

Horticultural Inspection Society Central States Chapter

Making Professionalism a Part of Every Effort

Volume 37, Number 1

March 2007

In This Issue:

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE AND 2006 MEETING SUMMARY

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE 2007 CENTRAL CHAPTER'S MEETING IN FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

NETHERLANDS TRIP INVESTIGATES PLANT PEST PROBLEMS ON IM- PORTS

STIGMINA LAUTII A NEW DISEASE ON SPRUCE

NORTH DAKOTA HIRES A NEW INSPECTOR

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE AND 2006 MEETING SUMMARY

John Bock – HIS – Central States Chapter President
Michigan Department of Agriculture

The 36th Annual HIS Meeting held at the Brook Lodge in Augusta, Michigan was a tremendous success!

There is no question that the venue plays a big part in the success of our conferences. We were very fortunate to find and utilize the Brook Lodge as our conference meeting site in Augusta, Michigan this past October. The lodging accommodations and the food were superb, and the service was exceptional, as attested to by all those in attendance.

We had attendance from 10 of our 12 member states involving a total of 41 regulatory staff, including a number of retirees and former inspectors. It was a pleasure to host last year's conference in Michigan, and I enjoyed getting to share the experience with all of you who attended! I invite and encourage ALL of you to attend our 2007 HIS Central Chapter Annual Conference in Fargo, North Dakota this coming October. Carrie Larson is working hard to make this a memorable conference experience for all us as well.

2006 Meeting Summary continued on page 2

MEMBER STATES

Illinois,
Indiana,
Iowa,
Kansas,
Michigan,
Minnesota,
Missouri,
Nebraska,
North Dakota,
Ohio,
South Dakota,
Wisconsin

MARK YOUR CALENDERS FOR THE 2007 CENTRAL CHAPTER MEETING IN FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

The 2007 HIS meeting will be held Oct. 16th and 17th, at the Ramada Plaza Suites in Fargo, ND.

Registration will begin Monday at 4pm. I am in the process of reserving a block of rooms. I'll send out a notice to when I have more final details about the meeting.

What would the Conference be without its speakers? We were blessed with an “A” list of presenters. We heard from Gina Davis the Deputy Director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture’s Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division (PPPM) about the diverse nature of the many tasks Michigan inspectors perform in addition to their nursery work. Mike Philip, PPPM Survey Coordinator, entertained us with his rendition of Exotic Pests on the Horizon. Associate Professor Bert Cregg, informed us about the Abiotic issues we may encounter in nursery and landscape settings. Michigan Plant Industry Specialist, Barry Menser, educated us about his trip to The Netherlands with National Plant Board President, Ken Rauscher, to address import issues like Hosta Virus X-disease. Doug Chapman, the Manager of Dow Gardens in Midland Michigan, shared his views on the value of planting native plants. Bill Shane, Michigan State University Extension Educator, spoke about growing fruit trees in Michigan. Gerry Wheeler, a USDA partner, engaged us in discussion about Plum Pox Virus, and the ramifications of the new find in Michigan last summer. Haddish Melakeberhan, a Michigan State University Professor, enlightened us about nematode issues from a global perspective. Gary King and John Bedford from MI Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division gave us a rundown on the Emerald Ash Borer history and lessons learned from their experiences with this pest in Michigan. Finally, we were treated to an exceptional Emerald Ash Borer bus tour / field trip hosted and directed by Michigan State University’s very own Deb McCullough. This was certainly one of the highlights of our conference, and we are all indebted to Professor Deb and her staff for their exceptional efforts in making this a memorable close to our 36th Annual Conference.

We had a productive business meeting that complemented the educational aspect of our conference. Article VII of the Bylaws was amended so that the Vice President would have signature authority for check writing. This was already being done in practice, and this bylaw was amended to reflect this reality. Article VIII was amended to protect the confidentiality concerns of our

organization in regard to access to our listserv, and to accommodate former regulators who may now be serving in the private sector.

Article VII All checks written on this organization’s accounts shall be signed by the treasurer and/or vice president.

Article VIII The purpose of the HIS Central Chapter listserv is to reinforce the purpose of membership (see Article 3). Regular members, Complimentary members and one representative from each of the other HIS Chapters may be allowed on the listserv. All non-regular members may be allowed on the listserv pending he/she a) was a previous regular member, b) has a written reference by a regular member c) signs confidentiality agreement and d) executive committee grants final approval.

