

User Procedures, Rules and Regulations – January 2013

Introduction

The mission of the West Virginia greenhouses located on the Evansdale Campus of West Virginia is to support the research, teaching, and outreach mission of the University. While the facility is owned by the University, day-to-day management of the facility rests with the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences in the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design. This document applies to all greenhouse use and users unless other specific and legally binding arrangements have been made.

A partner in construction of the greenhouse was the USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station (NRS) Morgantown, WV. A memorandum of agreement between WVU and NRS specifies that the Forest Service has exclusive use of two laboratories on the second floor of the facility, greenhouse bays 3E and 3F and assigned caged storage space. All other space in the facility is for the use of WVU or is space designated to be shared by WVU and NRS. NRS has the right to request the use of two of WVU bays on a priority basis when needed.

Organization

Administrative responsibility for the WVU greenhouse lies with the Director of the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences through the administrative authority of the Dean of the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Design, and ultimately the Provost's office of the University. The greenhouse manager reports to the Director of the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences and informs the greenhouse committee of space requests and current and future management issues of the facility. The greenhouse committee serves in an advisory function on the day-to-day management of the greenhouse, develops rules and regulations tied to use of the facility, and mediates space requests that exceed the available greenhouse space or may be in conflict with greenhouse procedures, rules, and regulations. Each greenhouse committee meeting must have a quorum and issues must receive a majority vote of members present for their decisions to be binding in regards to space requests and allocation, and changes in rules and regulations governing the use of the facility. The committee will consist of 5 members appointed by the Director of the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences. At least one of the members shall be an employee of the USDA Forest Service. Decisions by the committee can be appealed to the Director of the Division of Plant and Soil Sciences.

Guiding principle

The WVU greenhouse committee and personnel will try to accommodate any and all request for space and services that further the research, teaching, and outreach agenda of the University, USDA Forest Service and other parties that use the facility. However, if and when projects or experiments significantly infringe on the work of other users, the greenhouse manager – in consultation with the greenhouse committee and the users that are affected (both the offender and parties negatively affected) – has the right to limit or suspend greenhouse use privileges. The greenhouse committee decisions on the matter are binding but can be appealed to the Plant and Soil Sciences Division Director.

Space requests

Space requests for greenhouse use are to be submitted by mid-term of the fall, spring, and summer semesters preceding the semester in which space is requested. Earlier submittals are encouraged. If space is available, additional off cycle requests will be considered. All requests have to be made in writing and submitted to the greenhouse manager in electronic form. Please refer to this document and the attached space request form on how to appropriately reserve space in the greenhouse. The minimum time allocation of space is two weeks and requests for space should be made in half month increments. Decisions on space

requested by the respective fall, spring, and summer deadlines will be made at least one month before the start of the respective semesters in which users will take occupancy of assigned space. If notification of the approved start dates is needed earlier than one month in advance, the need should be clearly stated in the request for space and if possible the request for space should be made well in advance of the request deadline. If required (see space charges) appropriate and sufficient accounting information should be supplied to bill the user or their respective administrative unit. When requesting space, it is important that the researchers not underestimate or severely overestimate the time needed to complete the project.

Space assignment

In the beginning of the semester preceding space allocation, the greenhouse manager will notify Davis College faculty via the faculty listserv, the greenhouse committee member(s) from the Forest Service and other interested parties of the date when space request forms are due along with a request form. The greenhouse manager will review and try to accommodate routine space requests. If requests exceed available space or are in conflict with routine management, and/or rules and regulations, the greenhouse manager will refer the requests to the greenhouse committee. Final approval of space requests/allocation will rest with the greenhouse committee.

The greenhouse committee will convene as soon as possible after the space request deadline (mid semester) and make decisions on space allocation at least one month before the start of a new semester. Applicants will be notified by e-mail of decisions made by the greenhouse committee soon thereafter. The greenhouse committee reserves the right, in consultation with the client, to make changes to the space request and/or allocation and to limit and restrict the use of the facility to facilitate efficient and effective operation for all users. Restrictions and limitations will be noted on the returned application.

Space environmental controls

All setting and subsequent changes to environmental control settings including supplemental lighting will be made by the greenhouse manager or designee. All requests to change settings should be made in writing and submitted to the greenhouse manager. Temporary changes (less than 8 hours) to facilitate research or teaching operations can be made by the user only upon consultation with the greenhouse manager or designee.

The greenhouse manager will consult with each researcher prior to changing any setting. Should an emergency dictate a change in setting in order to protect plants and/or equipment or facilities, the changes will be documented by the greenhouse manager and the details provided to each researcher.

