

Greenhouse Horticulture PWT

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The Greenhouse Horticulture PWT provides coordinated Cornell extension programming to producers of flower crops across New York, helping the state to rank 5th in floricultural production nationwide.

Stakeholders from different facets of the greenhouse industry form a 14-person Advisory Board that meets twice a year with the PWT to help with planning and evaluation of applied research and extension programs at Cornell. During 2008, the Advisory Board met with the PWT in Poughkeepsie on February 27-28 for a meeting and tour of Mark Adams Greenhouse. The combined group also met in Buffalo on October 1-2, afterwards touring floriculture enterprises in the Buffalo area. A plan was formulated to have the spring 2009 meeting allow the members to get to know the two new AEM faculty members, Brad Rickard and Miguel Gomez, so that we can plan together to improve aspects of marketing for floriculture in New York.

The Advisory Board has requested programming that improves greenhouse business profitability via a) business analysis and marketing skills b) dependable new crops c) better integrated pest management (IPM) methods for insect and disease management and d) education of garden center operators, and private and professional gardeners. These educational goals were addressed in 2008 through a Chrysanthemum Field Day and a Poinsettia Open House at the LIHREC, as well as an Agricultural Forum, a Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Grower School, Bedding Plant Schools, and a Floriculture Conference that were held in the Capital District, the Hudson Valley and on Long Island. NYS Ag & Markets Horticultural Inspectors were given training at their annual meeting in Albany. Recent findings from applied research in floriculture, entomology and plant pathology were extended at all of these educational sessions.

Cornell hosted the 23rd national Seeley Conference on the Ithaca campus June 21-24, with the theme, *Profit Squeeze Part 2: Is Differentiation the Solution?* The PWT and Advisory Board also contributed members to the New England Greenhouse Conference Planning Board, which held a major regional conference reaching 2000 attendees (including 65 from NY) in November. A number of the PWT members served as speakers. The PWT also provides an academic reviewer for the New England Floriculture Grants Program.

The Cornell Floriculture Conference and Field Day held July 22nd in Ithaca had 130 attendees. NYS Farm Bureau President John Lincoln provided a welcome to the conference, and Rick Schoellhorn of Proven Winners delivered a keynote presentation on exciting new plant materials. A morning educational seminar was followed by the opportunity to view plantings of new cultivars at the Bluegrass Lane research facility. The afternoon included Walkabouts with Cornell educators featuring information on landscape performance, including disease management and IPM. The 5th Annual Kathy Pufahl Memorial Container Design contest, held as part of the Field Day, brought noted horticulturists to Ithaca as judges and provided a forum for learning and horticultural inspiration from the 40 entries. Editors from two national greenhouse trade magazines and Jim Barber, Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Ag & Markets, were among the judges. The first IPM In-depth hands-on workshop was held on July 21st to give growers coming to Ithaca for the Field Day an additional educational opportunity. Thirty participants benefited from hands-on modules on thrips management, disease diagnosis, and nutrient

monitoring, with plenty of time for questions and discussion. Evaluations indicated that the audiences found the mixture of formal and informal learning options very educational.

In 2008, PWT members collaborated closely with the statewide professional floriculture association, New York State Flower Industries (NYSFI), and the Long Island Flower Growers. A NYS Farm Viability Grant to the NYS IPM Ornamentals Team resulted in October workshops on biocontrol in greenhouses in 6 regions across NY, with 150 people participating, that was facilitated by NYSFI. The LI region provided an Open House to horticultural professionals at the LIHREC's Plant Science Day, where tours and educational programs were offered to 150 people.

The NYS IPM Ornamentals Team and NYSFI received NE-IPM funding to develop a Pest Management Strategic Plan for greenhouse crops in the Northeastern U.S. Twenty growers, extension educators and researchers from 8 states from MD to ME worked during a 2-day meeting to list 164 research, education and regulatory needs that will henceforth be used to make funding decisions for pest management grants for greenhouse crops.

A needs assessment survey of commercial greenhouse producers was conducted by Neil Mattson to identify current production practices, sources of educational information, and barriers to success and profitability. Respondents identified energy, labor and hard good costs as challenges to their businesses and, as challenges to their crop quality, identified management of insects and diseases, the greenhouse growing environment, irrigation and fertilizers.

Phone conferences during the year were used to keep the members of the PWT in close communication at minimum cost. In May, extension educators around the state joined for a phone conference to discuss significant pest problems that had occurred during the spring growing season. Calls during the year were used to plan for educational content and to identify speakers.

The PWT's websites, www.greenhouse.cornell.edu and www.longislandhort.cornell.edu, used to communicate program activities and research results, were improved during 2008. *Elements of IPM for Greenhouses in NYS* are at www.nysipm.cornell.edu. Bulb crop research results are available on CD. *Cornell Guidelines for the Integrated Management of Greenhouse Floral Crops* and the *Pest Management Guide for the Production and Maintenance of Herbaceous Perennials* were updated for 2008. Numerous articles were prepared for *LI Hort News*, *Greenhouse IPM Notes* and other extension newsletters, the *NYSFI Newsletter*, the new four times/year *Ornamentals IPM e-Newsletter* and for national trade magazines. The *2007 Annual Report of the LIHREC*, including floriculture research relating to crop performance, plant pathology, entomology, and weed science was mailed to 350 stakeholders: in 2009, dissemination will be done largely by the internet to reduce mailing costs.

External funding for the Cornell Greenhouse Horticulture Program was obtained in 2008 through USDA/ARS, the American Floral Endowment, the Gloeckner Foundation, the Post/Schenkel Foundation, Friends of Long Island Horticulture, Hatch, Northeast IPM, NY Farm Viability Institute and various horticultural industries.