Spotted lanternfly; SNA and other conferences; SCRI grants; Wage & benefit survey



Research and News on the latest pest management techniques

GROWERTALKS MAGAZINE greenPROFIT MAGAZINE

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Pest Talks

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Spotted lanternfly
SNA Research Conference
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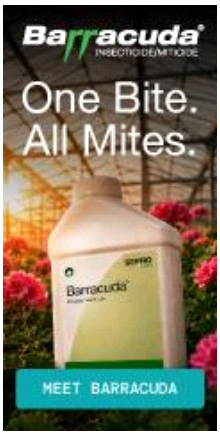






NGMA
National Greenhouse Manufacturers Association



How serious is the spotted lanternfly?

This week's "What the … ?" segment is taking a hiatus. Not that I have nothing to share. Oh, I got some "stumpers," y'all. But I'll save them for next week after I can properly identify them.

I'll share something about spotted lanternfly instead. A reader of this newsletter, "SC": just sent me a one-liner last week, "Start talking seriously about spotted lanternfly!"

SC, this is for you. I wrote a short piece in this newsletter earlier this year. But, words often fail to describe the magnitude of the problem. It certainly doesn't convey how freaked out folks in the infested areas are. So, I'll show you a video.

If that many dead lanternflies could be found at one building in Allentown, Pennsylvania, imagine how many more are in the area and the kind of damage they can do to trees and shrubs. I haven't seen a comprehensive assessment of the economic damage of the spotted lanternfly, but it's estimated in the hundreds of millions.

This pest is now found in Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia. It's likely to spread beyond these states, so everyone should keep an eye out for them (if you are outside of the infested areas) and be careful what you ship out of the infested areas.

My thanks to Suzanne "The Buglady" Wainwright-Evans for directing me to the video. Thanks, SC, for reminding me.

SNA Research Conference Proceedings are now available

The proceedings of the 62nd Annual Southern Nursery Association (SNA) Research Conference are now available online. For those who are not familiar with the SNA Research Conference, this event has been held since 1956 as a forum for researchers to share findings relevant to the nursery industry and to avoid duplicate studies. Topics covered include container

production, field production, floriculture, landscape, entomology, pathology and nematology, among others.

The SNA Research Conference Proceedings have been compiled and published since 1991. You can access all volumes from SNA's website. It's impressive how productive this conference has been—3,101 titles in 12,184 pages have been published in 27 years. Much of the research reported at this conference is still referred to regularly. Only a few days ago I cited several pioneering papers on ambrosia beetle management published in these proceedings.

The next SNA Research Conference will be held on January 7-8, 2019, two days before the Mid-Atlantic Nursery Trade Show (MANTS) in Baltimore, Maryland. All are welcome to attend.



SCRI-funded grants that may be relevant to you

Tom Bewick of USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) has been making some researchers very happy in the past few weeks. The 2018 recipients of USDA-NIFA's Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) grants have been notified. After submitting several proposals to the SCRI program, I know how difficult (and what an honor) it is to be selected by the stakeholder review panel and get a nod from the scientific review panel. Out of hundreds of submissions, only 18 were awarded this year. Congratulations to all the 2018 recipients.

You can find this year's recipients through NIFA's Funded Projects portal. A word of caution: This is not the easiest database to use. I suggest y'all search by using the key word "specialty crop". And, the amount of funding listed on the database is not necessarily the full amount of funding. The SCRI program often provides only partial funding to each project for two to three years, then additional funding at a later time for the remainder of the project. That way, the program is able to fund as many projects as the budget allows.

I dug through the database and found several 2018 funded projects that are relevant to ornamentals, turfgrass and herbs.

A team led by Marc van Iersel of the University of Georgia was awarded $5 million on a project to optimize the use of high-efficiency LED lights in greenhouse production to minimize energy cost. A disclaimer: Marc co-advised my Master's thesis project. Rightfully, I am mighty proud of Marc's grant award!

Another big grant was awarded to Muthu Bagavathiannan of Texas A&M University and his colleagues for a project on addressing herbicide resistance in annual bluegrass in managed turf. Our friends in the North perhaps wonder, "Why would anyone be concerned about herbicide resistance in annual bluegrass? That's a turfgrass!" Well, yes, annual bluegrass is a turfgrass, but not in the South and the Transition Zone. In warm-season turf, annual bluegrass is actually a winter annual weed. Years of herbicide applications have created a storm of resistant annual bluegrass.

Is downy mildew limiting your basil production? A team led by James Simon of Rutgers University is trying to change that by breeding for downy mildew and fusarium resistant basil varieties, and by developing seed treatment and disease management programs. In fact, Rutgers' program has already introduced several resistant varieties. See the story here.

Several planning grants were also awarded by SCRI. These are smaller grants (no more than $50,000) that allow researchers and their stakeholders to get together and develop successful SCRI grants. One of the planning grants was awarded to my friend Jason Oliver at Tennessee State University, to develop a program to address flatheaded borer management in tree nurseries.

The other planning grant that caught my eye was awarded to Roberto Lopez of Michigan State University to expand production of fresh herbs in controlled environments.

Training opportunities for the rest of 2018

If y'all are looking for some opportunities to learn new skills or receive pesticide license recertification credits, I have a few suggestions for you:

The North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville is hosting its 8th annual Horticulture Industry IPM Symposium on September 27. The conference will start with a keynote speech by Rose Buitenhuis of Vineland Research and Innovation Center, followed by three concurrent sessions with a series of talks on plant production and pest management by well-known speakers, such as the Windham brothers (Mark and Alan) and my friends Anthony Lebude, Steve Frank and Steve Arthurs.