Vacating space

Space must be vacated at the termination of the allocated period unless prior arrangements have been made with the greenhouse manager. Prior arrangements will include a written request for project extension (an e-mail or memo will suffice). The greenhouse manager will when necessary consult with the greenhouse committee and make a decision on extension requests. Only if space is available can a project go beyond the requested period. Users will be given one week to vacate the greenhouse after a decision by the greenhouse committee is made on forced termination of a project. It is absolutely essential that projects provide conservative, but realistic space requests. Space not used for extended periods of time (more than 1 month) will revert back to the pool of assignable space in order to avoid inefficient use of the facility. If the user can demonstrate a clear need – as is the case of quarantine – for limited use of a greenhouse bay, exceptions will be granted by the greenhouse committee. However, the user will be assessed space charges based on the entire greenhouse bay, not just the space occupied by plants. It is the responsibility of the user to clean and disinfect the greenhouse bay that is to be vacated. If the vacated space is not properly cleaned and the greenhouse staff has to clean the area a fee will be assessed to the user to cover expenses for the services provided.

Assignment priorities

Priority for greenhouse space will be given to PSS faculty, staff, and students and Forest Service scientists (2 bays). Programs outside the Division of PSS and the Forest Service will be assigned space excluding bays 3E and 3F if and when available. Projects requiring greenhouse space with tight environmental tolerances will be given priority in assignment of space in the new greenhouse. Projects that do not require strict environmental control will be assigned to the older, plastic covered facility next to the new greenhouse.

User fees

It is fully anticipated that there will be user fees imposed in the future to cover costs associated with greenhouse maintenance and operations. Greenhouses operated by sister institutions routinely have user fees. The fees enable the facility to be maintained and operated at a level needed by researchers and instructors to conduct high quality investigations. The Division of Plant and Soil Sciences in consultation with other entities within WVU are working to establish appropriate levels of user fees. The users of space in the greenhouse will be notified when user fees are to be imposed.

Some services will be provided by the greenhouse staff such as insect and disease scouting, pesticide application, routine cleaning of common areas, access to storage, help in ordering greenhouse specific supplies, general production information for plants in a greenhouse setting (technical but not research expertise), and routine maintenance. Specialty items needed in research and teaching must be provided by the investigator. Personnel with assigned space will be responsible for maintaining and watering of plants unless specific arrangements have been made with the greenhouse manager. Arrangements for maintenance, holiday or weekend watering or watering under extenuating circumstances can be made with the greenhouse manager. However, staffing will dictate the level and availability of services beyond the routine services provided. It may be possible in some circumstances to obtain specific services for a fee. Interested investigators need to see the greenhouse manager if there are questions about services available.

Rules and regulations

1. Greenhouse space will generally be used only for growing of plants and related plant handling. Exceptions will be considered on an individual basis. Users should refrain from performing potting, transplanting, and sowing operations in greenhouse bays unless to do so would interfere with teaching and/or research protocols. Drying of soil, manure, or any other inorganic or organic materials is strictly forbidden. Drying rooms and ovens are available both in the Agricultural Sciences Building and at the Agronomy Farm.
2. Greenhouse space will not be used for long term storage of laboratory supplies, dead plant material, pots, media, unmixed fertilizer, irrigation systems, lights, gas cylinders, containers and buckets other than trash cans, chemicals of any sort but especially pesticides and any other item that detracts from the visual appeal of the facility or which can create a safety hazard. Storage, both inside and outside the building, will be made available on a first come first serve basis. However, items cannot be stored longer than 6 months without prior written approval from the greenhouse manager.
3. It is the responsibility of the occupant to maintain a safe and clean work and plant growing environment. Users should at a minimum have completed workers protection standards training, in addition to any other required safety and health training required by WVU, the state of West Virginia, or the federal government. The cleanliness of the facility should reflect well on the Division of Plant Soil Sciences, the Davis College, and WVU as a whole. Users are required to routinely clean any and all areas under their direct control or use (greenhouse rooms, storage areas, and work area in the head house).

4. The production or growing of plants for personal use is strictly prohibited. No exceptions! The introduction of unwanted pests, the difficulty in verifying ownership, unethical use of government facilities, and maintaining an equitable system of greenhouse use by individuals who do not have user agreements are all problematic.

5. All plant material to be moved into the facility will be inspected by the greenhouse manager for insects and diseases and overall health. The greenhouse manager in consultation with the plant owner reserves the right to quarantine or dispose of any plant material that is deemed diseased or harbors insects.

6. Hallways are to be kept free and clear of any and all obstructions. Trash cans will be provided at the entrance of each greenhouse room and emptied routinely. No plants will be grown or placed in hallways.

7. All rooms will be open to routine inspection for cleanliness, diseases and insects, safety and health violations, and any other applicable university, state, and federal regulations. Research and teaching may require that greenhouse rooms be secured against unauthorized access. However, the greenhouse manager will have access to all of the facility at all times.

Failure to adhere to the above mentioned rules and regulations can and will, upon two written warnings, result in suspension of greenhouse use privileges.