The Sentinel Plant Network (SPN) reached a major milestone—the successful completion of its first international workshop in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. SPN, the NPDN partner project with the American Public Gardens Association (APGA), was launched in 2010 with funds from the Farm Bill through USDA-APHIS. Kerry Britton, National Pathologist with the US Forest Service Research had a global vision for such a network and after 14 domestic workshops in the US that international vision came to fruition this July.

The workshop brought together over 50 participants from 34 public gardens, including 18 gardens from Mexico and one from Costa Rica, to discuss ways we can coordinate our efforts to promote plant conservation and stop the introduction and spread of new insect pests and plant pathogens. While participants came from diverse gardens in different countries, the underlying goals for the workshop were the same—build new relationships, promote SPN and NPDN First Detector training resources and encourage increased monitoring of plant collections because insect and disease pests do not recognize country borders.

The workshop dubbed the Sentinel Plant Network 2014 Workshop of the Americas took place at the Vallarta Botanical Gardens.

Photo courtesy of Rachel McCarthy.
Botanical Gardens in Jalisco, Mexico, on July 23–25. Casey Sclar and Emiliano Sanchez Martínez, executive directors of APGA and Asociación Mexicana de Jardines Botánicos (Mexican Association of Botanical Gardens) welcomed the participants at our opening reception on July 23. Each expressed an interest to build relationships abroad so we can work towards common goals of plant conservation.

Founded in 2004, the Vallarta Botanical Gardens have 20 acres dedicated to native habitats, especially plants endemic to tropical western Mexico. A major focus of the garden’s mission is conservation and public education which aligns nicely with the mission of SPN. Neil Gerlowski and Bob Price, executive director and owner/curator respectively, were gracious hosts and made us feel welcome and at home in their gardens.

Our presentation team consisted of Dan Stern and Annemarie Nagle from APGA, Rachel McCarthy (NEPDN), Dick Hoenisch (WPDN) and Consuelo Estevez De Jensen (SPDN), plant pathologist from the University of Puerto Rico Plant Disease Clinic, and Julio Medal, entomologist with Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Plant Industry. As with all SPN workshops the program included a “sharpening your observation skills” walk through the gardens and our enthusiastic group found all sorts of goodies throughout the two hour adventure for Consuelo and Julio to discuss.

Addressing the language barrier: No hablo Inglés & I don’t speak Spanish

Most of the participants were NOT bilingual so everything was presented in both English and Spanish. Julio and Consuelo delivered their talks in both languages but all of the other talks were translated on the fly. Our exceptional translation team consisted of Alan Heinze, Research Coordinator, Vallarta Botanical Gardens, Raul Puente Martinez, Curator of Living Collections, Desert Botanical Garden (AZ), NP DN’s Dick Hoenisch, WPDN Training and Education Coordinator, and Linda Asencio, Peace Corps Volunteer, Vallarta Botanical Gardens.

In addition to training front-line IPM and horticulture staff on regional threats to their gardens, SPN provides members access to a suite of outreach materials to enhance their outreach efforts. The SPN signage series is intended to educate visitors about the impact of high-consequence plant pests and pathogens and engage individuals as First Detectors. In preparation for the Workshop of the Americas, the signs for sudden oak death and laurel wilt were translated and produced in
Spanish and donated to the Vallarta Botanical Gardens. SPN’s signs are available in English and Spanish and can be acquired through the SPN toolbox (SPN membership required).

The final day of the program included a lively group discussion about continued international collaboration. Participants departed inspired and hopeful that this meeting was just the beginning of a strong and growing partnership to improve early detection and rapid response of high-risk pests that threaten our plant resources.

More pictures from the workshop are available on the NPDN Training and Education Facebook page. The Sentinel Plant Network is managed on behalf of NPDN by Rachel McCarthy and APGA by Dan Stern. If you have questions about diagnostic samples through the Sentinel Plant Network contact Rachel at rachel.mccarthy@cornell.edu or learn more about SPN at our public facing website www.sentinelplantnetwork.org.

NPDN STAR-D auditing exercise and gap audit at Michigan State University Diagnostic Services Laboratory

Dawn Dailey O’Brien and Karen Snover-Clift, Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology, Cornell University

An NPDN STAR-D auditing exercise and gap audit was conducted at the Michigan State University Diagnostic Services (MSU-DS) in East Lansing, Michigan on July 8-10, 2014 and was hosted by Jan Byrne and Jackie Smith. This STAR-D auditing exercise is being made possible through funding provided by the NPDN regions and by USDA-APHIS-PPQ-CPHST.