In other business meeting actions, Steve Shimek from Minnesota was awarded the Robert McAdams H.I.S. Award as per his selection at the 2005 meeting. Dave Johnson from Missouri was selected our new Robert McAdams award recipient from a very qualified field of candidates, which included Barry Menser from Michigan and Nellie Brown from Missouri. Dave’s name will be forwarded to the Central Plant Board president as our suggested nominee for the Carl Carlson Award.

Carrie Larson from North Dakota was our representative to the Central Plant Board Meeting in 2006. At the meeting, Carrie showed some slides and provided information on past and future Central Chapter HIS Meetings, and encouraged supervisors to continue to send employees to the HIS meeting. Thank you Carrie, for representing us at last year’s Central Plant Board Meeting.

John Crouch of Iowa who retired in June of 2006 was recommended by Susan Ehlenbeck from Missouri and accepted by the body as an honorary

member. Ryan Krull from Iowa, said that he would be willing to be the H.I.S. Central Chapter representative in 2007 to the Central Plant Board meeting and then report back to us during our next business meeting. Ryan is also assuming oversight of the H.I.S. website functions. Many thanks to Steve White for all his service and contributions in this area over the past many years!

It was proposed and passed that as of our October 2006 meeting, HIS Central Chapter meeting's registration fee would be waived for Retired/Honorary members with a limit of five per year. After discussion, the following amendments were added: "As of this meeting (October 2006), HIS Central Chapter meeting's registration fee is waived for Retired/Honorary members with a limit of five per year as funding permits. It cannot be the same five members unless there are openings. This policy is contingent upon fund availability and subject to the approval of the executive board."

Our new officers for 2007 are as follows:

President:	John Bock, Michigan
Vice President:	Carrie Larson, North Dakota
Secretary:	Casey Jo Kellner, Missouri
Treasurer:	Ken Cote, Indiana
Editor:	Steven Shimek, Minnesota

I would like to thank Ken Cote, Steven Shimek, Bill Hilbert, and Steve White for all of their service to H.I.S. Central Chapter and their help with last year's meeting. I would like to extend a very special thank you to Susan Ehlenbeck not only for her many years of service as Secretary of H.I.S. Central Chapter, but also for her indispensable help in preparing me for and helping me run last year's business meeting. I would like to welcome Carrie Larson as our new Vice President and wish her well in her preparations for our 2007 meeting in Fargo, North Dakota. I would also like to welcome Casey Jo Kellner aboard as our new Secretary, and Ryan Krull as our new website guru.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the H.I.S. membership for your professionalism and your exemplary day in and day out performance as inspectors. Your dedication to your profession, your clients, and your individual states, are what make this organization special and worthwhile. Keep up the good work! I look forward to seeing all of you in Fargo, North Dakota, October 15th through 18th.

NETHERLANDS TRIP INVESTIGATES PLANT PEST PROBLEMS ON IMPORTS

Barry T. Menser, Region III Plant Pest Specialist

In late August, I had the pleasure of traveling with Ken Rauscher, Director of the National Plant Board, to The Netherlands. This was the result of several years of complaints through the National Plant Board to the U.S.D.A. of the increased number of pests detected on plant material being imported from the Dutch. For at least three decades, Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) inspectors have been finding excessive soil, nematodes, weeds, insects, and various diseases on imported plant material, especially from Holland. Despite previous complaints the situation has increased in recent years. Until a few years ago, most of the imported pest problems were found on bulbs but, due to the increase of preclearance approval of herbaceous perennial plants, the past few years has resulted in a large increase of diseases, especially viruses. Mike Philips, Survey Manager of the MDA, obtained CAPS money for the spring of 2006 to sample and analyze imported hosta from The Netherlands with, in part, the results proving that these diseases were indeed being shipped with the plants. 665 plants of 55 varieties from 10 growers were tested and approximately 14% were found to be initially infected with either Hosta Virus X (HVX) or Arabis Mosaic Virus (ArMV).



