



Horticulture Student Writing: What's in a Name?

By Jordan Walker



As arguably one of Shakespeare's defining characters, Juliet Capulet utters these words to her lover, Romeo. This classic tale of forbidden love has the capacity to make even the hardest of hearts ache. As they search for ways to come together, the pair often shares sweet nothings in the midst of short passages. Juliet says to Romeo, "What's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" (Romeo and Juliet II, ii, 1-2). This young woman, saddened by her heavy heart, makes a statement that resonates beyond the realms of love and poetry and plops, quite comfortably, into the niche of gardening enthusiasts.

Dirt. A four letter word that crams much meaning in such a concise package. I imagine mothers screaming at white pants, grandmothers frowning at stains on picnic blankets, children with smudge-stained faces, dogs with brown noses and evidence of sneakers on clean floors. Change frame. I meant a space. A landscape. A plot of land, in a busy quad, that is passed by hundreds on a daily basis. Day in and day out, it sits. This 'dirt' waiting to be played in, waiting to stain white pants, dreaming of dogs rolling and tumbling on its barren surface. But no. It still sits.

Hope. A four letter word that often finds itself at the center of a campaign. I hope to graduate; I hope to be successful; we as a people hope for peace; you as a reader hope you find a point to my rambling, but no. I meant the students. I was referring to a specific subset of individuals striving to make a name for this 'dirt.' For we pass by this space on a daily basis. We see the toll these years of neglect have taken on its crust of a surface. For this 'dirt' has become so despicable to the average weed that not so much as a dandelion will take up residence. This 'dirt' looks upon a triangle of turf. They both reside along the same avenue of stained concrete but the turf has the opposite problem of our 'dirt.' They say the grass is always greener, in this case it literally is, but what the 'dirt' has yet to realize is that the 'turf' has its own

gamut of issues. Does the 'dirt' realize that the 'turf' has root rot? That its blades are waterlogged and trampled? That when it rains the moisture hangs around for days, bogging the soil, starving it of breath, crushing the dreams of the St. Augustine. But to the 'dirt' this life, this title 'Saint', is something to behold.

Despite the war between the two, I take you back to the students. Back to the advocates of change. We strive to change the name of these areas. We want them to carry the title 'garden'—make that 'native garden'. For we feel there is splendor in these twelve letters. We feel these warring plots can join as one and provide the passers by with tidbits of knowledge and perhaps be rewarded with a smile. For just as verbal communication portrays an image, so too does non-verbal. The votes are in. Both 'dirt' and 'turf' are willing to change their names.

To take the art out of sculpture, to take the joy out of cooking, to rob a lover of her feelings would not only derail their purposes but would ruin the very emotions so deeply tied to the cause. In the same way, gardening, landscaping, growing, reaping, selling, sharing, and showing are actions

deeply rooted—no pun intended—in the purpose of the landscape advocate. What we as lovers of the land want to share is a splendor, a joy, a fascination with the success that comes from taking the time to appreciate the land below our feet and the potential it has as a medium for education and even more so, avocation.

Jordan Walker is a horticulture student in Dr. Vincent's Horticulture Discovery & Inquiry class. This narrative essay concerns two relatively empty garden spaces located on the Clemson campus between the Poole and Barre buildings, alongside Lehotsky. Walker worked on collecting behavioral data on the space during the previous semester to document how the space was being used prior to redesign. In this piece of writing she reflects on the soon to be renovated areas. The photographs of dirt and turf show you how the space looks now while the sketch by Campus Landscape Architect B. Anderson shows how the space could look. The flower photos are also intended to demonstrate the power of the garden to be planted. Jordan Walker will be graduating in May 2012.

