Sentinel Plant Network holds workshop at Connecticut College Arboretum  

The Sentinel Plant Network (SPN) concluded its 2018 training program with a workshop for northeastern public garden professionals on August 16 & 17. Held at the Connecticut College Arboretum in New London, CT, this event served 44 participants from 25 public gardens across nine states and Newfoundland, as well as participation from NPDN, the American Public Gardens Association and USDA-APHIS.

Our northeast training team included Rich Buckley and Sabrina Tirpak from the Plant Diagnostic Laboratory at Rutgers University, Yonghao Li and Rich Cowles from the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station, and Rachel McCarthy, Tyler Hale and Marisol Mata from the Sentinel Plant Network. Rich Buckley gave an engaging diagnostics 101 presentation—the art of the diagnosis, then he and Rich Cowles led the scouting walk and uncovered signs and symptoms around campus and the arboretum. Participants put their problem-solving skills to the test in the diagnostics 102 labs when they examined unlabeled samples more closely with Sabrina and Yonghao.

Location and dates set for 2019 NPDN national meeting, page 3

Joan Ellen Allen — remembering a talented colleague and dear friend, page 2
Joan Allen was my buddy. We met at the NEPDN meeting at Rutgers 13 years ago. She was newly hired at UConn as the plant diagnostician and a new member of the NEPDN. Since then we’ve seen each other several times a year at various meetings and always had dinner or took walks together. We had a wonderful time last fall at the Northeastern APS meeting—sharing a taxi from the airport, dining together, and walking along the lovely streets of Quebec City. The meetings were good too!

Joan was a gentle soul and full of life. Some may have thought she was quiet, but she was bold and confident. Her first time attending the Kanuga Ornamentals Workshop in North Carolina she dressed up as her favorite pathogen, Pestalotiopsis, for the ‘dress as your favorite insect or pathogen’ social. She wasn’t intimidated by not knowing what to expect, she just thought it sounded like fun so she built and wore a costume.

Joan was an excellent scientist and plant pathologist. And she loved her job, including all the presentations she delivered each year to Master Gardeners and many other organizations. The day she died, August 15, I hear she gave one presentation and was headed to New London, CT to give another. She never made it to the second presentation due to pulmonary edema.

Everyone agrees that Joan is one of the nicest people they have ever met—sweet and nice and thoughtful. I’m lucky to have known her.

~Heather Faubert, Plant Protection Clinic, University of Rhode Island
The workshop provided an opportunity to update frontline plant healthcare professionals on regionally significant pests and alert them about imminent exotic threats. In addition to the diagnostic and hands on sessions, participants learned how their participation in the network can improve early detection and rapid response, and how to communicate more effectively with diagnosticians and regulatory officials.

Since September 2011, over 750 public garden professionals from 250 member gardens have participated in an SPN workshop. Participants are required to complete a pre and post-test which measures knowledge learned at the training. Occasionally attendees forward additional comments to show their appreciation like these from Jeff and Sonia:

“I just wanted to thank you for being part of the Florida Naples Sentinel Plant Network Workshop in May. . . . It was honestly one of the most worthwhile conferences I’ve ever attended. I particularly loved the lab session with Sladana Bec. Being able to see everything up close, putting your own slides together, and running simple diagnostic tests was so much fun.”—Jeff, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, Miami, FL

“I thought the workshop was terrific. It was incredibly well organized and all of the lectures, the lab work and the field walk complemented each other nicely. I thought everyone managed to pack an enormous amount of information into a short time, keeping it interesting and clear. I am hoping to be able to share all that I learned with my volunteers and start offering some pest lectures and scouting walks at my garden.”—Sonia, Greenwood Gardens, Short Hills, NJ

The Sentinel Plant Network will resume its training schedule in 2019 with programs planned for gardens in the Midwest, Great Plains and Northwest. If you would like to participate please contact Rachel McCarthy at rachel.mccarthy@cornell.edu.

Photos from top: Sabrina assists with a sample at the microscope; Yonghao looks on as participants examine another lab sample; and Rich Buckley uses a relatively healthy horsechestnut to illustrate disease severity and the disease triangle on the Sharpening walk.

© Marisol Mata, APGA and (bottom) Rachel McCarthy, NEPDN, Cornell University

2019 NPDN NATIONAL MEETING

The next national meeting will be in beautiful downtown Indianapolis, Indiana!

This meeting will focus on diagnostics for diagnosticians, making the most of what we have and improving the science for the network.

We can’t wait to see you! Stay tuned for details...

Where: Crowne Plaza-Indianapolis-Downtown-Union Station
(rate for April 15–20, 2019: $141/night)

When: April 15–20, 2019
Upcoming events

Meetings

November 11–14, 2018
2018 ESA, ESC and ESBC Joint Meeting
Vancouver, BC, Canada

April 15–20, 2019
2019 NPDN National Meeting
Indianapolis, Indiana

August 3–7, 2019
2019 APS Annual Meeting
Cleveland, Ohio

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

connect

NPDN outreach. Connect with us on social media!

Pestalotiopsis leaf spot conidia (Pestalotiopsis sp.)
© Bruce Watt, University of Maine, Bugwood.org

www.bugwood.org

Rachel McCarthy, layout editor
NPDN Training and Education Coordinator
Cornell University

www.npdn.org