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Students go green at PLANET Competition

North Georgia Technical College Horticulture students weathered the pouring rain and red clay mud of North Carolina at the 39th Annual PLANET Student Career Days competition. Held at North Carolina State University, ten NGTC students participated in all 28 of the events that highlight the diversity of careers in the “green” industry.

The NGTC team competed against 757 students and 65 schools from both two year and four year colleges and major Universities like BYU, Penn State, Ohio State, North Carolina State, The University of Georgia, Michigan State, Clemson, Auburn and Colorado State just to name a few.

“I am extremely proud of our students that took time out of their busy lives and daily schedules to prepare for and attend this competition,” said Horticulture Instructor Craig Thurmond. “Their performance reminded all of us that even though we are a small school we are capable of competing and holding our own against the biggest and the best programs and students in the nation, including students in bachelors and master level programs.”

The team had set a goal of placing in the top 25, and they met that goal, finishing 21st in the National ranking.

For individual overall rankings, NGTC had four students that placed in the top 50 out of 757 students. They were Scarlett Kilby of Rabun Gap at 27th, followed by Christian Delugach of Clarkesville in 30th place, Cody Turpin of Alto in 37th place, and Tommy Etheridge of Lavonia in 46th place.

Three students also placed in the top 20 in their individual contests. Scarlett Kilby placed 6th in both Annual and Perennial Identification and in Interior Plant Identification. She also placed 19th in Woody Plant Identification. The team of Cary Galloway of Clayton and Susie Berry of Cleveland placed 14th in Irrigation Troubleshooting. Case Dodson was ranked 19th in the Tractor Loader Backhoe event.

Other members of the 2015 NGTC PLANET team included Tracey Pardue of Mt. Airy, Jess Owens of Clayton, and Josh Bowling of Lithia Springs.

“We are very proud of our students and their courage to step up to such a prestigious competition,” said Vice President for Academic Affairs Kathie Ivestor. “Craig Thurmond does an excellent job sharing his expertise in the field, and our students shine because of it.”
Student Career Days is an annual three-day competitive event among students enrolled in horticulture programs from colleges and universities across the country and internationally. For more information, visit [www.studentcareerdays.org](http://www.studentcareerdays.org).

For more information on the Horticulture program at North Georgia Technical College, contact Craig Thurmond, [cthurmond@northgatech.edu](mailto:cthurmond@northgatech.edu) or visit [www.northgatech.edu](http://www.northgatech.edu).

Picture: Back (L-R) Case Dodson, Tommy Etheridge, Christian Delugach, John Mather, Cody Turpin, Josh Bowling, Jess Owens; Front: Scarlett Kilby, Tracy Pardue, Cary Galloway, Susie Berry, and Craig Thurmond. ###