

PLANT INDUSTRY NEWS

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MS DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE - CINDY HYDE-SMITH, COMMISSIONER - JOHN G. CAMPBELL, DIRECTOR

Boxwood Blight: New Plant Disease Makes First Appearance in the United States

By James Dale

The fungal pathogen, *Cylindrocladium pseudonaviculatum*, commonly known as boxwood blight, was first discovered in the United States on the East Coast in October 2011. As implied by its name, boxwood blight can cause unsightly damage to all varieties of boxwood plants. The disease has been known to occur throughout Europe and New Zealand for some time, but it is un-



The boxwood blight fungus causes dark spots on leaves and lesions on plant stems that result in defoliation and plant dieback.

Photos by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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known exactly how the disease was introduced in the U.S. To date, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has confirmed detections of boxwood blight in a total of eight states, including Connecticut, Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Virginia.

There is no information suggesting any type of boxwood is immune from the disease, however, English and American boxwoods seem

to be particularly susceptible. Boxwood blight infects all aboveground portions of boxwoods, appearing initially as dark or light brown leaf spots with dark borders. Over time, these spots enlarge and infected leaves turn brown or straw colored to create a "blighted" look. Defoliation is said to occur quickly after these initial symptoms develop. The fungus also infects the plant stems causing brown or black lesions. The roots, however, are

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Emergency Exemption for Corn Seed Treatment Announced

By Stacey Swain

Mississippi Agriculture Commissioner, Cindy Hyde-Smith, has announced approval by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of an emergency exemption that will provide protection to corn producers throughout the state from blackbird predation of newly planted corn. Mississippi corn growers have suffered million dollar losses in recent years due to heavy blackbird predation.

The products receiving emergency exemption under Section 18 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) are Avipel® Liquid Seed Treatment and Avipel® Dry Powder Corn Seed Treatment manufactured by Arkion Life Sciences, LLC. Corn producers may treat corn seed with Avipel prior to planting to prevent blackbirds and

cowbirds from consuming the seed.

Avipel contains the active ingredient anthraquinone, which occurs naturally in some plants, fungi, and insects. As a bird repellent, anthraquinone works as a taste deterrent.

Corn is extremely subject to bird predation in Mississippi because it is the first crop planted in early spring, when the presence of native and crop seed are very low and high wintering blackbird populations are present. Bird predation during the corn seed germination and plant establishment stages kills seedlings, which reduces plant density, leading to considerable yield reduction.

Contact Tommy McDaniel at (662) 325-7763 for additional information regarding Avipel.

Stacey Swain is Communication and Policy Advisor.
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Mississippi Seedsmen Host Annual Convention in Biloxi

By Stacey Swain

The 67th Annual Convention of the Mississippi Seedsmen's Association (MSA) was held February 10 – 12, 2012, in Biloxi, Mississippi. This annual event brings seedsmen from across the state together with growers, business owners, regulatory officials, academic leaders, and more for the opportunity to share new ideas, create lasting contacts, and get the most up-to-date information on critical issues impacting the future of the planting seed industry in Mississippi.

This year, beginning with the Mississippi Crop Improvement Association Annual Membership Meeting, the three-day event provided members and guests with educational lectures, commodity updates, and the chance to participate in business sessions and social events.

Convention speakers included Fabian Watts, Seed Lab Director, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce (MDAC); John Campbell, Bureau of Plant Industry Director, MDAC; Tom Allen, Delta Research and Extension Center, Mississippi State University (MSU); Greg Bohach, Vice President of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine, MSU; David Cummins, President, MSA; Richard Taylor, Secretary – Treasurer, MSA; Peter Nimrod, Chief Engineer, Mississippi Levee Board; Lee Rivenbark, Vice President of Global Cotton and United States Seed Operations, Bayer CropScience; Pat Miller, Director of State Affairs, American Seed Trade Association; Owen Wallace, President, Southern Seedsmen's Association; and a special keynote address from Carlisle Clark with the United States Senate Committee on Appropriations and

MSA Convention, continued on page 3

MSA Convention, *continued from page 2*

former agricultural aide to U.S. Senator Thad Cochran. These featured speakers addressed various issues such as seed quality, disease and environmental pressures, upcoming legislation, research and development, and the future of agricultural education.

