

Clippings

the newsletter of mt. san antonio college's horticulture program

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IT'S SPRING!

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IPM is Booming!

We're proud to announce the birth of a new degree program in Integrated Pest Management. This degree will enable many more students to pursue lucrative and rewarding careers in this burgeoning area. See p. 5.

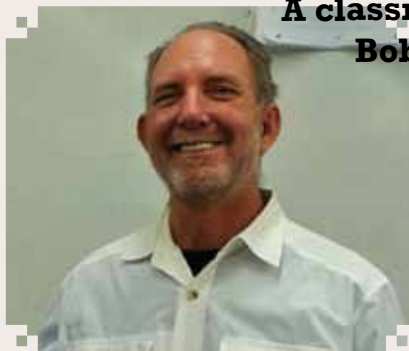


also in this issue...

**Q&A with
Barbara Alvarez,
California Landscape
Contractors Association**



**A classroom visit from
Bob Perry p. 8**



**and
more!**

Dave's World

horticultural
ramblings
of an old man

by Dave Lannom

A fond farewell ...

MT SAC AGRICULTURE LOSES ONE OF ITS FOUNDING FATHERS

THIS past fall **Harold Peck** passed away at the age of 86. Mr. Peck was dean of agriculture at Mt. SAC for many years. He not only taught animal science classes, but also agronomy, pest control, weeds & poisonous plants, and agricultural calculations. I first met him in the hallway of the agriculture building when I was a student, and had no idea that this man would become a close friend, teacher, and mentor in my life.

His advice to me when I came to teach at Mt. SAC was to try and teach students to think, and to share in their successes and down-falls throughout life. I truly feel that Harold Peck was my guardian angel in life.

Besides being a great man, he was also a great jokester. When I married my wife, Julie, he told her she was making a foolish mistake, and not to blame him if it did not work out. Thirty years later when we renewed our vows, he questioned why she was making this mistake again, and reminded her not to blame him as she had been fairly warned.

The last time we had lunch together last June, he said to me, "Lannom, when are you going to learn that you never will be able to win the battle of wits with me?"

I never will, Mr. Peck!



An unwelcome visitor ...

RED PALM WEEVIL FOUND IN SOCAL ♀

The Red Palm Weevil (*Rhynchophorus ferrugineus*) was recently discovered for the first time in the United States in Laguna Beach. There have been two sightings about 100 yards apart, and both palm trees were removed and destroyed. Several government agencies are involved. Every palm in the Laguna

Beach quarantine has been surveyed,

and traps have been set. The agencies currently are discouraging the public from setting traps.



A palm decapitated by weevils
(Christina Huddle)

The weevil measures about 1 1/2 inches long and ranges

in color from reddish brown to black. Female weevils bore into the trunks of the palm and have the capacity to lay 250 eggs that hatch within 3 days.

Visible signs are excessive dead fronds and a wilting crown. The crown typi-

cally smells of vomit. In the Mediterranean and Middle East, where the weevil has caused significant damage, Merit applications have seemed to be effective. Let's hope we can limit this buggar to the quarantine area. Protocol will be released in early spring lots of information available on the internet (redpalmweevil.com).



...And finally some good news!

MT. SAC TO SPONSOR INTL. PLANT PROPAGATORS SOCIETY AREA MEETING

Mt. SAC will be the sponsor of the area meeting for the **International Plant Propagators Society** at **Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Gardens** on **March 24** at 8 a.m. The cost is \$30.00 for professionals and \$15.00 for students. Contact Dave (dlannom@MtSac.edu) or Jesus (jramirez@MtSac.edu) for program and registration program.



ANNUAL HORTICULTURE REUNION PICNIC COMING UP!

Mark your calendar: **June 18** we will be hosting our **Annual Horticulture Reunion Picnic** at the **NEW AG BUILDING!** Come share an evening of networking and seeing old friends and making new ones. Picnic begins at 4 p.m. 🌻



Street Tree Seminar, Inc., Awards Mt. SAC Students

Street Tree Seminar, Inc., recently awarded scholarships to Mt. SAC horticulture students **Kelly De La Peza, Ruben Flores, Sandy Gillis, and Kay Hoevel**. Congratulations to these students, and thanks to Street Tree Seminar for its continued support!



wisdom, warmth & shoptalk with

Barbara Alvarez

By Kate Sullivan

Barbara Alvarez is respected both as a leader and a landscaping professional: She has served as state and chapter president of the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA), while running Alvarez Landscape and Maintenance, which she and her husband, Xavier, founded 35 years ago. Alvarez earned her BA in Ornamental Horticulture from Cal Poly Pomona and also sits on Mt. SAC's advisory board. She generously sat down with us to share her wisdom, her warm spirit, and her advice to aspiring landscape contractors.

