

Station News

A PROGRESS REPORT for staff

and Friends of America's first Agricultural Experiment Station

Departmental News

STATION STAFF PARTICIPATES IN THE BIG E by Ms. Vickie Bomba-Lewandoski

Attendance at the Big E this year was at record highs at 1,227,889 visitors for the 17 days of the fair from September 14th through September 30th. We hosted a Station booth in the Connecticut Building on Wednesday, September 26th and Thursday, September 27th. The visitors we hosted in the Connecticut in these two days were 42,216 and 35,001 respectively. Our exhibit consisted of poster displays on Sudden Wetland Dieback and Invasive Aquatic Plants along with Station brochures and publications, live honey bees, and apples slices of Golden Smoothie grown at Lockwood Farm in Hamden. The staff members that participated this year were: Mr. Ira Kettle, Ms. Gale Ridge, Ms. Vickie Bomba-Lewandoski, Ms. Tia Blevins, Ms. Rose Bonito, Ms. Lisa Kaczanski, Ms. Roslyn Selsky, and Ms. Rose Hiskes. Thank you for another successful event.

BLUEBIRDS AT LOCKWOOD FARM—SUMMER 2007 by Ms. Lisa Kaczanski



Immature Bluebirds

Photo taken by Ms. Lisa Kaczanski

This was a tough year for the Bluebirds even though we added two new additional nest boxes at Lockwood Farm. I was really excited this spring; but half way through the summer sure signs of trouble were showing.

Last year we had 21 successful fledglings; this year there were only 13. There was potential for at least 25 but the first 4 eggs were, for some reason, abandoned. There was no evidence of predation. The remaining broods were clearly attacked by House Wrens, whom are known to peck the eggs and drop them out of the nest then proceed to build their own nest over the existing Bluebird nest. Next year, we will be installing House Wren Guards on the nesting boxes. These guards will prevent the House Wrens from entering the boxes but the Bluebirds (from what I've read) have no problem with it. European Sparrows were a continued problem this year mainly against the Tree Swallows and House Wrens. They have not (from what I can tell) attacked any of the Bluebird families after the eggs have hatched.

It's tough to see inside of the nest boxes, but Mr. Scott Williams gave me a mechanics mirror, which is a small mirror with an extension, so I can peek into the nest boxes, sometimes directly through the entrance hole. It's really great! One morning (I've spent most of my Saturday mornings at Lockwood) I was spying on a Tree Swallow nest, and when I put the mirror in the nesting box, all the babies thought I was a parent coming with something to eat – what a sight to see these five mouths looking for their meal. The Bluebird babies were more cautious and seemed to lay low. The House Wrens were really tough to see because they build their nest with twigs almost to the roof of the nesting box. House Wrens are tricky; in that they build “dummy” nests, and because House Wrens are protected by the USDA (among all song birds with the exception of the European Sparrows and Starlings), these nests cannot be removed during

the nesting season. It is difficult to determine which is an actual nest as opposed to a dummy nest; so needless to say for weeks I have monitored nests that were essentially decoys. I've read that the male House Wren will build several nests for the female to choose from, but I've also read that they build these "dummy" nests to ward off other competitors. I believe, from what I saw, that the latter is true.

It is very interesting, to me, to see the different types of nests each species builds. The Eastern Bluebird builds their nest primarily of grasses, neat and compact. Their eggs are sky blue. The Tree Swallow nest is comprised of the same compact grass nest as the Bluebird but is lined with feathers. I've noticed that they seem to choose the same color feather for each nest. In other words, a nest will have either all white feathers or all brown feathers. I haven't seen a nest with a mixture of white and brown feathers. (I don't believe this means anything, but I found it interesting). Tree Swallow eggs are pure white. House Wrens build their nests with twigs then a lining of fine grasses. Their eggs are very small and pinkish. Chickadees build their nest with mosses and lichens (the first Chickadee nest I saw I mistook for a mouse nest) their eggs are very small and pinkish. I've read that Tufted Titmice have similar nests but none have nested in the nesting boxes at Lockwood. The House Sparrows build their nests with whatever they can find - garbage and all. Their nests are kind of domed shaped and messy. Their eggs are cream and speckled with brown spots.

