

# NC STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES  
DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCE



## GRADUATION CELEBRATION CEREMONY

Duke Energy Hall  
James B. Hunt Jr. Library  
N.C. State University, Centennial Campus

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURAL SCIENCE

*Processional, please stand*

WELCOME..... Dr. Frank Louws  
*Department Head, Professor*

SPECIAL GUEST..... Dr. Garey Fox  
*Dean  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*

AWARDING OF DEGREES

Ph.D., M.S., M.H.S.....Dr. Gina Fernandez  
*Director of Graduate Programs, Professor*

B.S.....Mrs. Jodi Driedger  
*Director of Undergraduate Programs, Senior Lecturer*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

*Modesta Abugu* – Dr. Craig Yencho and Dr. Massimo Iorizzo  
(Co-Chairs)

Volatile Composition, Sensory Attributes and Quantitative Trait  
Loci (QTL) Associated with Flavor Traits in Cooked Sweetpotato

*Colton Blankenship (In Absentia)* – Dr. Katherine Jennings  
(Chair)

Evaluating Alternative Weed Management Systems and  
Challenges Across a Variety of North Carolina Crops

*Jackson Bobo* – Dr. Brian Jackson (Chair)  
Reducing Phytotoxic Effects in Engineered Pine Wood  
Substrates Through Aging and Preconditioning Treatments  
(Summer 2025)

*James Duduit* – Dr. Wusheng Liu (Chair)  
Functional Characterization of a Candidate Bacterial Wilt  
Resistance Gene in Tomato

## **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY** (continued)

*Simon Fraher* – Dr. Craig Yencho (Chair)

Genomic Tools for Sweetpotato Variety Development:  
Genomic Selection, *Fusarium* Wilt Resistance, and High-  
Throughput Phenotyping for Guava Root-Knot Nematode  
Resistance

*Kyle Freedman* – Dr. Mark Hoffmann and Dr. Ricardo  
Hernandez (Co-Chairs)

Precise Indoor Vine Conditioning: A Proof of Concept Study  
Using Supplemental Lighting to Enhance Young Grapevine  
Nursery Production

*Stephen Ippolito (In Absentia)* – Dr. Katherine Jennings (Chair)  
Weed Hosts for Root-Knot Nematodes and Potential Herbicides  
for Their Control in Sweetpotato

## **MASTER OF SCIENCE**

*Danielle Clade (In Absentia)* – Dr. Brian Whipker (Chair)  
Defining Nutrient Disorder Symptomology and Foliar Nutrient  
Interpretation Ranges for Greenhouse Culinary Herbs (Basil,  
Cilantro Parsley, Spearmint, Rosemary, and Sage)  
(Summer 2025)

*Samuel Crawford (In Absentia)* – Dr. Katherine Jennings (Chair)  
Evaluating the Effects of Herbicide Tolerance on Bambara Nut  
and Containerized Sweetpotato (Summer 2025)

*Madison Love* – Dr. Danesha Carley (Chair)  
Advancing Pollinator Conservation and Integrated Pest  
Management within Agriculture and Communities

## **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN AGROECOLOGY**

**Ricardo Hernandez** (Advisor)

*Paige Brecheisen*

**Agroecology – Urban Horticulture**

*\*Animal Science*

*\*Horticultural Science*

*Neva Grace Brescia*

**Agroecology – Urban Horticulture**

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## **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HORTICULTURAL SCIENCE**

**Brian Jackson** (Advisor)

*Jeremy Brown*

**Production Systems and  
Entrepreneurship**

*Clayton Humble*

**Production Systems and  
Entrepreneurship**

*Matthew Post*

**Production Systems and  
Entrepreneurship**

*Om Surkund*

**Production Systems and  
Entrepreneurship**

**Julie Sherk** (Advisor)

*Nic Eaton*

**Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

*Lizzie Kosmerl*

**Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

*Kat Peters*

**Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**  
*\*Landscape Architecture (Non-ARC)*

*Shannen Petro*

**Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

*Beka Schick*

**Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**  
*\*Plant Biology*

*\* denotes minor*

## **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HORTICULTURAL SCIENCE**

*(continued)*

### **Wusheng Liu** (Advisor)

*Brady Farlow* **Plant Breeding & Biotechnology**

*Sara Fink* **Plant Breeding & Biotechnology**

*Sydney McLennan* **Plant Breeding & Biotechnology**  
*\*Biological Sciences*

*Jerry Yu* **Plant Breeding & Biotechnology**

### **Hudson Ashrafi** (Advisor)

*Ellen White* **Plant Breeding & Biotechnology**  
*\*Genetics*

### **Jodi Driedger** (Advisor)

*Montana Baldwin* **Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

*Ethan Brown* **Production Systems and  
Entrepreneurship**

*Kayla Clark* **Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

*Ella Creason* **Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**  
*\*Environmental Science*  
*\*Plant Biology*

*Emily Eldridge* **Production Systems and  
Entrepreneurship**  
*\*Extension Education*

*Sam Magdanz* **Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

*\* denotes minor*

## **BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HORTICULTURAL SCIENCE**

*(continued)*

### **Jodi Driedger** (Advisor) -Continued

*Humberto Martinez*

**Production Systems and  
Entrepreneurship**

*Even Simpson*

**Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

*Sam Stokes*

**Production Systems and  
Entrepreneurship**

*Evan Villani*

**Plant Breeding & Biotechnology**

*Erica Wallace*

**Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

*\*Agroecology*

*\*Biological Sciences*

*\*Environmental Sciences*

*Daniel Wasserman*

**Landscape Design, Gardens, and  
Urban Environments**

**CERTIFICATE RECOGNITION**  
**Undergraduate Certificate**

**Mr. Issac Lewis** (Advisor)

*Adrian Van Essendelft*

**AWARDS – Outstanding Senior**

**CLOSING COMMENTS ..... Dr. Frank Louws**

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**GRADUATION WITH HONORS**

To be eligible for degree honor designations students must have completed at least two semesters and at least 30 credit hours at NC State University. Undergraduate degree honor designations are:

***Cum Laude*** (white sash) – GPA 3.25 through 3.499

***Magna Cum Laude*** (silver sash) – GPA 3.50 through 3.749

***Summa Cum Laude*** (gold sash) – GPA 3.75 and above

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**PI ALPHA XI**

The Iota Chapter of Pi Alpha Xi is the national Honor Society for Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture. Pi Alpha Xi members graduating today are recognized by Cerulean blue and Nile green honor cords, the official colors of the organization.

The Department of Horticultural Science thanks the Iota Chapter of Pi Alpha Xi for their generous contribution to the graduation ceremony.

# **Associate of Applied Science in Horticultural Science Management**

*\*These students were recognized at the Agricultural  
Institute Graduation Ceremony on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025.*

Sophia Beck

**Ornamentals and Landscape  
Technology**

Grayson Black

**Ornamentals and  
Landscape Technology**

Conor Green

**Small Scale Farming**

Charlie McGhee

**Small Scale Farming**

Mireyah Pentico

**Ornamentals and Landscape  
Technology**