Clippings: *Is it hard staying competitive in this economy?*

Alvarez: Oh my gosh, right now it really is. And we're dealing with the underground economy, because not everybody is willing to pay what we think our time is worth. So for example, I have a degree in ornamental horticulture, I'm water certified by Metropolitan Water District and the City of Pasadena, and I'm trained on the new irrigation controllers. It's getting more and more technology-oriented. You've got to be open and willing to learn something new. But it's exciting to me.

Can you talk more about the underground economy?

It's the mow-and-blow guy. And OK, not all of them, but most of them are uninsured. And in this economy, for a lot of people all they care about is having their grass mowed for a lower amount.

How have you managed to survive?

Those of us that are in maintenance are the ones that have survived. Because low-end, high-end, middle-end, landscape installation right now is dead.

It's the smaller jobs that have gotten us through. The large companies came down and took the jobs that I would have nor-

mally had, and then I had to go down and take the jobs that the next guy down normally had.

As a landscape designer I'd like be able to maintain a residential installation for at least a year after installing it.

That's one of the most intelligent packages you could provide. Why spend \$50,000 and not maintain it? You wouldn't do that with a car. Magnificent gardens are created over years.

Maintenance may not be prestigious, but we're the problem-solvers. We are the ones that keep that garden going five years down the road.

I've heard landscape architects look down on landscape designers, too.

On occasion, on commercial projects, landscape architects design from the office. I have found they have not been out to the job site enough to see how well their design may or may not work on the site.

I have been working with [landscape architect] Bob Perry on jobs—he does the design, and I do the install. What I like about him is that he listens to the person who does this day in and day out. Bob had designated *Agapanthus* “Peter Pan” in this one planter because it doesn’t get as big as *Agapanthus africanus*. But it’s deciduous. So I said, Bob, I think *Agapanthus* “Queen Anne” would be better for this client, because they want evergreen. And he goes, *Sunset* says they’re semi-deciduous. And I said, from my experience, they lose all their leaves—so please take into consideration my experience. And so he did.

Do you recommend interning?

Yes, I did that at Cal Poly Pomona. I worked for a summer with a crew at a shopping center, and it was a heck

I interned for a summer with a crew at a shopping center. It taught me later that as an owner, I know what it's like to be on that hot asphalt on a 100-degree day.

of an experience. But it taught me later that as an owner, I know what it's like to be on that hot asphalt on a 100-degree day. I believe the employees are my bread and butter. If I didn't have them, I would have nothing. We have 11 fulltime employees and my husband and I treat them like they were our family.

Where do you stand on contractors who use undocumented guys and pay them less than they should?

This is a passion of mine. I am a former chair of the Immigration Taskforce for CLCA. When you get into our industry you'll realize that 80% of the workers can be undocumented. That's just a reality. Most Americans are not going to endure this kind of work day in and day out, 40 hours a week, even if they were paid twice as much as another less laborious trade.

What I am trying to say is low wages are not the primary reason our industry has a high rate of undocumented workers. The work is hard and not considered sexy.

Don't you have to prove they're documented?

Yes. The law states a person who has been hired must provide to the employer specific legal documents that show they can legally work here in the United States. This is for any person you hire. But I would

Continues p. 7

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

DR. NAVEEN HYDER: Started her long educational journey at Mt. SAC, received a B.S. at Cal Poly Pomona, an M.S. and PhD at UC Riverside. She is now a Turf Specialist and Pathologist for the University of California.

NOE CARDENAS: Is Supervising Arborist for the City of Seattle.

GARY, JOYCE, & NEAL ABRAMS: Operate a garden center and tree nursery in Nampa, Idaho near Boise.

CHRIS WALTON: Is enjoying retirement while her son **ROBBIE** is a Forest Technician for the County of Los Angeles.

