

Owen Washam

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Summary

County Extension Agent providing leadership in determining, implementing, and evaluating agriculture programs which are designed to solve social, economic, and environmental challenges in Montgomery County, N.C. Primary duties to consumers and commercial producers include horticulture technical support, pesticide education, plant health diagnostics, and solving complex problems. Experienced in cultivation and safe handling of specialty crops, organic practice and certification, applied agronomic research, science communication to a variety of audiences, and fostering positive relationships with farmers.

Commented [OW1]: You use problems in this statement twice, it's vague. Consider using "challenges" in place of one of the problems

Pertinent Skills & Abilities

- **County Extension** – technical support, agricultural educational programming, science communication, funding acquisition and management, webpage management, marketing, volunteer group management, student advising
- **Applied Research** – authority of information on organic horticultural crop production, evaluation and diagnostics of agronomic pests, research trialing of food and ornamental crops, statistical analysis, communicating results using various methods to diverse audiences
- **Horticulture** – skilled in and able to learn a wide variety of horticulture methods and systems

Education

M.S., Plant Pathology. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI
B.S., Horticultural Science, *Cum Laude*. North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N.C.
B.S., Plant Biology, *Cum Laude*. North Carolina State University, Raleigh, N.C.

Relevant Experience

AGRICULTURE EXTENSION AGENT | TROY, NC | AUG 2023 – PRESENT

45 hours worked per week. Supervisor: Chrissy Haynes

Agricultural Extension, 90% Horticulture and 10% Forestry. Responsibilities include:

- Assists farm and homeowners with technical problems
- Advises producers on educational and grant programs
- Provides leadership to the county Master Gardener volunteer program
- Communicates regularly across multiple platforms on pertinent horticultural topics
- Promotes local food initiatives and agribusiness
- Implements community agricultural education and evaluation
- Analyzes and reports program impacts and outcomes

Commented [OW2]: Maybe a number here or somewhere in these bullet points? Number of master gardeners?

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RESEARCH ASSISTANT | MADISON, WI | SEPT 2020 – MAY 2023

40 hours worked per week. Supervisor: Dr. Erin Silva

Plant Pathology M. Sci. research program. Responsibilities included:

- Served as an authoritative source of information on vegetable production through literature review
- Prepare reagents for on-farm, laboratory, and greenhouse research studies
- Collect, prepare, evaluate, and verify samples and supporting records
- Maintain detailed records of research data
- Maintain, calibrate, and modify specialized equipment for test and evaluation procedures
- Dispose of waste, both chemical and biological
- Manage research projects using technical knowledge in laboratory, field, and greenhouse
- Analyze and summarize data using personal computer and R software
- Presented horticultural research methods to a variety of audiences through visual posters, informative interviews, press releases, and scientific publications

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CORNELL SUMMER SCHOLAR | GENEVA, NY | MAY – AUGUST 2019

40 hours worked per week. Principle Investigator: Dr. David Gadoury

Managed hop (*Humulus lupulus*) farm operations with minimal supervision. Responsibilities included:

- Research of plant pathogen hop powdery mildew (*Podosphaera macularis*)
- Maintain records and locate and compile data and other information from various sources
- Collect, prepare, evaluate, and verify samples and supporting records
- Keep detailed records of experimental data
- Prepare solutions and reagents for laboratory, field, and greenhouse experiments
- Participate in phases of research process by performing a variety of complex, technical duties
- Contribute ideas towards planning and sequencing the technical aspects of the research
- Perform a full range of techniques and studies using a variety of specialized equipment
- Communicated results visually, verbally, and in writing to a variety of audiences

RESEARCH – PLANT PATHOLOGY, HORTICULTURE| RALEIGH, NC | MAY 2018 – MARCH 2020

20 hours worked per week. Principle Investigator: Dr. Mark Hoffmann

Assisted laboratory team in strawberry field production and soil pathogen investigation. Responsibilities included:

- Field preparation, planting, fertilizing, maintaining irrigation systems, harvesting, collection of yield data, and monitoring crop pathogens in a laboratory setting.
- Initiate action to remediate technical difficulties and results, recommending resolutions to principal investigator
- Maintain inventory of chemicals and stock solutions in laboratory
- Dispose of waste, both chemical and biological
- Improve techniques and standard operating procedures to satisfy the needs of the research project
- Developed plant pathogen plating assay and record horticultural research plot pathogen levels
- Communicated results to a variety of audiences

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PLANT BREEDING INTERN | MILLS RIVER, NC | MAY 2018 - AUG 2018

40 hours worked per week. Principle Investigator: Dr. Thomas Ranney

Managed ornamental plant nursery operations with limited supervision. Responsibilities included:

- Potting media preparation, seeding, plant propagation, transplanting, mulching, irrigating, fertilizing, pruning, tissue culture, research plot maintenance, and data collection.
- Conducted independent research project investigating *Hydrangea*
- Research project results were presented orally and in writing.

