

New Center for Public Horticulture Opens at UD

Article by Martin Mbugua
Photos by Kathy Atkinson



Ed Moydell, Associate director of the Center for Public Horticulture; Robert Lyons, Director of the Longwood Graduate Program and Executive Director of the Center for Public Horticulture; and Robin Morgan, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources

4:52 p.m., June 4, 2008--The University of Delaware has opened a new Center for Public Horticulture. The interdisciplinary center, which was officially opened during a ceremony on the Newark campus on Wednesday, June 4, was created to address the needs in the field of public horticulture, including training for existing professionals, research on issues in public horticulture, leadership, unity and collaboration.

Public horticulture is the art and science of cultivating plants in spaces for public use and enrichment, such as public gardens, municipal parks and gardens, cemeteries, museums with public landscapes, nature centers and zoos.

The center builds on UD's rich history of public horticulture education and research. Since 1967, UD has been a leader in public horticulture through the Longwood Graduate Program and through the UD Botanic Gardens, which traces its roots back to the late 1950s with the planting of specimen trees and shrubs around Townsend Hall.

The new center, which developed during four years of planning, was created with valuable input from more than 75 leaders in public horticulture from across the country through interviews, focus groups, surveys and informal discussions.

“By formally establishing this center,” UD President Patrick Harker said, “we reaffirm our commitment to preserving and optimizing managed landscapes for the public good through practice, example and education.”

The new center aspires to be a national leader in formal and professional education and research in the field of public horticulture as an unbiased source of information for professionals, students and decision makers. It will produce public horticulture professionals through innovative education programs for students of all ages and career stages and conduct, organize and disseminate valuable research and information resources. In addition, partnerships will be established among academic institutions, public gardens and professional organizations.

Robert Lyons, director of the Longwood Graduate Program in Public Horticulture, is also directing the new center. “UD enjoys a special relationship with Longwood Gardens, rooted in the legacy of Pierre du Pont who valued education so highly,” Lyons said. “Establishing the Center for Public Horticulture echoes that commitment to education and extends it to include new research findings that will strengthen the value of public horticulture and increase its awareness, nationwide. The center's efforts will be grounded in partnerships and collaborations with other organizations, large and small, in ways that augment the future aspirations of the University of Delaware and improve the quality of life of all citizens.”



Robin Morgan and Provost Dan Rich present a bouquet for benefactor Emalea Warner Trentman to her friend, Jane Maroney, who attended Wednesday's ceremony on her behalf.

The establishment of the Center for Public Horticulture was made possible through the generous support of Emalea Warner Trentman, a friend of UD and granddaughter of Emalea Pusey Warner, after whom Warner Hall on the UD campus is named. Trentman donated an endowment to fund the Emalea Warner Trentman Scholarship and the Emalea Warner Trentman Public Horticulture Endowment.

The center will work closely with the American Public Gardens Association, the national representative organization

for public gardens, and the American Society for Horticultural Science, dedicated to advancing horticultural research, education and application for more than 100 years. Both organizations have helped shape the mission of the new center and offered philosophical support, information and opportunities for collaboration.



Paul Redman, Director, Longwood Gardens

“We are very grateful for the generous support we have received from Emalea Warner Trentman, which has made it possible for us to establish the center,” said Robin Morgan, dean of UD's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. “Through such support and extensive collaboration with partner organizations, UD can draw from its rich experience in this field to make a difference in our communities.”

The opening ceremony included remarks by UD President Patrick Harker; UD Provost Dan Rich; Robin Morgan, dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Robert Lyons, director of the Longwood Graduate Program and executive director of the Center for Public Horticulture; and Paul Redman, executive director of Longwood Gardens. Guests included administrators of

many public gardens in the region.

Redman said the creation of the center is “very exciting,” adding the field of public horticulture is relatively young and that the center “will provide those of us in the field the resources and the tools to grow professionally.”

For more information about the center, visit [www.publichorticulture.udel.edu].

