

2024 Annual Report

Foundation of the State Arboretum at Blandy Experimental Farm





Who We Are

The Foundation of the State Arboretum (FOSA) supports the University of Virginia's Blandy Experimental Farm and its research and educational goals. FOSA enhances Blandy's value as a public institution, and helps maintain the State Arboretum's many collections.

Our 2024 Impact

200,000

Visitors

8,399

**Education
Program
Participants**

127

**Woody Trees
and Shrubs
Planted**



Message from David E. Carr

Director, Blandy Experimental Farm
Research Professor, Environmental Sciences
University of Virginia

Fiscal Year 2024 coincided with the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Friends of Blandy. This organization helped launch the dawn of a new era at Blandy after many uncertain years following the Department of Biology's withdrawal in 1965. Blandy's "rediscovery" by Ed Connor, a young professor in UVA's Department of Environmental Sciences, and by the visionary founders of the Friends pushed Blandy toward a rebirth and reorientation that develops to this very day.

In its earliest years, Blandy developed as a facility for the study of plant genetics under the direction of Orland E. White. The arboretum we know today began with his efforts to build a research collection. Under Connor and the other young scientists that he hired, Blandy aligned itself in the environmental sciences, training students, hosting classes, and conducting research in ecology. The Friends recognized the arboretum's potential as a resource for people beyond just academics and guided its designation as the State Arboretum of Virginia by the General Assembly in 1986. Since then, the academic and public sides of Blandy have blossomed.

Blandy's mission is to increase the understanding of our natural world through research and understanding. It is easy for me to imagine how much narrower our reach would be, had it not been for being home to the State Arboretum. The Foundation of the State Arboretum, which grew from the Friends, has created opportunities to bring environmental education to wider audiences through their philanthropic work and through state funding that eventually followed the State Arboretum designation. The Foundation has spent most of its history finding new ways to bring people to Blandy and to enhance their experience after they arrive. The new Fiscal year will focus on expanding that reach, including to parts of the Commonwealth that we have yet to reach.



Dave Carr, back row baseball cap, with a few of the 2024 Foundation of the State Arboretum Board members.



ARTS & SCIENCES
Blandy Experimental Farm

www.blandy.virginia.edu

2024 Reflections

Nancy Takahashi
President of the Foundation of the State Arboretum



In reflecting on my first year as President of the Foundation of the State Arboretum (FOSA), I am profoundly grateful for the work of our Board of Directors and to my predecessor Jolly de Give whose sage guidance helped me every step of the way. It was a happy moment this spring to honor her with the planting of a commemorative tree (Jolly's well known favorite ginkgo) near the native meadow.

FOSA celebrated another busy year in our continuing mission to support the activities and physical plantings at Blandy Experimental Farm and the State Arboretum of Virginia. FOSA's contributions can be enjoyed as you first enter through the gates of the Quarters and peek into the new public restrooms and our new Information Center. This interactive and new welcoming spot for visitors was funded by Donald and Mary Shockey, one of our many valuable donors and community supporters. Stop by and see it!

In addition to FOSA's signature annual events– Mother's Day Garden Fair, the Ginkgo Festival, and Holiday Wreath Workshops, FOSA organized its first ever Plein Air Art Festival in September. This 6-day event invited nearly 100 artists from across the state and region to set up easels across the arboretum to paint familiar favorite scenes and even expose us to lesser-known places at Blandy. On the final day, the art was displayed for sale, with a portion of the sales donated to FOSA.

FOSA was also instrumental in initiating two critical studies that will have great impact in directing the future changes to Blandy's beautiful and historic landscape. The first is a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), which has become a critical resource for all major historic properties. CLRs document the most comprehensive history of the groups and individuals who shaped and managed the land from the indigenous to the enslaved up to the present. A highly recognized team of archeologists and landscape historians was commissioned and have begun their deep dive research which will continue through 2025.