This summer we have extended the Bluebird Nest Box Trail to the Valley Laboratory, with five nesting boxes that Mr. James Preste put up for me. Ms. Jane Canepa-Morrison and Mr. John Winarski will be monitoring them next summer. Since they were put up late in the nesting season there hasn't been any activity, but we are hoping Bluebirds find them next spring!

I have registered the Bluebird trail with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology this year. At the end of the nesting season I will send all of my

observations; number of nests, clutch size, number of hatchlings, adult activity, etc., to help with research of the Eastern Bluebird.



Bluebird display at Plant Science Day 2007
Photo taken by Ms. Lisa Kaczinski

DR. JOHN AHRENS CELEBRATED HIS 50TH YEAR WITH THE STATION by Dr. James A. LaMondia

Valley Laboratory staff and families gathered to celebrate Dr. John Ahrens' 50th year at The Station and the Valley Laboratory with a cookout held in his honor at the LaMondia's on the evening of Wednesday August 22. John first started at the Station on August 1, 1957 and ostensibly retired in 1993. He has continued to work and publish after his retirement.



Dr. John Ahrens
Photo taken by Dr. James A. LaMondia

Administration

DR. LOUIS A. MAGNARELLI was interviewed about mosquitoes and encephalitis viruses by John Bergeson of the Connecticut Post (September 5); as Chairperson, conducted a meeting of the Legislative Invasive Plants Council (September 12); attended an Experiment Station Associates meeting and gave a report on Station research and other activities (September 13); and welcomed participants of the Regional Agriculture Summit in Jones Auditorium and gave a report on Station research (September 20).

Grants and Fundraising Office

MS. TESS FOLEY reported on the Farm Aid benefit concert in New York City to support family farms nationwide for Country Folks New England Farm Weekly newspaper (September 9) and met with the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven's Community Garden project, at their partner meeting, attending were officials from the New Haven Community Foundation; the New Haven Land Trust; University of Rhode Island; city of New Haven Parks Department & Community Gardening Association of Connecticut; and DR. MARY JANE INCORVIA MATTINA (September 13).

Analytical Chemistry

DR. BRIAN EITZER along with DR. KIMBERLY STONER was interviewed by Mike Mayko of the Connecticut Post about the analytical methods used to test bee pollen for pesticides (September 13).

Biochemistry and Genetics

DR. NEIL MCHALE presented a lecture on "Evolution and Domestication of Crop Plants" at the Kellogg Environmental Center in Derby to the Naugatuck Valley Audubon Society (September 18).

Entomology

MS. ROSE BONITO set-up and staffed a Station exhibit at the Celebrating Agriculture; Woodstock Fairgrounds (700 visitors to our table) (September 22) and staffed the Station exhibit booth in the Connecticut Building at the Eastern States Exposition (Big E), Springfield MA (September 27).

MR. IRA KETTLE gave a bee presentation to students and staff at the John R. Manson Youth Institution in Cheshire (45 students and staff) (September 5), presented a Honey bee display at Harkness Park, Waterford, Family Day which the Station was prominently promoted (1,463 attendees) (September 9), gave a Honey Bee presentation to the Environmental Coalition Group of Milford (20 attendees) (September 20) and staffed the Station exhibit in the Connecticut Building at the Eastern States Exposition, Springfield MA (September 26 & 27).