ADOLFO ALUAREZ: Is a Lead Grounds Man for the Cactus Garden at Huntington Library.

TONY JORDAN: Is Parks Superintendent at the City of Diamond Bar after stints at La Puente and Anaheim.

RICHARD WILSON: Is President of Colorama and La Verne Nurseries.

RICHARD FARMER: Is Chairman of our Advisory Committee and Landscape Grounds Supervisor at Cal Poly Pomona.

TERESA TRUNELLE: Is Grounds Supervisor at the UCR Botanical Gardens.

BOB BENNETT: Wears many hats; he is a Consulting Arborist, operates Bennett Tree Service and is Facilities Manager for the Glendora Nature Conservancy.

PLEASE LET US KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING! CONTACT DAVE AT DLannom@mtsac.edu.

Mt. SAC to offer IPM Degree!

By Brian Scott

We are extremely excited to announce a new degree, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which has been approved by the Chancellor's office as part of the 2011 Mt. SAC catalogue.

The process took two years, including approval by the Los Angeles/Orange County Regional Consortium in October.

The courses in IPM are designed to enable students to prepare for a career in this essential and diverse profession. This degree is part of our comprehensive Agricultural Sciences Program. The program is unique in that most courses provide hands-on experience designed to give the student a combination of practical skills and technical knowledge.

The IPM degree program is intended to prepare students to implement a comprehensive IPM program for any private or public entity. It will also meet the educational requirements to qualify students to take the Pest Control Adviser (PCA) exam, which is administered by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. Along with this degree, one would need two years of hands-on experience to qualify for the exam.

Pest Control Advisers provide written recommendations for the application of pesticides. Students will learn how to design,

install, and manage irrigation systems; set up and implement fertilizer and pest management programs; and properly identify and maintain trees, shrubs, and turf grasses. In addition, students will learn about personnel management, budgeting, and other management topics.




It is our belief that this degree will fill a large void in the industry. Until this point, those hoping to qualify for the Pest Control Adviser exam had to complete some course work at a four-year university. This was a major stumbling block to many individuals for a variety of reasons. Completing our program, along with completing work experience requirements, will qualify individuals to take the PCA exam.

In several recently published articles, it has been stated that a



career as a PCA is a lucrative and rewarding career. In the next five to ten years it is estimated that many current PCAs will be retiring. Terry Stark, president and CEO of California Agricultural Pest Control Advisers (CAPCA), said a 2006 survey of the association's 3,100 members revealed that about 75 percent of its members were 45 or older (almost 40 percent were over 55, while 35 percent were 45 to 55). Only 17 percent were 44 or younger.

There are currently about 4,000 PCAs in California. They use a variety of technologies to provide recommendations to protect crops and livestock in the state's \$32 billion industry that, according to UC Davis, accounted for \$97.7 billion of the state's sales output, 3.8 percent of jobs, 2.5 percent of labor income, and 2.9 percent (\$39.6 billion) of labor and property income and indirect business taxes.

You can see why we are thrilled to add this new degree to our program. If you have any questions, feel free to call me (Brian Scott, Professor of Horticulture at Mt. SAC) at (909) 274-4539 or email me at bscott@mtsac.edu. 

TURF TEAM NEWS



Turf Team Finishes Strong in STMA Student Challenge!

The Seventh Annual Student Challenge took place in Austin, Texas at the Sports Turf Managers Association's 22nd Annual Conference and Exhibition. The conference was held January 11-15, 2011. For the fourth consecutive year, Mt. SAC enrolled two teams. Team 1 members are Pat Escalera, Tom Skelton, Chaz Perea and Wade Anderseck. Team 2 members are Kevin Marsh, Chris Romo and Matt Janney. The team coaches are Brian Scott, Professor of Horticulture and Steve Dugas, adjunct Professor of Horticulture.