2024 Garden Fair brought thousands to the Arboretum and raised nearly \$70,000 to support programs and collections.



The first ever Plein Air in the Arboretum brought 100 artists to paint and showcase the beauty of Blandy.



The long running Wreath Making Workshops is a member and supporter favorite event, raising funds and new friends for FOSA.

A second study completed in 2023 is the first ever study of the Arboretum's trail network. Made possible through a generous summer fellowship provided by the Garden Club of Virginia, UVA Landscape Architecture student Greta Mattheis accepted the task of inventorying and assessing current trails and made proposals to improve accessibility and directing of visitors around the collections. This report will be instrumental in taking our first steps to improve our trail network.

In addition, Board Director Susan Harris, Secretary to the UVA Board of Visitors, successfully garnered a \$40K gift from the UVA Alumni Board of Trustees to support continued experimental work to restore a native forest after removing invasive buckthorn groves along Wilkins Lane. After an original nursery from Orland White was uncovered in the south lot, FOSA helped support the creation of a new loop trail featuring the rediscovered pawpaw collection.

The quiet magic of Blandy continues to delight me and I imagine it's the reason why you come to walk and learn at the arboretum. Please step forward—join, volunteer, attend our events, give your financial support! Thank you for loving Blandy!



Top left: New interactive Visitors Welcome Center opens at Blandy. Top right: New Paw Paw Trail offers glimpse into Blandy's past. Bottom: Renovated Walter Flory Memorial Iris Garden.

Transform Fear to Fascination

“Students cannot engage in scientific exploration and discovery, nor can they be interested in caring for our natural resources when they are afraid.”

By Candace Lutzow-Felling, Director of Education

“An ant; I need to kill it!” “Yikes! A bee! Will it sting me?” We often hear these and other fearful statements when students visit Blandy for our education programs. Our goal is to replace these negative perceptions with curiosity and excitement about the natural world. We achieve this by using incremental steps that guide students to closely examine organisms until fascination replaces fear.

A powerful example of this process is our Incredible Insects program. Many children—and even some adults—initially feel trepidation toward insects. During the program, students examine mounted insect specimens under microscopes. As they explore the myriad adaptations of these “safely dead” organisms, they begin to wonder about the form and function of various insect parts. This magnified glimpse into a radically different world displaces their initial fears and sparks genuine curiosity.

Outdoors, students observe insects in their natural habitats and consider the roles these creatures play in the ecosystem. They use nets to collect insects and place them in specimen jars for closer observation. The jars provide a sense of security, allowing students to study live insects without fear.

Gradually, exclamations such as: “Why is the beetle shiny?”; “I didn’t know there were so many kinds of bees!”; and “Woah, look at what this bug is doing to this other bug!” become common, leading to engaging conversations about the insects’ habitat roles and behaviors.

Every student brings a unique background and a personal encyclopedia of experiences. Some already are comfortable with outdoor learning, while others face significant challenges just getting off the bus onto the mown, grassy parking lot. Our aim is to help each student take one more step to feeling at home outdoors, to deepen their desire to explore and understand natural phenomenon, and to foster a greater concern for the natural world than they had when they first arrived at Blandy.

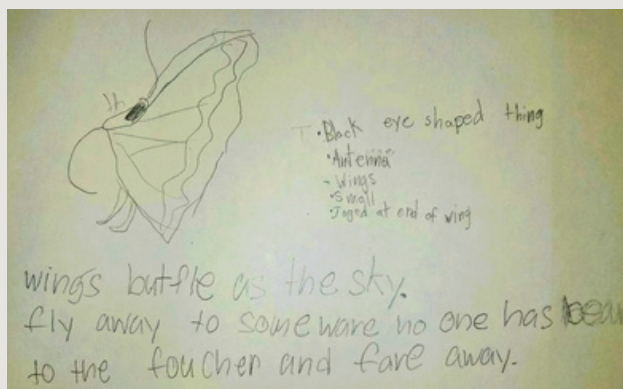


Waiting to feel a Woolly caterpillar crawling across one's palm.

