and genetics at the graduate level...There are very few individuals with doctoral degrees...in a broad field.”

Survey says: Quotes

“I’m over 25 years into my professional horticultural career. What keeps me going in my teaching duties. I do not see another generation coming up behind me that is getting the applied, science-rich, in-depth horticultural training I was privileged to have had. I’m optimistic over the future of world horticulture, but less so within the US.”