A lot of information was provided to the USDA to show proof of our pest concerns and a Powerpoint presentation was created to show both the USDA and the Dutch of the historical pest interceptions and quantity of the problems. Included with this information was data from Region III for 2005 that indicated over 95% of the 52 separate virus restrictions of plant material originated in The Netherlands. Since money does talk, slides were also shown indicating a \$1,500,000 loss for one year by one large Michigan nursery because of imported nematodes. Also, data was shown that hosta purchases by one large firm decreased by over 90% in the last 4 years due to the pest problems. This presentation was shown during our recent Nursery Specialists meeting, the last HIS meeting, to a couple of our large nursery operators, and will be available for anyone else who has not seen it via a CD in the regional offices.



Ken and I traveled to the Netherlands with Paul McGowan (top preclearance officer for all countries), Shannon Hamm (head of PPQ policy), Ed Podleickas (top risk assessor), Murali Bandla (top PPQ pathologist), and Jeanne VanDersal (risk assessor) plus met with all of the top Dutch officials from their Minister of Agriculture to their BKD (bulb inspection agency) and Naktuinbouw (perennial inspection). Our presentation was provided twice and it definitely opened up some eyes with both the Dutch and the USDA. It was stated that they did not realize the scope of the problem before this meeting. The Dutch provided us a very thorough amount of information on their bulb

Netherlands continued on page 5

and perennial inspection program and we were treated with the utmost respect and cordiality during all phases of our trip.

During one of the meetings where all pertinent people were in attendance, I commented that the States basically restrict for all deleterious pests and have almost a 0% tolerance level for everything. If I could state in the shortest amount of words what all of this about it is this: Why can't the USDA have authority to restrict plant products for pests as do the States? Or... Why are most pests allowed entrance into our country whereas they wouldn't be approved to be moved across the street, let alone to other states?

During site visits of nurseries, both HVX on hosta and Tobacco Ringspot Virus (TRSV) on daylilies were pointed out. It is also interesting to note that the Dutch consider their country to be free from TRSV and the latest international compendium, indicating what pests occur where, also substantiates this. Since our visit, the Dutch have confirmed the TRSV on some other daylilies plus some Iris and are working to eradicate this virus again.



What Happens Next?

It was agreed that a committee would be started to improve the preclearance program and this would include 4 State-nominated members plus 3 federally nominated people. Currently we have 8 people on the committee that includes a member of each of the 4 national plant boards where I will represent the Central Plant Board, a bacteriologist, nematologist, and 2 plant pathologists. There are about 4 pages of specific improvements that are on the agenda to be completed and basically they involve a more formal

communication/resolution of pest problems between the States and the USDA with imported plant material, increase of training for all staff, creating tolerance levels of "quality" pests, changing all language involving "quality" to "regulated non-quarantine pests", etc. We are looking at completing the preclearance improvements by June and meeting with the National Plant Board in August. It should be noted that any import/export requirements between countries must meet World Trade Organization (WTO) guidelines. This stipulation means that all states must also adopt the same criteria and this may mean some differences in our certification protocol in the future.

What Should We Inspectors Be Doing?

This is always one of the most critical aspects to any of our programs. Training, learning, looking, finding, and reporting are all-important aspects. We all need to be looking for exotic pests during all of our activities, be familiar with the Exotic Manual, take our survey tab in the nursery suite seriously by looking and utiliz-

ing it, etc. It is very important that we all identify the origin source of any pest that we find and document it. This may mean asking your firm to find out where their source in Mississippi, for example, obtained the plant material.

Summary

In summary, we need to continue this process with the USDA. This is not just a USDA/Dutch issue but a USDA/worldwide issue. The federal government certainly has not done a very good job in protecting against exotic organisms from entering our Great Lakes and they are not doing well with preventing the spread of harmful pests that could infest/infect our food supply and natural environments. Viruses, in particular, are a hidden danger. Even if most don't kill a plant, add up a 10-30% (or whatever) reduction of our food production and the repercussions are huge. I have no idea whether or how much we can resolve in reference to these issues of new, different, or just plain more pest introductions but we do need to at least try.

UPDATE – 02/21/2007

Since November, the national committee has had biweekly teleconference calls and one face-to-face meeting at the USDA-APHIS headquarters in Riverdale. Everything is going well so far and I could even say “better than I had expected”.

All of us are on the “same page” and are doing the best to help the USDA make the pertinent changes necessary to reduce the incidence of pests being imported into our country. However, I still cannot state any specific things at this time because everything is still being worked on.

