



Botanic Gardens
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE &
NATURAL RESOURCES

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STAFF *part-time

Andrew Adams, *Horticulture Manager*

Andrew Adams is a recent UD graduate with a BS in Plant and Soil Sciences and Agriculture and Natural Resources and a minor in Landscape Horticulture and Design. He worked at UDBG as an intern in the summer and fall of 2016 and collected urban forestry data for Dr. Tara Trammell in the summer of 2015. Andrew has eight years of experience working for his father's landscaping business.

Alexis Bacon, *Annual Intern*

Alexis Bacon is a recent graduate from Temple University's horticulture program, and has been working in the field for nearly a decade. Alexis comes to UDBG after an internship at the Scott Arboretum where she served as the Education Intern, developing writing, marketing, event planning, and teaching skills in the context of a public garden. Previously, she worked at Bucks Country Gardens and Bromm's Lullaby Farm, assisting in the perennial and annual plant departments. She also has experience working at a blueberry farm in Maine, volunteering at several CSAs, and running her own gardening business for homeowners.

*Valann Budischak, *Volunteer & Education Coordinator*

Valann Budischak is the Volunteer and Education Coordinator at the UDBG. She also wears two other professional hats: As the Executive Director of the Delaware & Nursery Landscape Assoc. and as a UD Extension Agent. Previously, Valann worked for 14 years for Black & Decker in New York and Philadelphia, first as a Sales Representative and then as Regional Account Manager. She has worked in numerous professional capacities as project administrator for Delaware Livable Lawns, Plants for a Livable Delaware and Enhancing Delaware Highways. She also serves on the board of the Urban Community Forestry Council, the Governor's Water Supply Coordinating Council, and Bright Spot Ventures.

Dr. John Frett, *Director*

Dr. Frett earned his PhD from the University of Georgia, where Dr. Michael Dirr served as his advisor. He then joined the faculty at Texas A&M University. In 1986 he joined the faculty at UD, where he teaches many plant and botany courses, including *Woody Landscape Plants* and *Indigenous Woody Flora of the Eastern U.S.* As the Director of the Botanic Gardens, he has developed an extensive collection of woody plants. While Dr. Frett never met a plant he didn't like, he has a particular fondness for and specialties in magnolia, holly (*Ilex*), oak (*Quercus*), maple (*Acer*), viburnum, and false indigo (*Baptisia*). Dr. Frett taught continuing education classes at Longwood Gardens for 20+ years and lectures in the mid-Atlantic.

*Donna Gerst, *Publicity & Plant Sale Assistant*

Donna Gerst coordinates UDBG's public relations and marketing, manages the inventory database, and assists with plant sale logistics and special projects. Prior to UD, she worked at a variety of paid and volunteer positions at diverse organizations, including: The Delaware Center for Horticulture; Mercer Arboretum and Botanic Gardens (Houston, Texas), YWCA of Orange County and Downing Park Planning Committee (Newburgh, New York), and others, focusing on strategic planning, board governance, public relations, and branding. As a Peace Corps Volunteer in Costa Rica for 3 ½ years, she served as an Agricultural Research and Extension Agent, initiated a collaboration between the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and the Costa Rican Ministerio de Agricultura to develop an extension outreach program for Nicaraguan refugees at the Tilarán, Guanacaste refugee camp, and worked with women in the community to develop a small business. She received her BS in Horticulture from Pennsylvania State University and an MS in Public Horticulture Administration from UD's Longwood Graduate Program.

Rachel Hutchins, *Annual Intern*

Rachel Hutchins received her BA degree from Berea College in English with a concentration in Literature and a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. She gained experience in horticulture as a student working on the Berea College Farm which includes the Gardens and Greenhouse. Rachel also interned at N Street Village, an organization that empowers homeless and low-income women in Washington, D.C. through a broad spectrum of services and at Greenhouse17, an advocacy agency in KY that supports survivors of intimate partner violence with a therapeutic gardening program.

Catherine Meholic, *Curatorial Graduate Student*

Cat Meholic is a MS Student and Teaching Assistant in the Plant & Soil Sciences department at UD with Dr. John Frett. Part of her work at the UDBG includes serving as the acting curator. Previously, she worked as the Plant Recorder and Assistant Curator at Mt. Cuba Center. She

volunteers with both the Nomenclature and Taxonomy, and Plant Collections sections of the American Public Garden Association, and is the co-founder of the Women in Horticulture Group. Presently, her area of study is assessing the Hamamelidaceae in living collections.

*Melinda Zoehrer, *Program Coordinator*

At UDBG, Melinda is involved in membership, website development, special events, maintenance of the Herbaceous Garden and Lepidoptera Trail, and interpretation. She earned a BS in Environmental & Systematic Biology and MS in Public Horticulture Management. She has worked and volunteered in public horticulture for over 30 years.