UC Davis Students Tour Horticultural Research Facilities and Universities in Germany

by Heiner Lieth

Last year I had the idea of taking a group of students to Germany to learn about European horticulture, and especially German horticulture. My friend at the University of Applied Sciences in Dresden, Germany offered to help me with this idea and offered to help me apply for funding from the Deutsche Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). Earlier in the year we heard that they decided to fund our proposal (to fund all the local costs in Germany) and we immediately set out to assemble the group and to make our travel plans. The students were assigned to various planning tasks and they really assembled the entire trip according to their horticultural interests.

We started the tour on August 12 in Dresden, Germany, and over the next two weeks toured horticultural and cultural sites throughout Germany. We visited various government research stations (Dresden, Erfurt, and Grossbeeren) focusing on ornamental horticulture, pomology, and vegetable crops where researchers made presentations on the research that was going on at their facilities. We also visited universities (HTW Dresden, TU Munich, TU Geisenheim, and U Hannover) where it became clear that the professors were very happy to connect with us and in some cases we were approached about developing ongoing academic relationships. Most of the students in the group had had some research experience at UC Davis and were amazed that much of what they had been exposed to in the past was very relevant to the German scientists. At the same time, we learned a lot about the various facets of horticulture including breeding of horticultural crops, hydroponic production including oxygen and fertility management and suitability of perennial plants.

In addition to the incredible horticultural experiences that the students (and non-students) had, we also had a lot of opportunity for historical and cultural learning as well as connections with German students. In fact, one of the conditions of the DAAD program was that it had to include cultural factors. We learned a lot about how young Germany is as a republic and how turbulent its history has been. It was very sobering for everyone to learn what initiated the various wars and how these came about and how little the German people were able to stop these forces, and how similar these forces are to what we see in the world around us today. The devastating effects from the last World War and the cold war were still present everywhere in the former eastern states. It was very sobering.

As part of this project, students on the trip were given the opportunity to write articles related to their experience on this trip. In fact, we are encouraging our students to write articles for Growing Points to give you a sense of how they see the horticultural world.

Compendium of Strategies to Reduce Tree Root Damage is Now Available

Reducing Infrastructure Damage by Tree Roots: A Compendium of Strategies is available to help you with your tree root problems. The Compendium offers solutions in three different categories: tree, infrastructure, and root zone.

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Dr. Larry Costello and Katherine Jones have compiled information that will serve as a quick and complete reference for all professionals interested in reducing infrastructure damage. Literature citations are included and field photos are used to illustrate techniques whenever possible.

You can obtain a copy from the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture (WCISA) by calling 530-892-1118 or faxing 530-892-1006. Cost is $15.00 per compendium plus $8.00 for shipping and handling in the U.S.

--Jim Geiger, Center for Urban Forest Research (http://cufr.ucdavis.edu)