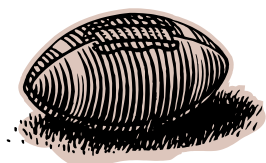
tion and Morphology, Soil Management, Soil Fertility, Water Management, Drainage, Turfgrass Mathematics, Pest Identification and Manage-

State finished second, while the University of Maryland finished third in the Two Year College category. Mt. SAC Team 2 placed sixth. This is an

The 2011 Mt. Sac Turf Team would like to thank the following sponsors for making it possible for them to compete this year: West Coast Turf, Rain Bird, the Greater Los Angeles Basin Sports Turf Managers Association, Jane Roth, Bill Marsh, Bob and Dawn Marsh, Larry and Bonnie Marsh, Barbara Vanassa, Dan and Julie Weatherford, Art Partida,



Jerry Budnick and Fred Herrera. The donations of these organizations and private individuals fully funded the team's trip this year. We truly could not have done it without their support. Thank you all!



The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Student Challenge consists of several parts. Included in the test are Turfgrass Identification, Selec-

tion and Morphology, Soil Management (both turf and non-turf areas), and essay questions pertaining to real life sports turf management scenarios.

This year there were approximately 33 teams competing, consisting of both four year and two year colleges from across the country. The Mt. SAC Team 1 placed first, Penn

State finished second, while the University of Maryland finished third in the Two Year College category. Mt. SAC Team 2 placed sixth. This is an amazing finish for both teams, to say the least. The first place finish comes with a \$4,000.00 award to be used to enhance the turfgrass science program at Mt. SAC. Pictured above, from left to right are: Steve Dugas, Pat Escalera, Kevin Marsh, Chaz Perea, Wade Anderseck, Matt Janney, Chris Romo, Brian Scott and Tom Skelton.



not know which documents are genuine or not. That is not my is not my expertise. Down the line if it is determined that something doesn't match the information provided by the state or feds, I must at that time notify the employee and they are required to sort out the issue. If they can't then within a certain amount of time I have to let them go.

What do you think?

I want people to be compensated adequately.

Most of them are. I think that's pretty much a myth. I think that's a tool that the people that are very anti-immigrants use. Now there are always some owners that are going to be abusive. But most people that are success-

ful in our industry play by the rules.

A landscaper on the east coast told me that when I get my business going I should just hire day laborers to get started.

I wouldn't, but I have been told that the day laborers often demand higher wages than someone working for a company. They set the going rate themselves.

I have been told many of the day laborers are able to work here legally, but they just prefer to work as a day laborer.

One must weigh the costs. I can bet those that hire the day laborers do not carry workers' compensation insurance. That is against the law. Imagine this: if that individual should hurt himself on the job, you as the employer are fully responsible. If that individual requires medical attention, the facility to which you take him must report workplace injuries to the state. The state comes back to the employer and asks, what's up with the no workers compensation? The fine for not having workers compensation coverage is huge.

Do you recommend taking business classes?

Oh my gosh yes. A little psychology would be good, too. To be able to analyze your clients. You've got to be able to know what they can and can't pay. My goal was to never be the most expensive, but not the cheapest person on the block, either. Going to school is one of the best things

you can do. What I think is great about Mt. SAC and also Cal Poly is that they're pretty hands-on. It's learn by doing.

Do you work in CAD?

No. What I have found for clients is that people need to have a visual—a flat aerial plan tells them nothing. So I have a young lady

who recently just graduated from Cal Poly Pomona who does it for me in Photoshop. People love it. She takes a before photo and

puts pictures on top of it so they can visualize it. It's the best thing ever.

What else do you recommend to aspiring landscapers?

Networking. When I joined CLCA 14 years ago I had no idea the empowerment I could get—not because it's because it's such a fantastic association but because I met people. They become your buddies and you can talk to someone who's been in a situation you're in. They may not have the answer, but it gives you an alternative thought process that helps you solve problems.

I love the young mind. Our [local CLCA chapter] treasurer and president are both young. I thrive on hearing the young opinion, because that's the future. I only have maybe 10 years left in this career, 'cause I'm 55 already.

You're very well preserved!

Thank you! It's because I'm happy most of the time.



Barbara's To-Do advice for new landscapers

- Get a credit line if you can to help cover expenses like payroll
- Take business classes
- Network!
- Try to establish a maintenance route
- Follow the rules—get licensed, get insured
- Have outside hobbies. "I'm reading this book called *Hot House Flowers*. It talks about the nine flowers that are supposed to be associated with one's life: gloxinia for love, moonflower for fertility. When you have your own business you need to have hobbies to take you away from the grind of the everyday."

Plant profile

Prunus species

Flowering cherries for Southern California

Three selections of flowering cherries have emerged as doing well in Southern California with low chilling requirements. They offer spectacular flower color.