Education Program Impact



Students proudly show insects they collected with their observation jars.



One student was inspired to write the poem below, after drawing an insect observed under a microscope. (Some spellings are corrected.)

*Wings beautiful as the sky
fly away to somewhere no one
has been
to the future and fade away*

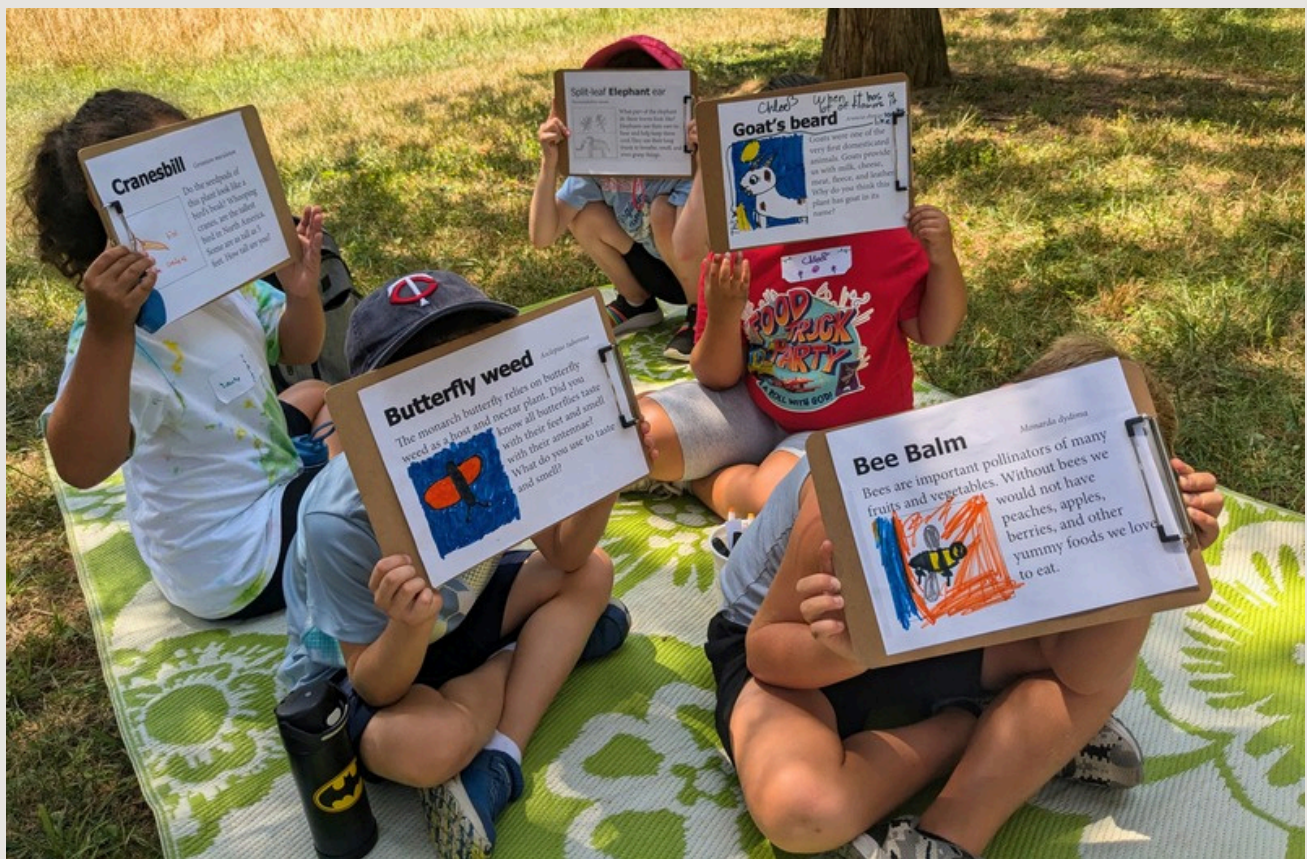
Program Type	Number
PreK-12 School Programs	
Education Programs	292
Students Served	5950
Teachers attending	383
Chaperones attending	1594
School Divisions Served	10
Schools Served:	64
Public School	45
Private school	15
Home School	4
Professional Learning & Adult Programs	
Teacher Professional Learning, # attending	399
Scientist Professional Learning (undergraduates), # attending	10
Community Education Programs, # attending	63
Education Program Summary	
# preK-12 students served	5950
# teachers served	782
# undergraduates served	10
# adult community served	1657
TOTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPACT (# served)	8399