Since 1945, the convention has been an important part of MSA's mission to "promote and protect the interests of the seed trade." Throughout the year, MSA is involved in other activities to support the agriculture industry such as legislative efforts, scholarship programs, and promotional campaigns, like Farm Families of Mississippi. For additional information on the seed industry of Mississippi or to learn how to become involved with MSA, visit <http://mississippiseedsmensassoc.org/>.

Contact Stacey Swain at (662) 325-3393 for additional information regarding the Mississippi Seedsmen's Association Annual Convention.

Stacey Swain is Communication and
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Mississippi Seedsmen's Association Board Members

Pictured left to right back: Bert Mann, Chad Ervin, David Cummins, and Brent Gholston

Picture left to right front: Dale Brown, Jeff Mosley, and Richard Taylor

Photo Courtesy of MSA

Campaign Connects Farmers, Restaurants

By Kaitlyn Byrne
Agricultural Communications,
Mississippi State University

Mississippi State University (MSU) is part of an effort to connect restaurants with Mississippi producers to get fresh local produce to consumers.

MSU's Extension Service is promoting Eat Healthy Mississippi, a campaign sponsored by the Mississippi Hospitality and Restaurant Association (MHRA). The program unites restaurant chefs seeking local foods for their menus and growers who can supply fresh fruits and vegetables. In turn, restaurant patrons will have access to healthier foods.

By connecting local food producers to new markets, the Eat Healthy Mississippi campaign will benefit local economies, said Ken Hood, Extension professor in MSU's Department of Agri-

cultural Economics.

"It will stimulate the local economy by encouraging restaurants to seek out locally grown produce through the Mississippi Market Maker website, where local producers post what they have available," he said. "These new market outlets for farmers will hopefully stimulate new menu ideas, thus increasing demand for local fare at restaurants."

A vital part of the campaign is the Healthy Dining Finder at <http://www.healthydiningfinder.com>. This nationwide website lists healthy restaurant menu options and can be searched by location. Each restaurant lists the number of items offered in different categories: healthy dining, sodium savvy, and kids eat well. The website includes healthy recipes that incorporate fresh local produce.

"The website tells consumers where they can find healthy choices in restaurants, plus

they will be able to get recipes so they can try it at home," Hood said.

Mike Cashion, executive director of MHRA, said Eat Healthy Mississippi is creating new relationships between growers and restaurants.

"We're developing a working roster of local growers that restaurants can easily access," he said.

Paige Manning, Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, said the campaign has the potential to increase business for growers.

"This initiative will potentially lead to consumers eating more Mississippi-grown fruits, vegetables, and specialty crops, which will expand our specialty crop industry."

Manning said MHRA, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, and the MSU Extension Service have collaborated to

Eat Healthy Mississippi, continued on page 7

AG AVIATION INDUSTRY NEWS

A Message from WMAAA

The Women of the Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association (WMAAA) would like to thank all of those who supported us at the 2012 Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association Annual Convention. The WMAAA is a fantastic resource for women wishing to build networks and friendships with other women actively involved in agricultural aviation. Please contact a member of our board if we can help in anyway. Be SAFE!

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Women of the Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association Board Members
Pictured left to right back: Brenda Carson, Phyllis Howard, and Regina Russell
Pictured left to right front: Kris Artman and Heather Brignac
Photo Courtesy of WMAAA

Ag Pilots Recognized for Environmental Stewardship

By Trey Cooke, Executive Director,
Delta F.A.R.M.