***Prunus subhirtella* 'Autumnalis'** (at right): Starts blooming at Thanksgiving and will bloom through winter to early spring here in Southern California. Produces double pinkish white flowers on a tree that is 25' to 30' wide. This provides great winter color. There is a small specimen at the Horticulture Unit.

***Prunus* 'Beni-Hoshi'**: Tree with broad dome and massive blooms of white to shell-pink flowers. The tree grows to a 25' to 30' spread. There are beautiful specimens at Descanso Gardens on the main lawn and magnolia lawn.

***Prunus serrulata* 'Kwanzan'**: Tree grows very upright to 35' tall by 25' wide. Form is much like an inverted cone. Large double pink flowers to tend to hang down. Once again, beautiful specimens on magnolia lawn at Descanso Gardens. — Dave Lannom



Agricultural Literacy Trail Opportunity

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR FUN CAMPUS PROJECT

As we move into the new Agricultural Sciences building we will begin creating displays for the planned Agricultural Literacy Trail. This permanent installation will be a self-guided walking tour through Mt. SAC's Agriculture

facilities, with displays exploring aspects of California agriculture. (See Clippings Fall 2010 for full article on the trail.)

We will form teams this spring to begin developing displays, focusing first on the plant-related displays. We hope to finish the following plant displays during the fall.

- Cacti and Succulents
- Bamboo
- Efficient Landscape Irrigation
- Turf
- Turf Alternatives
- Home Fruit Orchard
- Vegetable Plots
- Container Gardening

If you are interested in getting involved, contact Dave at dlannom@MtSac.edu.

the dirt.



news from the Hort Unit
by Jesus Ramirez

It's (almost) spring!

We are happy to report a successful poinsettia sale for the month of December 2010. We had eight varieties, the most popular being Prestige Red, Strawberries and Cream, and Winter Rose.

For our upcoming spring sales at Descanso Gardens and on campus, we are trying something new: peppers and tomato plants in quarts. Heidi Kitahara (with some guidance from Dave) researched the plants, and we ordered seeds and germinated the plants in the retractable-roof greenhouse. Heidi has done an excellent job of watering and monitoring



the vegetable crop. She has gone more than the extra mile to make this crop a success.

**Our Descanso Gardens
Spring Plant Sale is coming
up soon, April 7-10!**

Our sales are always a reflection of the times. We are hopeful that this spring's forecast will be sunny, bringing an abundance of sales.



Our spring plant sale at Descanso is a great way to celebrate the end of winter and kick-start your spring garden. This year we'll be featuring edibles such as tomatoes and peppers!



A Visit from Bob “Bono” Perry

By Sandy Gillis

One of the many benefits of a Mt. SAC education: bang for your buck. Two: The breadth and depth of material. Three: Expanding the boundaries of the classroom, through field trips, walking labs, and guest speakers.

Case in point: Students enrolled in Soil Sciences class were recently granted a visit by landscape legend Bob Perry. For those of you who have perhaps been studying geology inside a cave for the past 10 years, Bob Perry is a lauded international authority on California native plants, an influential landscape architect, a sought-after speaker, and author of several useful and drop-dead gorgeous horticulture books. A landscape architect, Cal Poly Pomona Professor Emeritus, author, and expert on ecology, plant communities, and water conservation, he is the Bono of the sustainability set (i.e., a rock star combined with a god). He also gets comparisons to Indiana Jones, for his leather hat, bold horticultural adventuring, and ability to disappear mysteriously into the night after a lecture.

Oh, and one more thing: Before completing his B.S. at Cal Poly Pomona, Perry took a variety of classes at Mt. SAC, including history, photography, and business. He then went on to complete his B.S. in Landscape Architecture at Cal Poly Pomona and his Master’s Degree in Landscape Architecture at UC Berkeley.

To our class, Perry delivered a comprehensive lecture on Southern California water allocation and determining water requirements. Perry deconstructed scientific assessments of plants, geography, climate, soils, and irrigation quantity and efficiency to help us better understand the challenges inherent in the “simple” task of watering landscapes, large and small, native and exotic.

Perry explained the principals covered in his newest, well-received book, *Landscape Plants for California Gardens*. He introduced the research protocols he followed, and reviewed the importance of developing hydro-zones in irrigated landscapes.