Scientific Engagement

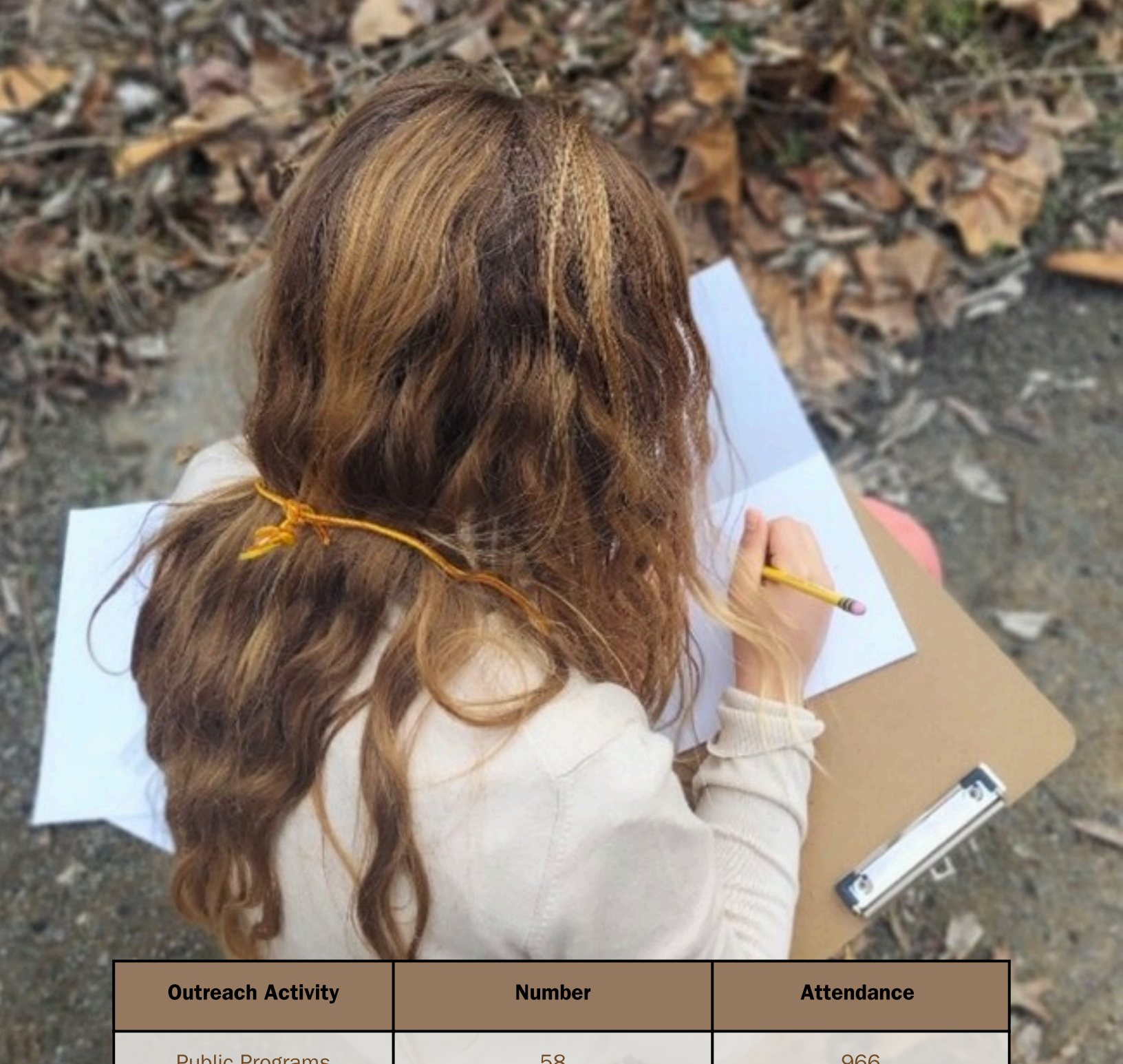
Talks, Tours, Camps and More

There's never a dull moment at Blandy! FY24 brought a busy schedule of programs, talks, tours, camps, and more, all centered on exploration of the natural world. Here are a few moments from the past year that highlight engagement:

- **Pawpaws!** FY2024 might have been the Year of the Pawpaw, with the opening of Blandy's newest trail through an old pawpaw orchard and the continued popularity of pawpaw-centric public programs.
- **Downward facing dogwood-** Local author and environmental educator Alison Zak led a yoga class in the courtyard following her author talk on Wild Asana: Animals, Yoga, and Connecting Our Practice to the Natural World.
- **"I notice, I wonder, it reminds me of..."** Nature journalers of all ages got curious about the world around them in a series of nature journaling programs led by Environmental Educator Stefany Feldbusch.
- **Leafing on a jet plane-** In the recurring Around the World in Ten Tree programs, participants traveled the world without leaving Clarke County while learning about unique exotic trees in the arboretum's collections.
- **All talk-** Guest speakers gave programs on owls, Native American foodways, pioneering local botanists, riparian buffers, kestrels, and more!



Campers at Wild Things learn about plants with animal names as they help make new signs for the Zoo Garden.



Outreach Activity	Number	Attendance
Public Programs	58	966
Camps	3	43
Tours, Talks, Expos	33	2,767

Premier Ecological Research Field Station

Blandy's Undergraduate Research Program