Barry T. Menser, Plant Pest Specialist
Michigan Department of Agriculture



Stigmina lautii

Submitted by Carrie Larson North Dakota Department of Agriculture

A new fungus has been identified on North Dakota spruce trees. *Stigmina* was first discovered in 1999 on various spruce trees in North Carolina. Then, in 2006, an alert from Virginia Tech alerted plant diagnosticians to watch for *Stigmina* on spruce samples that appeared to have *Rhizosphaera*. Following the alert from Virginia Tech, the next spruce sample that arrived at the NDSU Plant Diagnostic Lab with *Rhizosphaera*-like symptoms was found to have *Stigmina*. Samples were soon collected from spruce trees around eastern and central North Dakota that had these symptoms. Every sample had *Stigmina*, but *Rhizosphaera* was not found on any of them. The species found in North Dakota is *S. lautii*.

Biology - It is premature to discuss symptoms of *Stigmina lautii* until it is proven to be a pathogen and cause a disease. However, the subsequent description of *S. lautii* signs (e.g., fruiting bodies, spores) is valid regardless of the pathogenicity of the fungus. *Stigmina* causes a needlecast similar to that of *Rhizosphaera*. *Stigmina* produces fruiting bodies on green needles and on necrotic needles, as we have observed with *Rhizosphaera* in North Dakota. Our observations indicate that the pattern of needlecast on trees appears similar to that of *Rhizosphaera*. Current-year needles appear to be unaffected. By late summer, fruiting bodies can be present on second-year needles. Initial observations indicate that the symptoms on second-year and older needles range from a general off-green color to individual bands of yellow, tan, brown, reddish-brown or purple. Eventually, the entire needle may become any of these individual colors. Necrotic needles may remain attached to the tree for years, with symptoms likely progressing to a more advanced stage over time, or may be cast the same season as symptoms develop. All of these symptoms can be caused by *Rhizosphaera*. We do not have enough years of observations to know if severe defoliation by *Stigmina* can result in branch death, but we speculate this will happen because *Rhizosphaera* can eventually kill branches.