RESEARCH - PLANT PATHOLOGY | WAYNESVILLE, NC | AUG 2017 – AUG 2018

40 hours worked per week. Principle Investigator: Dr. Inga Meadows

Investigation of the plant pathogen *Calonectria* disease complex on *Sarracenia* plants. Responsibilities included:

- Researching and writing grants, experiment design/execution, trial management, inoculation, disease rating, harvest, collection, and analysis of data, and writing academic articles.
- Research results were orally and visually presented at national and international professional meetings.

RESEARCH TECHNICIAN | MILLS RIVER, NC | MAY 2017 – AUG 2017

40 hours worked per week. Principle Investigator: Dr. Inga Meadows, others

Plant pathology research at Mtn. Hort. Crops Research and Extension Center. Responsibilities included:

- Researched pathogen relationships with vegetables, herbaceous ornamentals, and grasses.
- Built skills in intensive fruit and vegetable farming operations, fungicide application, disease monitoring, pathogen isolations, and applied laboratory research.
- Communicated scientific results to community members through written factsheets.
- Contributed to decisions regarding unintended pests and pathogens that afflict field trial crops and participated in deciding how to move forward with the experiment.
- General farm hand with varied field management duties 16 hours per week. Farm crew supervisors included station director Jeff Chandler, Dr. Tom Kon, Dr. Tom Ranney, Dr. Inga Meadows, Dr. Dilip Panthee, Dr. Randy Gardner, Dr. Mike Parker, Dr. Sara Villani

Professional Development

Oral Presentations

- American Society for Horticultural Science – Chicago, IL (August 2022)
- National Conference of Undergraduate Research – Bozeman, MT (March 2020)*
- International Carnivorous Plant Society World Conference – Santa Rosa, CA (August 2018)
- The Native Plant Podcast – Asheville, N.C. (June 2018)
- Departmental Seminar – NC State University, (April 2018)
- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Administration, NC State University (November 2017)

Poster Presentations

- American Phytopathological Society – Omaha, NE (June 2022)
- American Society for Horticultural Science – Orlando, FL (August 2020)*
- Cornell Summer Symposium – Cornell University (July 2019)
- National Conference of Undergraduate Research – Kennesaw State University (April 2019)
- International Carnivorous Plant Society World Conference – Santa Rosa, CA (August 2018)
- National Conference of Undergraduate Research – University of Central Oklahoma (April 2018)
- State Undergraduate Research Symposium – NC State University (April 2018)

Conferences (Attendee Only)

- Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference – Savannah, GA (Jan. 2024)
- Perennial Farm Gathering – Madison, WI (Dec. 2020) *
- Tomato Field Day, Mountain Hort. Crops Research and Extension Center – Mills River, N.C. (2017, 2018)
- Speaking of Gardening – Asheville, N.C. (August 2018)
- Mid-South Hydrangea – Memphis, TN (June 2018)
- Mid-South Native Plant – Birmingham, AL (October 2017)

Professional Organizations

N.C. and National Association of County Agricultural Agents
UW-Madison Plant Sciences Graduate Council – President 2022, Representative 2021
American Society of Horticultural Science and American Phytopathological Society
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Pi Alpha Xi Iota Chapter
JC Raulston Arboretum
NC State Water Polo – Officer 2019-2020
National Eagle Scout Association

Awards

2025 N.C. Department of Agriculture Resilient Food System Infrastructure Grant - \$71,056
2020-2023 Graduate Research Grants: Assistantship (approx. \$150,000), Research/Travel Grants (approx. \$3500)
2016-2020 Undergraduate Research Grants: 7 totaling \$5,350 (detailed list upon request)
2018 Continuing Excellence Award 2019 \$5000
2016 – 2019 Shelton Leadership Scholarship \$3000
2016 Academic Excellence Award \$6800
2014 Eagle Scout with bronze, gold and silver palms
2014 Eagle Scout Sponsor Award

* Events that may have been affected, reformatted, or cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic

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References

Dr. Erin Silva (Graduate Advisor)
Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Plant Pathology
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Dr. Mark Hoffmann
Small Fruits Extension Specialist, Assistant Professor, Strawberry and Grape; North Carolina State University
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Dr. David Gadoury
Senior Research Associate, Cornell University
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Dr. Inga Meadows
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