Each summer, an energetic cohort of faculty, graduate, and undergraduate researchers joins the permanent faculty and staff at Blandy Experimental Farm, ready to make the most of Blandy as an ecology research field station. Their work spans a range of ecological topics including pollination dynamics, human impacts on plant and insect communities, songbird reproductive adaptations, and more.

As part of Blandy's Undergraduate Research Program, a group of undergraduate students are selected each year from colleges and universities across the United States to design and conduct independent research projects under the mentorship of experienced researchers. For many, this is their first opportunity to engage in independent research and communicate their discoveries in a professional format. The skills they develop— experimental design, critical thinking, data analysis, and scientific writing—serve them well as they continue their academic and professional journeys.

At the conclusion of the program, each participant gives a presentation of their findings and produces a formal written research paper. These papers reflect the depth of inquiry and dedication of Blandy's undergraduate students.



Hannah Russell measuring salt pollution and its impact on black-eyed peas and ants.

LEARN MORE

We invite you to explore summaries of these works in our growing database of past projects and see their exceptional work firsthand. Discover what Hannah learned in 2024 about how salt pollution impacts the black-eyed pea and the ants with which it shares a mutualistic relationship. Share in Caroline's 2023 exploration of how the northern cardinal identifies eggs of the brown-headed cowbird, deposited in their nests as brood parasites. The topics are vast and the opportunities to learn from the experiences of these students are limitless!