MS. ROSE HISKES participated on the insect team at BioBlitz in Middletown (June 8 - 9), participated in a meeting at the Department of Information Technology on getting the "Pesticide Guide Toward Integrated Pest Management for Arborists" on the web (June 13), attended a bee workshop at the University of Connecticut (June 15 - 16), talked to the Hadlyme Garden Club about Butterflies in Hadlyme (24 attendees) (June 27), attended the Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association's summer meeting (July 11), staffed the Station Question and Answer Booth at the Connecticut Tree Protective Association summer meeting in Farmington (July 19), participated in a Connecticut Tree Protective Association meeting about putting the "Pesticide Guide toward Integrated Pest Management" on the web in New Haven (July 25), gave a talk on Butterfly Gardening at the Fairfield Horticultural Society in Westport (August 9), gave a talk on Insects to the Garden Program at Manson Youth Institute in Cheshire (25 attendees) (August 22), along with MR. THOMAS RATHIER and DR. CLAIRE RUTLEDGE, organized and spoke at a seminar "IPM III: Managing the Root Environment" at Elizabeth Park in Hartford for the Connecticut Tree Protective Association (65 attendees) (September 13), gave a tour of the Connecticut Nursery & Landscape Education gardens and an arthropod and pesticides update at the Nursery and Landscape research tour at the Valley Laboratory in Windsor (September 18), staffed the Station booth at the Big E (September 27), and attended the Connecticut Pest Control Association fall seminar in Meriden (September 28).

MS. GALE RIDGE staffed the Station booth at the Big E (September 26).

MR. STEPHEN SANDREY set-up and staffed a Station exhibit at the Celebrating Agriculture, Woodstock Fairgrounds (700 visitors to our table) (September 22).

DR. KIRBY C. STAFFORD, III was interviewed by Mike Mayko, Connecticut Post, about Varroa mites and colony collapse disorder (September 4); visited by Ted Melnick, President of Novozymes Biologicals, to discuss the fungus *Metarhizium anisopliae* for tick control (September 18); welcomed the Federated Garden Club to the Station and provided a brief update on activities (200 attendees) (September 19); and welcomed Connecticut Greenhouse Growers to the Station and provided a brief update on activities (80 attendees) (September 25).

DR. KIMBERLY A. STONER chaired a meeting of the NOFA Organic Land Care Committee, Valley Laboratory, Windsor (September 11); was interviewed by Mike Mayco, reporter for the Connecticut Post (September 13); made a presentation with DR. BRIAN EITZER on how we are measuring pesticides in pollen collected by honey bees, and distributed a survey of beekeeper practices at the Back Yard Beekeepers Association, Weston (September 25); and participated in a meeting of the Board of Directors of CT NOFA, Roby's Organic Farm, Berlin (September 30).

Forestry and Horticulture

DR. JEFFREY S. WARD administered practical and oral examinations to arborist candidates for the Connecticut Tree Protection Examining Board (September 12); participated in the Connecticut Tree Protective Association, Board of Directors meeting in New Haven (September 11); spoke on "Tree Biology" for the Arboriculture 101 class sponsored by The Connecticut Tree Protective Association, Jones Auditorium (45 attendees) (September 12); participated in the Connecticut Urban Forest Council meeting in Middlefield (September 19); participated in the Connecticut Tree Protective Association IPM III workshop in West Hartford (September 13); and along with MR. J.P. BARSKY and MR. SCOTT C. WILLIAMS, provided a field tour of Japanese barberry control research to members of the Connecticut Chapter-The Nature Conservancy, Redding (September 21).

DR. MARTIN P.N. GENT visited Sali Barolli of Imperial Nurseries, Granby, to examine and discuss effects of growth regulators on rhododendron (September 21) and represented CAES at the opening ceremony of Pardee Greenhouse, East Rock Park, Hamden. (September 27).

DR. ABIGAIL A. MAYNARD judged fruits and vegetables at the North Haven fair (September 6); hosted the fifth grade from Hamden Hall Country Day School at Lockwood Farm (32 children, 3 adults) (September 24); attended meetings of the State Solid Waste Management Advisory Committee and the Organics Recycling and Composting Subcommittee at CT-DEP, Hartford (September 25); and hosted the Pre-K and Kindergarten from Hamden Hall Country Day School at Lockwood Farm (38 children, 8 adults) (September 26).

