NC STATE UNIVERSITY

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Dear Graduates, Spring Class of 2022,

On behalf of the Department of Horticultural Science, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and NC State University, we CONGRATULATE YOU on this momentous and meaningful achievement. We thank you for letting us be a part of your journey during this unique season of time. In fact, given all that we have walked through as an academic community, there is a deeper sense of joy, a more profound sense of achievement, and therefore a fulfilling sense of celebration as we share this day with you.

Congratulations to family, friends, and supporters of our students. I suspect there were times in the past year or two when you were not sure if you would see this day. We have heard of many sacrifices, difficult and joyful experiences, care, and love for your students during the pandemic events. Therefore, we also celebrate all that you have done and express our deepest congratulations to you as we celebrate the graduation of your student.

Congratulations to the faculty, staff, and the broader community of the Department and NC State University for all you have done to pave the way toward this day of celebration. The depth of professional commitment, resiliency, and care shines through as we celebrate the growth and change in the life of each student as they move on to the next phase in their life.

Graduates – your experience has probably been a mix of face-to-face and online interactions (some of you secured your degree completely through distance education). Simultaneously, with the joy of graduation, there may also be a mixed sense of "missing out" on some experiences that accompany the typical academic experience. However, no matter the times, and no matter the circumstances, each graduating class is unique and distinct in composition, in shared experiences, and in personal growth. During the pandemic, horticulture has expanded in the consciousness of the public as an important discipline linked to food security, aesthetic beauty, ecosystem services, essential businesses, and personal/familial recreation. It is our hope, linked to the rights and responsibilities of being a graduate, that you will embrace the uniqueness of this experience. May the combination of your experiences here, combined with your distinct skills in the horticultural sciences, enhance your leadership, resiliency, and innovation to make a positive difference in our State, Nation, and World. In the spirit of graduation, celebrate all the good things that lie ahead and may you be an instrument of change, where such change is needed.

Thank you for the diversity of ways you have contributed to the Department of Horticultural Science and our University. It is our delight to celebrate this accomplishment with you. GO CLASS of 2020. GO PACK!

Sincerely,

Frank J. Louws
Department Head and Professor, Horticultural Science