Browse past research abstracts

https://blandy.uvcreate.virginia.edu/reu_past_projects/

Academic Year 2023-2024 and Summer 2024

Students and Visiting Researchers

Gideon Ameh, *Graduate Researcher*

Katie Barlow, *Undergraduate Researcher*

James Barnes, *Graduate Researcher*

Beth Burrous, *Researcher*

Alana Cohen, *Undergraduate Researcher*

Elizabeth Cramer, *Blandy Undergraduate Researcher*

Abigail Dyer, *Undergraduate Researcher*

Jemima Elsherbini, *Graduate Researcher*

Avery Fernandez, *Research Technician*

Madison Giese, *Undergraduate Researcher*

Rachel Herzog, *Undergraduate Researcher*

Kelsey Huelsman, *Graduate Researcher*

Camille Ingram, *Blandy Undergraduate Researcher*

Julia Jackson, *Research Technician*

Kelcy Kent, *Research Technician*

William Loner, *Graduate Researcher*

Thomas Lopez, *Graduate Researcher*

Willow Lovecky, *Graduate Researcher*

Aspen Lovejoy, *Undergraduate Technician*

Joseph Mallon, *Graduate Researcher*

Lorenz Mammen, *Graduate Researcher*

Blake Molenaar, *Blandy Undergraduate Researcher*

Cameron Morris, *Undergraduate Researcher*

Daniel Pelletier, *Research Technician*

Stephanie Petrovick, *Graduate Researcher*

David Prudente, *Graduate Researcher*

Tess Reichard, *Undergraduate Researcher*

Hannah Russell, *Blandy Undergraduate Researcher*

Kelsey Schoenemann, *Graduate Researcher*

Owen Shaffer, *Research Technician*

Avehi Singh, *Graduate Researcher*

Caroline Speidel, *Blandy Undergraduate Researcher*

Helen St. John, *Graduate Researcher*

Sophia Stoddard, *Horticultural Intern*

Preston Thompson, *Graduate Researcher*

Kimberly Union, *Graduate Researcher*

Juliana Villa, *Graduate Researcher*

Geneva Waynick, *Graduate Researcher*



Summer 2024 Blandy Undergraduate researchers, Camille Ingram, Caroline Speidel, Elizabeth Cramer, Blake Molenaar, Hannah Russell

Publications

Barnes, J., and A. Barnes. 2024. Cultivating Computationally: Parametric Plant Growth Dynamics in Multispecies Design. Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture.

Dalgleish, H.J., A.A.R. Kula, S.S. Yair, I. Munkres, J. Mutterperl, S. Struckman, and M.D. LaMar. 2024. Herbivory as a continuous state variable in an IPM: Increasing herbivory decreases population growth of *Asclepias syriaca* through its effects on clonal reproduction. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution & Systematics* 62:125779.

Haynes, K.J., G.D. Miller, M.C. Serrano-Perez, M.H. Hey, and L.K. Emer. 2023. Artificial light at night increases the nighttime feeding of monarch butterfly caterpillars without affecting host plant quality. *Basic and Applied Ecology* 72:10-15.

Hepner, M.J., Orcutt, E., Price, K., Goodell, K., Roulston, T.H., Jean, R.P., and R.T. Richardson. 2024. Montane central Appalachian forests provide refuge for the critically endangered rusty patched bumble bee (*Bombus affinis*). *Forest Ecology and Management* 556:121751.

Hueslman, K., H. Epstein, X. Yang, L. Mullori, L. Cervena, and R. Walker. 2023. Spectral variability in fine-scale drone-based imaging spectroscopy does not impede detection of target invasive plant species. *Frontiers in Remote Sensing*. 3:1085808.

Sheikh, U.A.A., M. Ahmad, M.A. Aziz, M. Imran, J. Rahim, T.H. Roulston, S. Guo, and C. Sun. 2024. Rearing of native bumblebee species *Bombus haemorrhoidalis* for greenhouse pollination in Pakistan. *Agriculture* 14:590.

Wise, M.J. 2024. Spatial and temporal variability in structure of the multiple-herbivore community of horsenettle, and evidence for variable evolutionary responses in the host plant. *Arthropod-Plant Interactions* 18:519-532.

Wise, M.J., and E.L. Mudrak. 2023. How plants' tolerance of herbivory can be altered by nutrient stress, other herbivores, and phenotypic plasticity in reproductive traits. *Oecologia* 202:783-794.

