

GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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New Funding for Plant Protection Secured

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The 2023 funding allocations for Plant Protection Act's Section 7721 (PPA 7721) were recently announced. Initially established in the 2008 Farm Bill as the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Program and revised in the 2014 Farm Bill to the Plant Protection Act, PPA 7721 provides \$75 million to fund projects meant to strengthen the Nation's infrastructure for pest detection, surveillance and identification; threat mitigation; safeguarding the nursery production system; and responding to plant pest emergencies.

For 2023, USDA is funding 322 projects, conducted by universities, states, federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, non-profits and Tribal organizations carried out in 48 States, Guam and Puerto Rico. Many of these projects were encouraged and supported by AmericanHort as a direct result of its interactions with the industry.

Of particular importance is over \$900,000 allocated for Box Tree Moth (BTM) response initiatives, including continued pest management, biological control, outreach and survey work for BTM. These efforts should provide the foundation for near-term boxwood plant certification and longer-term landscape-scale mitigation of BTM.

Vascular Streak Dieback (VSD) was also an important proposal topic, with several research-oriented projects being sponsored, as well as a regional survey for VSD. Another project that AmericanHort helped to coordinate seeks to streamline and improve the systems approach for geranium (*Pelargonium*) offshore-produced cuttings, ultimately leading to a more efficient supply chain. **GT**