Perry framed the imperative for preserving water in terms of Assembly Bill 1881. We all must comply and reduce water consumption—but to do so, there are a few points to understand.

First: how much water is needed by plants and landscapes? Climate and microclimate including temperature, precipitation, humidity and wind are the first considerations. Next are plants, irrigation, and soils or topography. For his research, Perry uses the California Irrigation Management Information System at www.CIMIS.ca.gov to help calculate water needs, and understand specific plant requirements.

To develop a water use measurement guide, a statewide team of ecologists studied various plants. (Perry was one of the regional consultants on the study initiated by the Water Conservation Office of the California Department of Water Resources, although he didn’t mention this to our class.) Grass has the highest water consumption, so it was selected as the reference crop for converting water into biomass.



Who says you can’t go home again? Mt. SAC’s Brian Scott and his former professor, now friend, Bob Perry

Perry outlined the California water conservation allowance, the amount of supplemental water needed to sustain a plant. A more generous supply is allowed for desert areas. But even with compensation for geography, temperature, soil and precipitation, Perry stated the landscape industry has vigorously resisted conservation efforts.

Linking plants to our soil studies is the idea all plants, even oaks, have the majority of their roots no deeper than 18 inches, with the top 3 to 4 inches of soil being the best for root growth. This clue leads us to examine a soil's infiltration rate in order to find an efficient watering schedule. In loamy clay soils, for example, the infiltration rate is four inches in five to 20 hours.

If a plant requires two inches of water per month, Perry recommends applying the entire amount of necessary water during one scheduled watering cycle. This conserves water better than applying one half inch four times in a month. Smart controllers can be used to create a layer of soil hydrated at field capacity. When irrigation is scheduled to sustain plants, smart controllers will continue to deliver slow, deep water, meeting the moisture depth and volume necessary to reach field capacity and available water.

Another consideration for watering efficiently is understanding and achieving the leaf growth-to-root proportion. Make sure this is balanced. In nature the root structure is 10 times greater than the leaf and stem structure. Leaf loss can signal drought stress. Water stress or drought conditions can induce dormancy. Cold temps can trigger leaf


loss, too, so take several factors into account when diagnosing. Improper watering can also invite pests and disease, which weaken plants.

Plants respond to the conditions provided. A woodland oak might grow to be 12 feet tall in its native habitat. With regular irrigation, the same tree might grow to be 30 feet tall. Same tree, different conditions, will produce different results.

He reminded us of the alchemy that unites everything, including plants, people, wooden lecterns, all made of the same elements: carbon, hydrogen and water.

California native plants work as fast as they can during the rainy, winter months, November through February, possibly March. When no water is available, plants go into a state of dormancy.

At lecture's end, Perry diverged from his scientific approach to a sense of wonder at all living entities, including plants, and their environment. He reminded us of the alchemy that unites everything, including plants, people, wooden lecterns, all made of the same elements, carbon, hydrogen and water. His personal challenge has been to design landscapes that can sustain a lifestyle without damaging the earth's atmosphere.

Students were allowed to purchase signed copies of his third book, all 640 problem-solving oversized pages. A seven-year project, the book commanded 18 months of intense concentration at the end. Landscape Plants for California Gardens is a necessity for any serious student or professional interested in California plant communities and water management. Bob Perry's visit to Soils Science class was a luxury. 



April

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
				1	2 Ag Field Day	3
4	5	6	7 Spring Sale at Descanso Gardens April 7-10	8	9	10
11	12 Horticulture Career Night (5 p.m.)	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 Agri-Science Camp—Animal Science April 29-30	30 Weekend	May 1

May

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
2	3 Mother's Day Sale May 2-5	4	5	6 New Agricultural Sciences Building Dedication	7 Mt. SAC Farm Day	8
9	10	11	12	13 Agri-Science Weekend Camp— Plant Science May 13-14	14	15

COMING UP IN JUNE & JULY ...

Annual Ag Banquet: June 4

Commencement: June 17

Agri-Science Week-Long Camp: June 27-July 1





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internship,
scholarship,
or other listings to
dlannom@mtsac.edu**

Send us your opinions,
story ideas, jokes, or what-
ever! bscott@mtsac.edu or
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