DR. WILLIAM R. NAIL participated in a meeting of the Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association at the Valley Laboratory (September 10); participated in a New England Grape Growers workshop at Newport Vineyards, RI (September 11); and participated in a meeting of the State Advisory Committee for Agriculture Education at Rockville High School in Vernon (September 26).

MR. SCOTT C. WILLIAMS along with MR. J.P. BARSKY and MR. GEOFF PICARD, gave a lecture and demonstration on small rodent capture, handling, and sera collection to the Wildlife Techniques class in the Department of Natural Resources Management and Engineering at the University of Connecticut, Storrs (8 students) (September 26).

Plant Pathology and Ecology

DR. SANDRA L. ANAGNOSTAKIS attended the annual meeting of the Multistate Research Project NE-1015, "Biological improvement, habitat restoration, and horticultural development of chestnut by management of populations, pathogens, and pests," in Marion, VA (40 adults attended) (September 6-8) and gave a talk on the 'Parsons' Japan Chestnut at the First Congregational Church of Cheshire (28 adults attended) (September 9).

DR. SHARON M. DOUGLAS was interviewed about the fall foliage season for Connecticut by Amanda Cuda of the Connecticut Post (September 14); gave a talk entitled "Highlights of the 2007 season" at the Nursery and Landscape Tour at the Valley Laboratory in Windsor (45 adults attended) (September 18); gave a talk on "Current diseases in Christmas trees" and answered questions about diseases at the Annual Fall Meeting of the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association held at Hartikka Tree Farm in Voluntown (80 adults attended) (September 22); and gave an invited talk entitled "How to recognize and manage diseases of propagation" at the Propagation Workshop, organized by CAES, UCONN, and CGGA/CNLA, in Jones Auditorium (85 adults attended) (September 25).

DR. WADE H. ELMER gave a talk entitled "Plant parts and their diseases" to second-graders at Mile Creek School in Old Lyme (78 youths and 7 adults attended) (September 24) and moderated the morning session of the Propagation Workshop, organized by CAES, UCONN, and CGGA/CNLA, in Jones Auditorium (73 adults attended) (September 25).

Soil and Water

DR. THEODORE ANDREADIS presented an invited seminar entitled *Host feeding patterns of mosquito vectors in the northeastern United States and their role in transmission of West Nile and eastern equine encephalitis viruses* at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Center for Tropical Diseases, Galveston, TX (audience approximately 50) (September 25) and participated as a member of the Supervisory Committee in the qualifying exam of Charles E. McGee, Ph.D. candidate in Experimental Pathology, University of Texas Medical Branch, Center for Tropical Diseases, Galveston, TX (September 26).

DR. PHILIP ARMSTRONG presented an invited talk entitled *The changing landscape of arboviruses in New England* at the Annual Conference of the Society for Vector Ecology, held in Springfield, IL (September 18).

MR. GREGORY BUGBEE spoke on *The CAES survey of Amos Lake and options for controlling nuisance vegetation* to the Amos Lake Association at the Preston Town Hall (approx 30 people in attendance) (September 19).

DR. GOUDARZ MOLAEI presented an invited seminar entitled *Global warming and its implication for vector-borne emerging infectious diseases* at Sakarya University in Turkey (September 10).

DR. JOSEPH PIGNATELLO presented an invited lecture entitled *Matrix sorption-desorption within the context of bioavailability* at Helmholtz Center for Environmental Research UFZ, in Leipzig, Germany (September 22-27) and received an "Excellence in Review" Award from the American Chemical Society Journal, *Environmental Science and Technology*

MS. ROSLYN SELSKY attended the Connecticut Geospatial Council meeting as the Station's representative (September 12) and attended a meeting of the Connecticut Arc User to User group meeting to learn about remote sensing research opportunities (September 17).

DR. JASON WHITE attended the 4th International Phytotechnology Conference in Denver, CO and served on the organizing committee (September 23-26); was elected Vice President of the International Phytotechnology Society (September 24); and chaired the Annual Editors Meeting for the International Journal of Phytoremediation held in Denver, CO (September 25).

