Meet the 2014 Summer Interns

All four of our UDBG summer interns this year are UD students: three are majoring in plant science and one in wildlife conservation. Please read the bios on each of them below. Because UDBG doesn’t have a staff person dedicated to maintaining the gardens, we are thrilled when the students start in early June. They are taming the garden, vigorously taking it back from the spring and early summer flush of weeds. We also welcome two intern supervisors: Jackie Perry, a past UDBG volunteer, and Jonathan Raike. Both work part-time overseeing interns in maintenance and other garden tasks.

The budget continues to be an exercise in conservation and efficiency, but we make progress. A major step is the establishment of a $50,000 endowment for garden operation. Much of these monies come from your generous support of the Herbaceous Garden project. We will add to this fund as we can. Thanks to all of you who respond to the Patrons solicitation each fall; your gifts are above and beyond your membership fees and help support our Student Program. This annual donation grew 26 percent last year thanks to your generosity. Particular thanks to two anonymous donors who each gave $5,000, which fully sponsors two summer internships.

The UDBG continues to function as an outdoor laboratory for many courses. This spring, Dr. Jules Bruck and the students in her Planting Design (PLSC 450) class completed a series of designs for a plant bed adjacent to the UD Creamery. The students were tasked to select plants that would first, survive the conditions, and second, reflected the flavor (literally) of the ice cream sold there. The interns installed plants and a series of containers, whose names visually say ice cream! Also, a group of graduate students in the Collections Management and Curation class (PLSC 637) completed an inventory of plants and their mapping in the UDBG.

Our collection of hydrangeas is being expanded with the interns’ help in the area northwest of Fischer Greenhouse. The better cultural environment there will be home to some of our new accessions of hydrangea (several of which were available at this spring’s plant sale). Expanding the species and cultivars in our collection will provide an underutilized area of the garden with a better representation of the genus.

Please stop by soon to see the interns at work and to enjoy the colorful display of flowering plants at their summer’s best.

Emma Brown, 2014 Summer Intern
Long story short, I have always loved plants. As a fourth-grader, I compiled a herbarium of common plants in my backyard. Before college I was involved in extracurricular activities relating to horticulture and ecology. Now I am continuing this path of knowledge, working toward a career in landscaping. I am a landscape horticulture and design and plant science major with a minor in Spanish. With this internship, I am getting hands-on experience in caring for plants and maintaining gardens. So far, I have learned about 30 new skills and practiced 30 old ones using tools and the methods for basic landscapes.

Emily Slingerland, 2014 Summer Intern
Originally from upstate New York, I am a junior at the University of Delaware, majoring in wildlife conservation with a minor in art. My hope is to learn more about plant sciences and landscape design and to hone my plant identification skills. I have enjoyed drawing ever since I could pick up a pencil, and this internship is showing me how I can use my artistic eye to shape the landscape around me. I am learning valuable skills through hands-on projects. A bonus is the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people, who have inspired and mentored me.
Jason Grzybowski, 2014 Summer Intern
I am a junior at the University of Delaware, majoring in plant and soil sciences. Once I earn my degree, I plan to work in greenhouse production or crop protection. This internship is a great opportunity to get hands-on experience in preparation for my chosen career. The many tasks I am responsible for are helping me build a firm foundation for this pursuit. I love working alongside experts in their fields.

Lauren Gregory, 2014 Summer Intern
Growing up in the suburbs of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, I fell in love with the flower and vegetable gardens that my mother maintained on our small plot. I am now a rising junior pursuing a major in plant science at the University of Delaware. I hope to learn more about herbalism, permaculture, and community building after college. In my spare time, I love making botanical drawings, playing the piano and guitar, learning about edible wild plants, and going on adventures in White Clay Creek Park with my Nikon.

Jackie Perry, Summer Intern Supervisor
A “late bloomer” might describe my path to public horticulture. After 30 years of home gardening, a long stint as an UDBG volunteer and the 40+ credit hours in UD plant science classrooms, this summer I am supervising our student interns part-time. This is not my first experience with students, as I taught accounting on an adjunct basis at Rowan University, after a stint as an analyst in the chemical industry. My daughter, Meredith, now a veterinarian, is a UD (Ag school) alum as well as my husband, Roy and 5 other extended family members. I love the energy of UD students and hope to learn from them as well as sharing what I’ve learned in the garden.

John Raike, Summer Intern Supervisor
I am a part-time Summer Intern Supervisor; I also work part-time in the outdoor horticulture department of Longwood Gardens. I attended Penn State, earning a BS in general agriculture in 1981. I was commissioned in the Army after ROTC and served 3 years duty in the 1st Infantry Division, after which I entered Civilian Government Service and continued my military service as USAR officer. After retiring in 2009, I returned to my interest in horticulture. I have 1.3 acres of home gardens and orchards that I have cultivated for the last 12 years. Last year, I worked at Longwood completing a full season gaining experience in the seasonal growth cycle of roses, trees, shrubs, perennials and annuals. My goal is to become an estate gardener in this area or near my grandchildren in northeastern Pennsylvania.