Grants and Fellowships

Barnes, J. \$10,000. From Blacktop to Biodiversity: Socio-Ecological Impacts of Temporary Biodiversity-based Architecture at a K-5 Virginia Schoolyard. The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi.

Barnes, J. \$400. Tactical Growth: Socio-Ecological Investigations of Biodiversity-based Tactical Urbanism in a K-5 Schoolyard. American Association of Geographers: Urban Geography.

Dalgleish, H.J., H. Machiorlete, and M.D. LaMar. \$10,912. Clone or flower?: Uncovering the population consequences of clonal and sexual reproduction in plants. Virginia Native Plant Society.

Elsherbini, J. \$2,000. Exploring the Impact of Terrestrial Salinization on Plant-Insect Interactions and Ecosystem Functions. Moore Award Research Grant. Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Virginia.

Lutzow-Felling, C., and B. Myrick. \$50,000. Designing and building an environmental literacy network in Virginia. Chesapeake Bay Trust.

Lutzow-Felling, C. \$13,400. Watershed education programs for Frederick County Public Schools 4th grade students and their teachers. Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund.

Schoenemann, K. \$34,000. EXPAND Research Traineeship Fellowship, National Science Foundation.

Volunteer Impact



120+
Volunteers



1,200+
Hours Donated





Faculty

David Carr	<i>Research Professor & Director</i>
Howard Epstein	<i>Professor & Chair</i>
Kyle Haynes	<i>Research Professor & Associate Director</i>
Candace Lutzow-Felling	<i>Lecturer, Director of Education, School Programs</i>
T'ai Roulston	<i>Research Associate Professor & Curator</i>

Visiting Faculty (Jul 23 – Jun 24)

Patrick Crumrine	<i>Rowan University</i>
Harmony Dalgleish	<i>College of William and Mary</i>
Rebecca Forkner	<i>George Mason University</i>
Daniel Hanley	<i>George Mason University</i>
Nia Johnson	<i>Chicago Botanic Garden</i>
Abby Kula	<i>Mount St Mary's University</i>
Mary McKenna	<i>Howard University</i>
Melissa Zwick	<i>Stockton University</i>



Staff (Jul 23 – Jun 24)

Robin Couch Cardillo	<i>FOSA Director</i>
Stefany Feldbusch	<i>Environmental Educator</i>
Ariel Firebaugh	<i>Director of Scientific Engagement</i>
Emily Ford	<i>Lead Environmental Educator</i>
Brandon Fox	<i>Buildings Superintendent</i>
Stephanie Fox	<i>General Services Technician</i>
Mike Groves	<i>Buildings Maintenance Specialist</i>
Kyle Hartmann	<i>Arboretum Specialist</i>
Ann Hirschy	<i>Weekend Visitor Services Aide</i>
Lillian Ledford	<i>Environmental Educator</i>
Jared Manzo	<i>Arborist</i>
Judy Masi	<i>Finance & Administration Manager</i>
Maggie McCartney	<i>Field Station Manager</i>
Adam McCraw	<i>Arboretum Specialist</i>
Piper Mettenburg	<i>FOSA Administrative Specialist</i>
Melanie Mullinax	<i>Communications & Events Manager</i>
Jack Monsted	<i>Assistant Curator, Native Plant Trail</i>
Orphee Ross	<i>Landscape Technician</i>
Justine Schaffner	<i>FOSA Director</i>
William Spinrad	<i>Weekend Visitor Services Aide</i>
Klio Stroubakis	<i>Environmental Educator</i>
Carrie Whitacre	<i>Assistant Curator, Herbaceous Gardens</i>
Robbin Winkler Arnold	<i>Weekend Visitor Services Aide</i>
Karen York	<i>VNPS Office Manager</i>
Chris Youngs	<i>Grounds Coordinator</i>

Foundation of the State Arboretum

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Nancy Takahashi, President
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Charles Ellison, Treasurer
Kathleen Groover, Secretary
Jolly de Give, Past President