Four ag pilots were recently recognized for exemplary environmental stewardship. Selected pilots were ranked highest among their peers based on criteria established through the A.C.E. (Applicators Conserving the Environment) Pilot Program. Those pilots selected for recognition include David Habig of Dixie Dusters in Itta Bena, Mississippi; Doug Muse of Aviation Flying Services in Sidon, Mississippi; Gary Couey of Planters Flying Service in Avon, Mississippi; and Dan Shannon of Shannon Agricultural Flying in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

Mark Kimmel, former President of the Mississippi Agricultural Aviation Association (MAAA) and Itta Bena based ag pilot, pointed out that “many pilots take additional, voluntary steps to ensure that they have no environmental impact.” Kimmel continued, “The A.C.E. Pilot Program now affords us the opportunity to identify the best pilots among us in their efforts to protect our natural resources.”

The A.C.E. Pilot Program was developed to recognize top environmental stewards in the ag aviation industry and to encourage other pilots to become better stewards. Those organizations involved in developing, administering, and validating the program included CropLife America,

A.C.E Pilot Award, continued on page 5

A.C.E. Pilot Award, *continued from page 4*

Delta Council, Delta F.A.R.M., MAAA, Mississippi Agricultural Industry Council, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, Monsanto, Southern Crop Protection Association, Syngenta, USDA Agricultural Research Service, and the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

All licensed aerial applicators in Mississippi who were members of MAAA in 2011 and had no proven drift violations within the past 24 months were eligible to participate in the A.C.E. Pilot Program. Each participant completed a questionnaire that documented their experience, track record, and voluntary environmental stewardship efforts.

Karl Holcomb, President of MAAA, presented each A.C.E. Pilot with a plaque and a cash award for \$1,500.00 at the recent MAAA annual convention at the IP Casino in Biloxi, Mississippi. Each pilot will also receive a sign for their place of business, recognizing this very important achievement.

Contact Trey Cooke at (662) 686-3372 for additional information regarding the A.C.E. Pilot Program.



A.C.E. Pilot Program Award Recipients
Pictured left to right: Gary Couey, Planters Flying Service; David Habig, Dixie Dusters; Doug Muse, Aviation Flying Services; and Dan Shannon, Shannon Agricultural Flying
Photo Courtesy of Delta F.A.R.M.

Applicator Certifications, License Renewals, and Agricultural Events

Agricultural Meetings, Field Days, and Events

March 24-25: Everything Garden Expo, Mississippi Horse Park, Starkville, (662) 324-3080

March 26-28: Small Farmers Conference, Natchez Convention Center, Natchez (877) 427-9536

March 30: Landscape Symposium, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Perkinston, (601) 928-5286

March 29-31: Mississippi Charity Walking Horse Show, Kirk Fordice Equine Center, Mississippi State Fairgrounds, Jackson, (601) 942-0138

March 30-31: New Albany Home and Garden Show, Union County Fairgrounds, New Albany, (662) 316-0088

April 6-7: Mississippi Quarter Horse Association Spring Horse Show, Kirk Fordice Equine

Center, Mississippi State Fairgrounds, Jackson, (228) 867-2048

May 4-6: Mississippi Championship Bayou Roping, Kirk Fordice Equine Center, Mississippi State Fairgrounds, Jackson, (601) 310-3700

June 19-20: Mid-South Green Industry Conference, Muse Center, Pearl, (601) 919-8111

June 21-23: All American Youth Barrel Race, Kirk Fordice Equine Center, Mississippi State Fairgrounds, Jackson, (901) 626-8994

July 24-28: Mississippi Agricultural Industry Council Annual Convention, Perdido Beach Resort, Orange Beach, Alabama, (662) 325-1269

July 27-28: Cloverleaf Summer Shootout Barrel Race, Kirk Fordice Equine Center, Mississippi State Fairgrounds, Jackson, (318) 680-4159

Commercial Applicator Renewals All Categories - Excluding Aerial

April 3: Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center, Raymond, (601) 857-2284