To prepare for real world accreditation audits and before they are added to the STAR-D auditor pool, STAR-D auditors are required to participate in at least two auditing exercises in addition to passing the ISO-17025 Auditor Training Course. The audit team consisted of Laura Jesse (Iowa State University) and Cheryl Smith (University of New Hampshire), Karen Snover-Clift (Cornell University), and Dawn Dailey O’Brien (Cornell University). The auditors were divided into two groups and although all four auditors were present for all aspects of the audit, each...
group focused on sections of the MSU-DS STAR-D system and were responsible for writing up their areas in the auditor’s checklist and associated documents that, in real world audits, would be submitted to the NPDN STAR-D Board for their use in determining the laboratory’s accreditation status.

All areas of the quality management system were audited including organizational and quality management, document control, customer feedback, non-conformances, corrective and preventive actions, records, internal audits and management reviews technical requirements, accommodations & environmental conditions, test methods & method validation, equipment, reference materials, and test result quality control, review of requests and agreements, subcontracting of tests, purchasing, personnel, sample & sample handling, and test result reporting.

The auditing exercise occurred over a three day period. The team met on a conference call to discuss the plans for the audit and to make a list of the documents they wanted to request from the MSU-DS STAR-D laboratory accreditation documents for their review before the on-site audit began. On the first day of the auditing exercise, the group discussed the documents they had been reviewing leading up to the visit and examined additional documentation to develop the auditor’s checklist they would use the following day. The second day was the official day of the audit and began with an opening meeting with the lab members. The auditors used the checklist they developed to collect evidence of compliance and to document good laboratory practices. On the third day, the auditors looked over all the evidence they collected and ensured all of their questions were answered. They pooled their information together to create a single document that contained all the evidence found with specific names, numbers, dates, examples and any other details they collected during the audit. This collection of their findings would eventually become the report they would submit to the STAR-D Board. They also presented their findings at a closing meeting with the laboratory members and administrators in which they discussed lists of good procedures observed, suggestions for continued development of their STAR-D program, and nonconformance observations the auditors recorded during the audit.

While the main purpose of the auditing exercises is to develop the skills of the auditor pool members, in every gap audit to date, the laboratory staff felt they received a very comprehensive review and input on the development of their STAR-D laboratory accreditation system and that this feedback from the auditors was extremely helpful in their mission to implement STAR-D into their laboratory practices.

QMS WORKSHOP UPDATE

We are in the planning stages for a second Quality Management System (QMS) workshop for the sometime late 2014 or early 2015. This workshop would be a repeat (only new and improved!) of the first QMS workshop that was held in Ames, Iowa in April of 2011. We have recently sent out an online survey for information to the NPDN membership asking some pertinent questions and are currently evaluating the results. We’ll keep you updated when a date has been chosen. If you missed responding to that survey and are interested in attending this workshop, please send us your name and contact information so you will receive future QMS workshop announcements.
Things You Always Wanted to Know When Creating a Lab Form

Judy Dizon, PDIS, Kansas State University

When developing a lab form, did you know…

1. You can change the sequence of the lab form questions. Select a lab form question then click on the up or down arrow buttons.

2. It is recommended that you choose to include the ‘- -’ option for all lab form questions with listbox-type answers. It represents the null value or what you can define as the ‘Select One’ option. If this option is available, it becomes the lab form question’s default value.
3. You must click on the ‘Save Answers’ button every time you make modifications to save the options for each of the selected lab form questions.

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**Upcoming Webinar**

**Building Pathogen Mitigation Features into Water Recycling Systems**

Presenter: Dr. Chuan Hong, Professor of Plant Pathology, Virginia Tech

Tuesday, August 5, 2014, Noon to 1:00 pm (Eastern)

To participate in this webinar, please go to [http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/irrigation-water/](http://connect.extension.iastate.edu/irrigation-water/) and dial 1-888-619-1583 then enter pass code: 491981

Visit the project site at [www.irrigation-pathogens.info](http://www.irrigation-pathogens.info) for recordings of past webinars and for other ongoing educational programs and exciting research activities. For more information about the webinar, or questions, contact Chuan Hong at chhong2@vt.edu.
Pest Threshold Report Updates
Mike Hill and Eileen Luke, CERIS, Purdue University

The Pest Threshold Report has been available for approximately one year to users with National access and we wanted to let you know about recent developments that have been made to enhance the report. These enhancements include adding additional search options along with the ability to output the report in a visual chart format instead of just a table format. Each of these features are discussed in further detail here.

New Search Options
You now have the ability within the search interface to specify which region and/or which state you would like the report to be created on. This will allow users to generate region specific or state specific reports. Figure 1 highlights each of these additional options.

Pie Chart
Along with the additional search options a new feature has been added that will allow you to generate a pie chart based on the pest threshold data. The pie chart can be created after generating the pest threshold report by clicking on the pie chart icon in the upper right hand corner as highlighted in Figure 2.