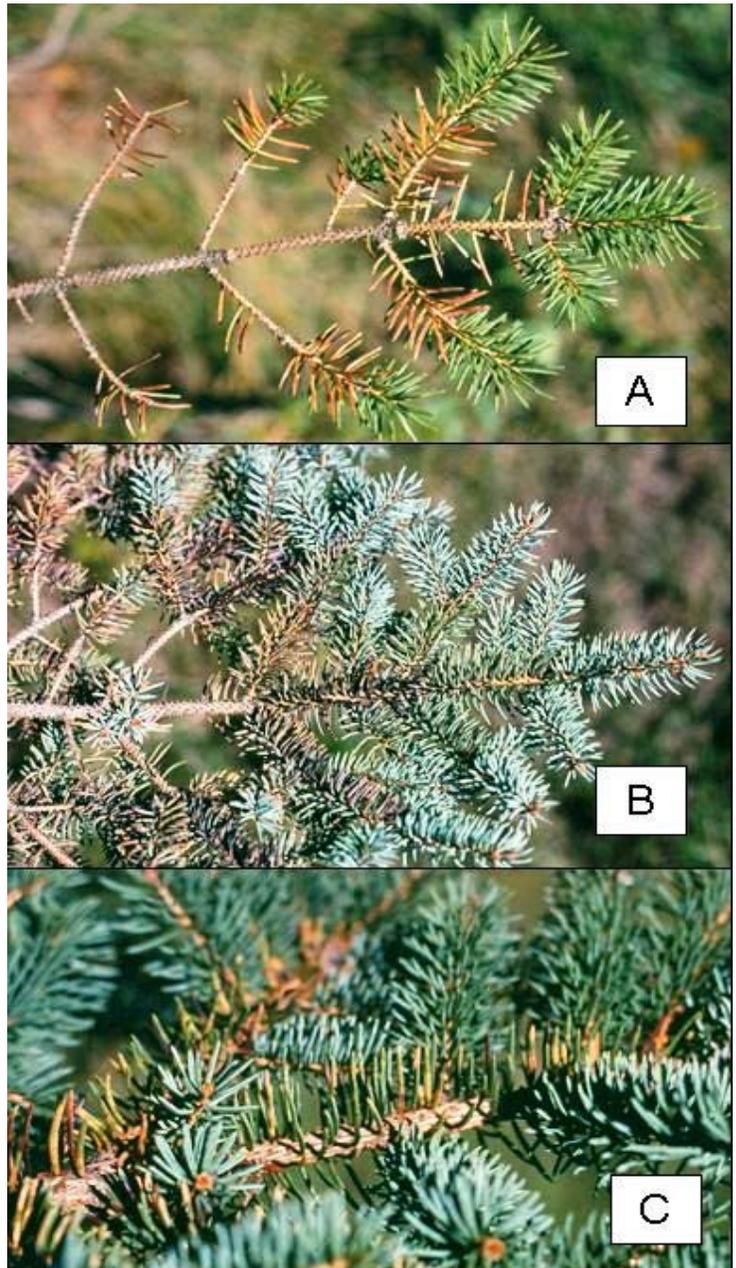


Figure 1. Symptoms of *Stigmina lautii* on Colorado blue spruce. Second-year needles show varying symptoms. They may be partially or completely yellow, tan, brown reddish-brown (A, C), grayish-green with some brown tips (B) or they may have dropped (A).

Photos by Jim Walla.

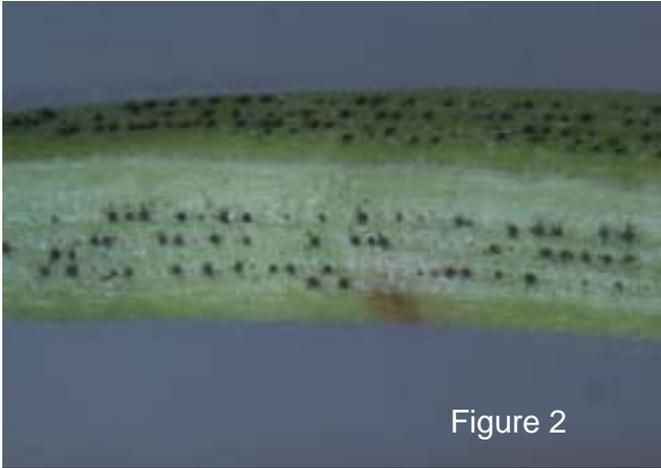


Figure 2

Stigmina lautii produces fruiting bodies in stomatal pits of spruce needles (Figure 2). When there are multiple fruiting bodies on a needle, the normally white rows of wax become black rows of fruiting bodies similar to those caused by *Rhizosphaera*. **The two fungi cannot be easily distinguished without magnification of about 20X or more.** If fruiting bodies are observed with a 20X hand lens or a microscope, fruiting bodies of *Stigmina* and *Rhizosphaera* can be distinguished. Most *Stigmina* fruiting bodies appear to be feathery, while most *Rhizosphaera* fruiting bodies appear to be smooth (Figure 3).

Control - Until we know if *S. lautii* is a pathogen of spruce, management of *Stigmina* will be dependent on confirming whether it is *Rhizosphaera* or *Stigmina* on spruce trees with needlecast before management options can be determined.

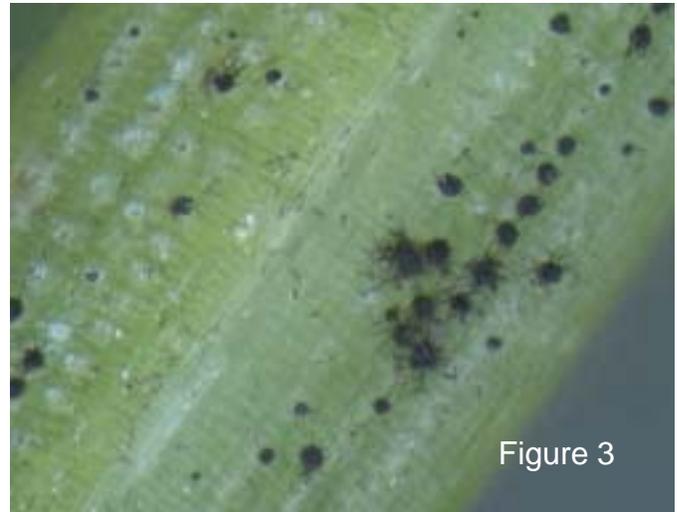


Figure 3

NORTH DAKOTA HIRES A NEW INSPECTOR

North Dakota has hired a new inspector. Her name is Denise Olson, and she has a PhD in entomology. Before joining the NDDA, she was an assistant professor at NDSU in the entomology dept.