

## Gordon S. Taylor, 1921-1992

J. A. LaMondia



Gordon S. Taylor, retired plant pathologist and chief scientist of the Valley Laboratory of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, died 8 September 1992, at 70 years of age.

Dr. Taylor, son of Ernest and Mabel (Taylor) Taylor, was born 12 November 1921 and was raised in Danbury, Connecticut. He served as a pilot in the United States Air Force during World War II and was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross with an oak leaf cluster. He

married Elizabeth "Libby" Campbell in 1946. Gordon Taylor received his B.S. degree in horticulture with high distinction from the University of Connecticut in 1947.

During the summer of 1947, he worked as a summer research assistant in the Department of Plant Pathology at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Perhaps as a result of this experience he went on to earn his M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in phytopathology from Iowa State University in 1949 and 1952.

Dr. Taylor was appointed assistant scientist in plant pathology at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven in 1952. The following year he was promoted to associate scientist and relocated his research program to Windsor, Connecticut, to direct the Experiment Station's Valley Laboratory. Dr. Taylor was promoted to scientist in 1955 and was chief scientist from 1960 until his retirement in 1987.

While at the station, Dr. Taylor was most widely recognized for his research on Connecticut cigar wrapper tobaccos. In the 1950s, weather fleck of tobacco threatened to destroy the tobacco industry in Connecticut. Dr. Taylor was instrumental in identifying ozone as the cause of this problem, and he worked to select and develop tobacco lines resistant to ozone damage. Partially in recognition of his efforts in identifying the cause of weather fleck, the Cigar Manufacturer's Association presented him with their Research Award in 1969. Dr. Taylor conducted research on a wide variety of topics, including the epidemiology

and dispersal of blue mold of tobacco, black shank, mosaic virus diseases, hollow stalk, black root rot, *Botrytis* stem rot, and nematodes of tobacco in Connecticut. He conducted resistance screens to identify pathogen-resistant tobacco lines and developed a breeding program to control tobacco mosaic virus, black shank, and *Fusarium* wilt of tobacco. In addition to tobacco diseases, Dr. Taylor investigated asparagus and potato diseases as well as the effects of atmospheric pollutants on plants.

Dr. Taylor's considerable interest in disease diagnosis and his powers of observation led him to discover a canker of red maples associated with oviposition by the narrow-winged tree cricket and to associate increased *Fusarium* wilt of broadleaf tobacco with infestations of the tobacco cyst nematode.

After 35 years of service to agriculture, tobacco growers, and citizens of the state of Connecticut, Dr. Taylor retired on 31 March 1987. He was a member of the American Phytopathological Society, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Institute of Biological Studies, the Air Pollution Control Authority, the New York Academy of Science, and was elected to American Men and Women of Science in 1979. He was author or coauthor of more than 60 scientific publications.

Dr. Taylor devoted his life to service in his community as well as to science. He was very active in the First Church of Windsor and was a charter member of the Windsor Civitan Club. He served twice as governor of the New England District of Civitan and also as vice president of zone 4 for Civitan International. He was a member of the Windsor Garden Club and since 1983, served on the Board of Directors of the Windsor Land Trust. Dr. Taylor was awarded the Windsor Jaycees Distinguished Service Award and the J. C. Penney Golden Rule Award. As president of the Connecticut Valley Tobacco Historical Society, he was responsible for the development of the J. Luddy Tobacco Historical Museum, which recently opened in Windsor.

Dr. Taylor was dedicated to plant pathology, to Connecticut agriculture, and to his community. He had a tremendous impact on each of these facets of his life, and his contributions to each will be greatly missed. He is survived by his wife Libby; a daughter, Nancy; a brother, Donald; and two sisters, Beth and Eunice.