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**NPDN Pest Threshold Report**

This report provides a listing of pest records based on sample dates and threshold levels. An example of how this report can be used would be to select a two week sample date period with a threshold of 15. The results returned would show all pests/pathogens that matched the two week time period that had at least 15 confirmations.

<table>
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<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sample Dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Threshold</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorted By</td>
<td>Total (Descending)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: New Search Options for Pest Threshold Report (fields in red are required)

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**NPDN Pest Threshold Report**

<table>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threshold</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confirmation</td>
<td>Confirmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Records</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Pest Scientific Name** | **State(s)** | **Total**
--- | --- | ---
Identification Analysis | AR, CO, FL, GA, KS, MA, MD, ME, MS, MT, NC, NY, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA | 52
Heterodera glycines | AR, MI, OH, SD, WI | 38
Tomato Chlorotic Dwarf Viroid (ToCDV) | AZ | 21
Fusarium spp./spp. | FL, MN, NC, OR, WI | 19
Unidentified Bacteria | AR, NC, OR | 18
Pythium spp./spp. | FL, GA, KS, LA, MA, MN, NC | 16
General | AL, FL, NC, OR | 16
Phytophthora spp./spp. | AL, DC, FL, LA, MA, MD, MN, NC, SC, TX | 16
Ceratocystis (Chalara) fagacearum (quercina) | MN | 15

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Clicking on the pie chart icon will generate the pie chart in a separate window as demonstrated in Figure 3. Additional information is available on the pie chart by hovering your mouse over each of the sections.

These Pest Threshold enhancements will be discussed at the upcoming NPDN Town Hall at APS along with other IT enhancements that are taking place within the network. Please feel free to contact Mike Hill (765) 494-9854 or Eileen Luke (765) 494-6613 if you have any questions or need any assistance.

Figure 3: Pest Threshold Pie Chart

<table>
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<td>Number of Records:</td>
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</table>

**Going to APS?**

NPDN Town Hall Meeting

Sunday, August 10, 2014

Time: 1:00 to 3:00 pm

Marquette VI in Hilton
CBP Intercepts 67 Extremely Invasive Giant African Snails at LAX

CBP Newsroom

U.S. Customs & Border Protection (CBP) agriculture specialists at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) inspected an air cargo shipment declared as 67 live snails. Accompanying paperwork described them as *Achatina fulica* for human consumption. They arrived from Lagos, Nigeria in two plastic basket packages weighing slightly more than 35 pounds in total and were destined for San Dimas, California.

After submitting an urgent sample to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Plant Protection and Quarantine entomologists, their acting national mollusk specialist in Washington, D.C., identified them as giant African snails — scientifically known as *Archachatina* (Calachatina) marginata var. ovum (Pfeiffer) (Achatinidae). CBP received notification of this on July 7.

“This significant interception of giant African snails is the first time this pest has been encountered in such large quantity and as a consumption entry by CBP in Los Angeles. It exemplifies how CBP agriculture specialists protect our nation’s agriculture from the introduction of threatening foreign pests, plants and diseases,” said Todd C. Owen, CBP director of field operations in Los Angeles.

These pests are a very serious threat to our agriculture, natural ecosystem, public health and economy. They can consume more than 500 types of plants and, if vegetables or fruits are not available, will even eat the paint and stucco off of houses. They can be carriers of several parasites which are harmful to humans, one of which can lead to meningitis.


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ATTENTION FIRST DETECTOR EDUCATORS

Here are some quick things you can do to help spread the word about ALB Tree Check Month:

- Post the Tree Check Month badge (right) on your website and/or social media pages
- Share ALB videos with people you know
- Create a social post in August as Tree Check Month — #TreeCheck2014
- Invite friends and family to go on a tree check walk to look for signs of infestation

visit www.beetlebusters.info/get-involved/tree-check/ for outreach resources
UPCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

August 9–13, 2014
APS-CPS Joint Meeting
Minneapolis, MN

November 16–19, 2014
Entomology 2014
Portland, OR

Training/Workshops

September 29–October 3, 2014
The 19th Ornamental Workshop on Diseases and Insects
Hendersonville, NC

CONTRIBUTE

Share Tips and News with Your Colleagues

Recently write an article for a trade journal? Do you have a tip, announcement, regional news or network update you would like to include in the NPDN News? Email Rachel McCarthy at rachel.mccarthy@cornell.edu

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Extension Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology

The Department of Plant Pathology at North Carolina State University invites applications for a 12-month non-tenure-track position at the Extension Assistant Professor level. This faculty position is located at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in the southern Appalachians near Asheville, North Carolina, and has a 90% extension and 10% research appointment.

For a complete job description and details for submission of applications, please refer to http://jobs.ncsu.edu/postings/39830.