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Beatrice von Gontard
Sandy Wilson

Committee Chairs

Arboretum Collections: Nancy Takahashi
Equestrian - Sylvia Wilson
Events - Mary Olien
Finance - Charles Ellison
Government & UVA Relations - Nate Adams
Nominating - Celie Harris
Public Programs - Alex Newhart
Volunteerism - Mary Olien

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Sylvia Wilson



ARTS & SCIENCES
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Foundation of the State Arboretum **Financials**

Foundation of the State Arboretum FY24 Financial Statement

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total	
Net Assets	\$ 25,967.00	\$ 1,211,481.00	\$ 1,237,448.00	
Liabilities, accounts payable			\$ (8,361.00)	
Total liabilities and net assets			\$ 1,229,087.00	
Revenue and Support				
Contributions	\$ 155,038.00	\$ 55,418.00	\$ 210,456.00	
Membership	\$ 22,870.00	n/a	\$ 22,870.00	
Investment return, net	\$ (313.00)	\$ 39,869.00	\$ 39,556.00	
Public program fees	\$ 24,935.00	n/a	\$ 24,935.00	
Fundraising events, net expenses \$24,115	\$ 66,502.00	n/a	\$ 66,502.00	
Net assets released from restriction	\$ 75,239.00	\$ (75,239.00)		
Total revenue and support	\$ 344,271.00	\$ 20,048.00	\$ 364,319.00	
Functional Expenses				
	Program Services	Management and General	Fundraising	Total
Administration		\$ 10,202.00	n/a	\$ 10,202.00
Collection/grounds improvements	\$ 80,044.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 80,044.00
Public programs	\$ 26,933.00	n/a	\$ 3,163.00	\$ 30,096.00
Research experience	\$ 43,108.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 43,108.00
Membership	n/a	\$ 93.00	n/a	\$ 93.00
Miscellaneous	n/a	\$ 98.00	n/a	\$ 98.00
Newsletter	\$ 1,048.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 1,048.00
Other expenses and supplies	n/a	\$ 13,797.00	n/a	\$ 13,797.00
Professional fees	n/a	\$ 13,973.00	n/a	\$ 13,973.00
Public information	\$ 3,902.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 3,902.00
Direct reimbursement for State Arboretum	\$ 86,267.00	n/a	n/a	\$ 86,267.00
Total Expenses	\$ 241,302.00	\$ 38,163.00	\$ 3,163.00	\$ 282,628.00

Blandy Experimental Farm

Financials

AS-Blandy Experimental Farm ~ Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)

Beginning Balance	\$1,622,473.23
Income	
Revenue	\$ 49,918.00
FOSA Support	\$ 206,653.26
Gifts	\$ 78,903.12
Reimbursements	\$ 22,803.80
Endowment Distribution	\$1,595,912.76
State Appropriation	\$ 304,927.00
UVA Support	\$ 356,190.44
F&A	\$ 2.69
Transfers	\$ (77,435.12)*
Total Income	\$2,537,875.95
Expenses	
Salaries & Wages	\$1,882,461.11
Student Support	\$ 302,716.58
Supplies & Services	\$ 206,379.69
Travel & Prof. Dev.	\$ 33,439.68
Printing & Publication	\$ 4,407.75
Communications	\$ 22,908.57
Utilities	\$ 86,799.02
Equipment	\$ 12,627.18
Insurance	\$ 3,019.53
Total Expenses	\$2,554,759.11
Ending Balance	\$1,605,590.07

This is an unaudited summary of income and expenditures in Blandy's University operating accounts. The audited financial statements of the University of Virginia are available here:

<http://evp-coo.virginia.edu/annual-financial-reports>

*Gift from Thomas R. Flory transferred to the Thomas R. Flory in Honor of Walter S. Flory, Jr. Endowment for Blandy.

FY 2024 Donor Support

\$100-\$249 Donors

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