April 5: Panola County Extension Office, Batesville, (662) 563-6260

April 11: Coastal Research and Extension Center, Biloxi, (228) 546-1001

May 8: North Mississippi Research and Extension Center, Verona, (662) 566-2201

May 10: Delta Research and Extension Center, Stoneville, (662) 686-3205

July 3: Central Mississippi Research and Extension Center, Raymond, (601) 857-2284

July 5: Panola County Extension Office, Batesville, (662) 563-6260

July 11: Forrest County Extension Office, Hattiesburg, (601) 545-6083

Everything Garden Expo

Presented by the
Starkville Area Arts Council

Mississippi State University
Starkville, Mississippi
Mississippi Horse Park



Vendors • Plant Sale
Noted Speakers
Educational Exhibits
Children's Program

ADMISSION: \$5
Children 6 and younger: **FREE**



For more information, contact the Starkville Area Arts Council • (662) 324-3080
or visit their website • <http://starkvillearts.org>

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

- Monday** March 19
11:30 – 1:00
Alison Buehler
Chemical to Natural Gardening
Book Mart and Café - Upstairs*
- Tuesday** March 20
11:30 – 1:00
Jimmy and Richard Linley
Bugs In The Garden
Book Mart and Café - Upstairs*
- Wednesday** March 21
10:30 – 1:00
Town & Country Garden Club
Tablescapes & Tastings - James Farmer
Sportsplex - Advanced Ticket Sales - 662-323-2260
- Thursday** March 22
11:00 – 1:00
Chef Daniel Wellington
Tastings - from James Farmer's book-
A Time to Plant
Thyme - 402 Lampkin St.
- Friday** March 23
11:30 – 1:00
Audrey Sheridan
Bee Gardening
Book Mart and Café - Upstairs*

*Bring your own lunch or call Book Mart Café
662-323-2844 to order a garden box lunch

SATURDAY, MARCH 24

Hours 8 am - 6 pm • Mississippi Horse Park

- 8:45 – 9:45 Dr. Eric Stafne
Pecans for the Homeowners
- 10:00 – 11:00 Dr. Blake Layton
Take The Sting out of Fire Ants
- 11:15 – Noon Gail Barton
Gardening with the Woods
- Noon – 1:00 LUNCH
- 1:00 – 2:00 Dr. Rick Snyder
Tomatoes, Tomatoes, Tomatoes!
- 2:15 – 3:15 Pat Drackett
Home Landscape Design and Renovation: Tips and Tricks
- 3:30 – 4:15 Janet Chapman
Reigning over Runoff- Rule your Yard
- 4:30 – 5:30 Felder Rushing
Slow Gardening

SUNDAY, MARCH 25

Hours 11 am - 5 pm • Mississippi Horse Park

- 1:00 – 2:00 Cary Lindsey
O Gardens! Occupy Your Lawn
- 2:15 – 3:00 Sam McLemore & Chris Oswalt
Super Soils: Supercharge Your Soil for Natural Success
- 3:30 – 4:15 Panel Discussion-
Marion Sansing, Dustin Pinion, Mike Buehler
*Barnyard in Your Backyard-
How Animals benefit Gardens*

Seed Swap • Saturday & Sunday • 2 pm - 3 pm

Sponsored by Mississippi State University,
MSU Extension Service, Greater Starkville Development Partnership,
Mississippi Horse Park, National Endowment for the Arts
and Mississippi Arts Commission.

USDA Gearing Up for 2012 Ag Census

From the United States
Department of Agriculture -
National Agricultural Statistics
Service

Surveys are now arriving in mailboxes around the nation to help identify all active farms in the United States. The National Agricultural Classification Survey (NACS), which asks landowners whether or not they are farming and for basic farm information, is one of the most important early steps used to determine who should receive a 2012 Census of Agriculture report form. The Census of Agriculture, conducted every five years by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them.