University of Florida's Greenhouse Training Online Courses will start the "Disease Management" course, the sixth in the series, on October 1. Training is available in English and Spanish. This training course is so good that the American Floral Endowment has recently awarded the program an education grant.

Want to know about the latest or just get refresher training on biological control? Attend the BioControls USA East Conference, October 10-12, in Rochester, New York. October 10 is reserved for several field tours, and educational sessions are scheduled for October 11 and 12. The BioControls USA conferences (BioControls USA West is scheduled for March) have become the premier conferences and expos for practitioners and suppliers of biological control.

The GIE+EXPO, or the Green Industry & Equipment Expo, will be held October 17-19 at Kentucky Exposition Center, Louisville, Kentucky. Educational sessions are available for equipment dealers and landscape care professionals, with programs ranging from School of Grounds Management to UTV (Utility Task Vehicle) University.

A series of presentations on pest identification and management will be given at the Northeast Greenhouse Conference and Expo on November 7 and 8. The venue is Boxboro Regency Hotel in Boxboro, Massachusetts. Margery Daughtrey, Suzanne Wainwright-Evans, Rich Cowles and others will be speaking.



Webinar on cannabis

The *GrowerTalks* webinar series is another source of educational opportunities.

The *GrowerTalks* webinar on October 4 is on "Greenhouse vs indoor cannabis growing," by Nick Earls of Wadsworth Control Systems. I'm kicking myself for not being able to attend this webinar. I'll be visiting a few flower farms in Columbia (the country). I'll watch the archived recording after I get back.

The cannabis industry has intrigued me—and not only because of the potential opportunities. We know so little about how to best grow cannabis plants and manage the pests on them. I've been assisting a grower participating in South Carolina's pilot program in industrial hemp in dealing with some pest issues. I can tell the grower he has hemp russet mites, corn earworms and botrytis, and tell him about these pests all day long. But, I cannot give a satisfactory answer to the follow-up question, "What can I do to kill them without leaving detectable residue in my extract?" Well, I have to find alternative management methods because no pesticide is legally

registered for use on industrial hemp, nor do we know how fast residue breaks down before the harvesting of industrial hemp (or cannabis, for that matter).

Brian Corr's recent column "Continuing education in cannabis" in *GrowerTalks* struck an empathetic chord in me. Brian's column is about a lack of an education or training path for those who are interested in learning and working in the cannabis industry. Public and private universities that receive federal funds don't offer courses on cannabis production because they will risk violating federal law and lose their federal funding. The same can be said about research and extension services.

I can provide extension services (pest identification and management recommendations) to growers of industrial hemp under a pilot program approved by the state of South Carolina. However, I cannot touch cannabis with a 50-foot pole as part of my official duties because it's still a Schedule 1 (I) substance.

It bothers me to turn away folks who can benefit from my knowledge and experience. It scares me to think about what folks are using as pest management tools without proper training or research-based efficacy and safety data. If I cannot help people officially, can I do that on the side legally?

It's a big ol' can of worms. Am I brave enough to open it? I'll have to sleep on that.

Wage & benefit survey

Finally, the last item for this week.

It's time for the 23rd Annual *GrowerTalks* Wage & Benefit Survey (for growers) and the 10th Annual *Green Profit* Wage & Benefit Survey (for retailers and grower-retailers), sponsored by Florasearch, Inc. The surveys have twelve (grower survey) to thirteen (retailer and grower-retailer survey) questions on operations, staffing and salaries you can answer in less than ten minutes. If you keep stopping and struggling with the question, "Now, what did I pay Bubba?," then you should perhaps reacquaint yourself with your business. Or, do I owe you an apology and congratulations on a successful operation that you can stay hands-off?

Save the best for last—enter your email address in the last question for a chance to win a new 128GB iPad!

The lack of a labor force was the central theme of the responses from the 2017 Wage & Benefit Survey. Do you feel the same this year? Tell us your current status and outlook. We'll be collecting the surveys until October 19th and sharing the results in December.

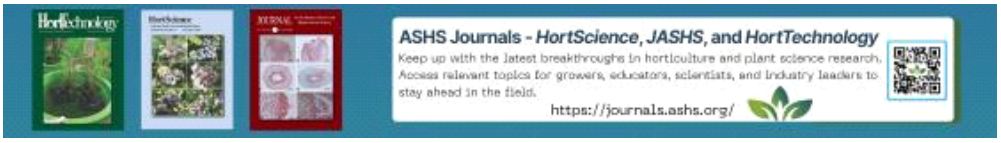
For the *GrowerTalks* grower survey, click here.

For the *Green Profit* retailer and grower-retailer survey, click here.

I'll close this week's newsletter by sharing with you a picture of an azalea caterpillar I found right outside of my home. It's a beauty, isn't it? I'm glad it survived the storm.



Many of you kept me in your thoughts before, during and after Hurricane Florence wreaked havoc in the Carolinas. I thank you. My home and experiment station in Florence, South Carolina, were lucky to be spared the worst, but many of my neighbors weren't so lucky. Rivers in the area have crested or are cresting, and many of our friends and colleagues in the green industry have been flooded or are bracing for the worst flooding many have ever seen. Please keep them in your thoughts. Travel is difficult in some areas because of flooding. If there is an opportunity to help out, please consider doing so through your local organizations.



See y'all next time!



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