

2025 NCAC4 Annual Meeting Summary

Dates: May 28–30, 2025

Host: Texas A&M University, Department of Horticultural Sciences

Location: College Station, TX

Meeting Highlights

- - Keynote Presentations: Leadership from Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Extension, and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.
- - Guest Speakers: Jazmin Albarran (Seed Your Future), Texas Department of Agriculture representative.
- - Tours: Texas A&M Teaching Gardens and Horticulture Teaching, Research, and Extension Center.
- - Workshops: Floral design demonstration, economic impact of horticulture, and consumer food choice science.
- - 2026 Host: University of Arkansas, chaired by Dr. Mary Savin.

University Highlights

Iowa State University

- - New department chair: Dr. Ajay Nair.
- - Awards: CALS Staff Service (Clawson), Extension Achievement (Nair), Golden Cleat (Thoms).
- - New Yard and Garden website launched.
- - Study abroad programs to India and Uganda.
- - Budget challenges due to state cuts.

University of Minnesota

- - \$3.35M in research funding; 32 graduate students.
- - New faculty in turfgrass, woody plant breeding, and social sciences.
- - New online courses and Coursera offerings.
- - Green Collar Scholars™ program recognized nationally.
- - Leadership transition: Dr. Adrian Hegeman incoming interim head.

Michigan State University

- - Stable enrollment; strong graduate numbers.
- - Multiple new hires in sustainable production and weed science.
- - Major greenhouse renovations underway.
- - 9% general fund cut over two years.
- - High national benchmarking in grants and citations.

Texas A&M University

- - New certificate programs in landscape/interior scape and viticulture/enology.
- - Five new faculty hires in 2024–2025.
- - Major USDA and NSF grants; strong royalty income.
- - Outreach: 200,000 youth via Master Gardener programs.
- - Strategic initiatives: podcast, advisory council, and 20M+ website visits.

University of Florida

- - New Crop Transformation Center for citrus HLB resistance.
- - Faculty expansion across research centers.
- - 10 new plant varieties released.
- - Upgraded research and teaching facilities.
- - Increased student engagement through awareness events.

The Ohio State University

- - Stable budget and enrollment; 40% graduate student growth.
- - New hires in forage, weed science, and fermentation.
- - Senate Bill 1 impacts: program consolidation, syllabus transparency.
- - Faculty loss: Dr. Imed Dami (viticulture).

Auburn University

- - Record enrollment and graduate student numbers.
- - New faculty and promotions; strong research funding.
- - Major infrastructure projects: Transformation Garden, aquaponics.
- - FoodU initiative integrates student-grown produce into campus dining.
- - National awards for faculty and extension programs.

NC State University

- - Record external funding (\$121.8M); 21 new plant varieties.
- - 64 graduate and 186 undergraduate students.
- - Four new faculty hires in 2024–2025.
- - Strong international engagement and faculty recognition.
- - JC Raulston Arboretum and CEFS thriving with community impact.

University of Arkansas

- - 81 undergraduates and 19 graduate students in horticulture.
- - New courses and revised internship program.
- - Faculty awards: PECASE (Worthington), Outstanding Team (Blackberry Team).
- - Extension innovations: pecan scab tool, high tunnel resources.
- - Successful fundraising for Teaching Gardens.

University of Georgia

- - 57 undergraduates, 60 minors, 53 graduate students.
- - Seven new faculty hires in 2024–2025.

- - Multiple national awards for faculty in research, teaching, and extension.
- - Strong emphasis on public service and industry engagement.

Included below are compiled images from the various activities and tours that the Department of Horticultural Sciences had organized as a part of the 2025 NCAC4 Annual Meeting.