"We are asking everyone who receives the NACS to respond even if they are not farming so that we build the most accurate and comprehensive mailing list to account for all of U.S. agriculture in the Census," said NASS's Census and Survey Director, Renee Picanso. "The Census is the leading

source of facts about American agriculture and the only source of agricultural statistics that is comparable for each county in the nation. Farm organizations, businesses, government decision-makers, commodity market analysts, news media, researchers, and others use Census data to inform their work."

NACS is required by law as part of the U.S. Census of Agriculture. By this same law, all information reported by individuals is kept confidential. NASS will mail the 2012 Census of Agriculture later this year and data will be collected into early 2013.

"The NACS survey is the first step in getting a complete count, so we ask everyone who receives a survey to complete and return it," said Picanso. "The Census is a valuable way for producers and rural America to show their strength - in numbers."

The 2012 Census of Agriculture is your voice, your future, your responsibility. For more information about NACS, the Census of Agriculture, or to add your name to the Census mail list, visit www.agcensus.usda.gov.

Boxwood Blight, *continued from front page*

not typically affected, but experience has shown that mortality can take place within two weeks.

The pathogen is most active under warm, humid conditions. It can be spread short distances by wind, wind-driven rain, or splashing water and longer distances by infected plant material, infected plant debris, soil, or equipment.

The Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Bureau of Plant Industry is inspecting plants throughout the state for signs of boxwood blight as part of routine nursery inspections. At this time, the disease has not been identified in Mississippi or other closely surrounding states.

Contact James Dale at (662) 325-7773 for additional information regarding the plant disease boxwood blight.

James Dale is Branch Director,
Pesticide and Plant Pest Divisions
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Waste Pesticide Disposal Event Held in Tallahatchie County

By James Dale

On January 26, 2012, the Mississippi State University Extension Service, along with the Bureau of Plant Industry and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, held a waste pesticide disposal event at the Cowart Gin Yard in Tallahatchie County. A total

of 25,664 pounds of material was collected from farmers and landowners who traveled from eight different surrounding counties to participate in the free event.

Waste disposal events provide farmers and landowners the opportunity to properly dispose of potentially hazardous material, which could otherwise con-

tribute to environmental contamination.

Contact James Dale at (662) 325-7773 for additional information regarding future waste pesticide disposal opportunities.

James Dale is Branch Director, Pesticide and Plant Pest Divisions
E-mail: JamesD@mdac.ms.gov



MISSISSIPPI FARMERS MARKET
Department of Agriculture and Commerce, Lester Spell, Jr., D.V.M., Commissioner

The Mississippi Farmers Market is open Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Downtown Jackson Off High Street

Eat Healthy Mississippi, continued from page 3

encourage farmers and restaurants to use Mississippi Market Maker, a site dedicated to connecting markets and quality sources of food from farms and fisheries in Mississippi. The free service is online at <http://www.marketmaker.msstate.edu>.

Recent consumer trends indicate a growing demand to know where food is from, as well as a preference for locally grown products, Manning said.

“This trend is no different for restaurant diners,” she said. “Eat Healthy Mississippi gives consumers the option to buy locally when dining out and creates more healthy dining options, which could lead to better health.”

Manning said restaurants could see an increase in revenue by meeting consumers’ demands for local produce.

“With increased access to locally-grown fruits and vegetables, restaurants will be able to fulfill consumer demand,” she said. “Restaurants offering healthy menu options that incorporate local produce could experience an increase in the number of diners and revenues.”

Contact Dr. Ken Hood at (662) 325-0849, or visit <http://www.eathealthymiss.com/>, for additional information regarding the Eat Healthy Mississippi Campaign.

PERSONNEL NEWS

Lacy Adcock, a native of Pontotoc, Mississippi, joined the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) on February 15, 2012. Prior to joining BPI, she attended Mississippi State University and received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal and Dairy Science. Lacy will serve as an Administrative Assistant in BPI’s Pesticide Division, working with landscape, tree surgery, and pest and weed control licensing and certification.



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