Valley Laboratory

DR. JOHN AHRENS judged Christmas Trees at the Eastern States Exposition in Springfield, MA, for the New England Christmas Tree Alliance (September 9); participated in the Nursery and Landscape Research Tour at the Valley Laboratory (45 attendees) (September 18); presented talks on Herbicides for Christmas Tree Plantations and Weed Control Options for Seeded and Transplant Beds at the annual fall meeting of the New Hampshire/Vermont Christmas Tree Association in Barton, Vermont (100 attendees)

(September 22); and was presented an Honorary Lifetime Membership in the NH/VT Christmas Tree Association for his services to the organization.

DR. JAMES A. LAMONDIA examined candidates for the Connecticut arborist license and participated in the quarterly meeting of the Connecticut Tree Protection Examining Board in New Haven (September 11); assisted with the Connecticut Tree Protective Association "Integrated Tree Health Workshop III: Managing the root environment" program by leading an outdoor laboratory tour group in Elizabeth Park, Hartford (September 13); provided broadleaf and shade tobacco samples to Joseph FireCrow of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe for ceremonial purposes (September 14); spoke about 'oilseed crops for Biodiesel and Integrated pest Management' during the Nursery and Landscape Research Tour held at the Valley Laboratory (45 attendees) (September 18); and conducted a day-long train-the-trainer NE-SARE Professional Development Program Workshop on 'Diagnosis, Visual Assessment and Management of Plant-Parasitic Nematodes of Vegetables and Small Fruit in the Northeast' in Albany NY (September 19).

DR. TODD L. MERVOSH spoke about his experiments on weed management in container-grown ornamentals and presented a display of weeds and invasive plants at the Nursery & Landscape Research Tour at the Valley Laboratory (45 attendees) (September 18); spoke about weed control at the fall meeting of the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers' Association in Voluntown (80 attendees) (September 22); and with MS. DOROTHY REISS and MR. BEN ROSS, delivered 900 lbs. of pumpkins harvested from experiments at the Valley Laboratory to Northwest Park in Windsor for use at their annual Country Fair (September 28).

Journal Articles Approved September 2007

Aylor, Donald E. and Francis J. Ferrandino. Prospects for precision agriculture to manage aerially dispersed pathogens in a patchy landscape. Abstract, 9th Intl. Congress of Plant Pathology, Torino, Italy, 24-29 August 2008.

Elmer, Wade H. Use of a pre-plant corm treatment to suppress Fusarium corm rot of gladiolus. Abstract, Annual meeting, NE Division of the American Phytopathological Society, 10-12 October 2007, Cape May, NJ.

Elmer, Wade H. The use of earthworms to suppress soilborne diseases. Abstract, 9th Intl. Congress of Plant Pathology, Torino, Italy, 24-29 August 2008.

Gent, Martin P. N. Effect of Shade on Water and Nutrient Use in Greenhouse Tomato. Agricultural and Forest Meteorology.

Gent, Martin P. N., Jason C. White, Brian D. Eitzer, and MaryJane Incorvia Mattina. A novel phytoremediation system for soils contaminated with persistent organic pollutants. Proceedings of the 9th International Congress of Plant Pathology, Torino, Italy, 2008 (Abstract).

LaMondia, James A. Actigard increases fungicide efficacy against *Peronospora tabacina*, cause of tobacco blue mold. Phytopathology Abstract.

Marra, Robert E. Amplified Fragment Length Polymorphic (AFLP) markers for the forest fungal pathogen, *Neonectria ditissima*. Abstract, Annual Meeting, NE Division of the American Phytopathological Society, 10-12 October 2007, Cape May, NJ.

Nail, William R. and G. S. Howell. Pruning and training system effects on Concord grapevines in Michigan I: Vegetative growth. American Journal of Enology and Viticulture.

Ward, Jeffery S. Crop tree release increases growth of red oak sawtimber: 12 year results. Central Hardwood Forest Conference XVI.

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