

# NPDN News

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## INTRODUCING THE NEW PLANT PATHOLOGY NATIONAL PROGRAM LEADER TO NIFA

**D**r. Rubella Goswami is the new National Program Leader for Plant Pathology at USDA-NIFA. She started in January of 2017 and her responsibilities include working with the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN) and the Extension Implementation Program (EIP) program areas.

Rubella has a background in plant pathology, with several years of experience in both applied and molecular aspects of crop protection. Prior to joining NIFA, she held faculty positions at North Dakota and Delaware State Universities and was a Principal Investigator at DuPont Crop Protection. Rubella's educational background includes a Master's degree in Plant Molecular Biology from the University of Nottingham, UK, and doctoral degree in Plant Pathology from the University of Minnesota, US.

Rubella is an ardent supporter of crop protection research and extension, and believes that our programs and capacities in the area of disease detection, monitoring and management are critical for assuring food and agricultural security. She feels that NPDN is one of the key programs in NIFA's tactical science portfolio and is proud to have the opportunity to work with the network. Her initial impression of the network and its efforts has been very good, and she considers the members of the network and their activities to be of great value to the community and the mission of NPDN. She feels that in addition to

improving and delivering on the established goals, there is a need to increase the visibility of NPDN's efforts and demonstrate the impact of the network to a wider audience and decision makers. In her role at



Photo courtesy of Troy Darden.

NIFA, Rubella looks forward to working closely with the entire NPDN team and its partners to help facilitate its success at all levels.

Rubella can be reached at [rubella.goswami@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:rubella.goswami@nifa.usda.gov).



## Issue Highlights

- SPDN meets at regional APS division meeting
- Laurel wilt new research: repellent could keep dangerous beetles away from avocado trees
- Job opportunity at the University of Florida

# Conference on Soilborne Plant Pathogens

## March 28–30, 2017

### University of California, Davis

In 2010 the Soil Fungus Conference was renamed Conference on Soilborne Plant Pathogens (CSPP), to include nematodes, bacteria, and viruses and to expand the scope of the meeting. The CSPP is a short meeting with a long list of benefits. Started in 1954 by researchers from the University of California with interests in soilborne fungi, it meets annually at locations in the western U.S. It has progressed into one of the most commonly known and highly valued conferences in plant pathology focused on soilborne fungi.

This meeting has a relatively informal and highly interactive format that allows for provocative, short oral presentations on research and development discoveries, new or increasing disease problems, new applications, products and equipment, and other subjects, followed by questions and spirited, illuminating discussions as the audience pitches in. In some respects, it is a veritable “think tank” with both immediate and long-term benefits. All participants are encouraged to present and/or contribute to the discussions as they choose and time permits. Creative thinking, insights, opinions, and lots of take-home ideas abound under the special climate of this event. Participants come from universities (research, teaching, extension), private industry, technical service organizations, private practice/consulting, municipal and state agencies, crop production, and other areas.

Visit the conference web site at <http://soilfungus.wsu.edu> for registration and travel information.

## REGIONAL NEWS



### SPDN convenes in Texas for the southern APS division meeting

*Carrie Harmon, Associate Director SPDN, Dept. of Plant Pathology and Plant Diagnostic Center, Univ. of Florida*

The Southern Plant Diagnostic Network (SPDN) met with the APS Southern Division and the Southern Region IPM Center last week in College Station, TX (link to meeting details here: [www.apsnet.org/members/divisions/south/meetings/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.apsnet.org/members/divisions/south/meetings/Pages/default.aspx)).

In addition to participating in the scientific sessions and tours, the SPDN met as a region to discuss priorities for the region, ways to improve communications through technology, and voted to meet virtually every other year (and with an APS division on the off years). Each state presented a poster during the poster session describing lab highlights, new diseases, diagnostic techniques, and relevant activities. 🌱



SPDN meeting participants; not pictured, Paul Vincelli and Phil Harmon (photographer).

## Repellant could keep dangerous beetles away from avocado trees

*ScienceDaily.com*

Using some pleasant-smelling chemicals, avocado growers may soon be able to repel beetles that inject a potentially deadly fungus into their trees, saving fruit and money, University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences researchers say.

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Redbay ambrosia beetle (*Xyleborus glabratus*)

When they are infected with the laurel wilt fungus, redbay trees—a close cousin to the avocado—emit methyl salicylate to repel redbay ambrosia beetles, the

very beetles that gave the trees the fungus in the first place, scientists say in a newly published study.

Florida avocados bring a \$100 million-a-year impact to Florida's economy, UF/IFAS economists say. They grow almost entirely in southern Miami-Dade County, but growers have battled the laurel wilt fungus, which can kill redbay and avocado trees, since it arrived in Georgia in 2003.

Because avocado growers have few viable options to combat laurel wilt, UF/IFAS researchers looked for solutions. For the study, scientists compared the number of beetles captured on sticky traps disposed on redbay tree logs. After 10 weeks, they also looked at the holes dug by the beetles into the logs because that's when the beetles transmit the fungus.

Scientists then tested three different blends of repellant and found verbenone and verbenone plus methyl salicylate—produced by the infected redbay tree—were the most efficient. When scientists applied these repellants on redbay logs, they reduced the number of beetles captured on sticky traps by 95 percent and the number for boring holes by 90 percent.

This is an excerpt from an article on [www.sciencedaily.com/](http://www.sciencedaily.com/). The full article can be accessed at <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/02/170223102556.htm> and the study was published in the 18 February 2017 *Journal of Applied Entomology*.

*University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences. "Repellant could keep dangerous beetles away from avocado trees." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 23 February 2017. <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/02/170223102556.htm>* 

## JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Entomology and Nematology Department at the University of Florida is accepting applications for an Assistant Professorship focused on pollination ecology in natural areas and crop systems. This is a 12-month, tenure-accruing position that will be 60% research (Florida Agricultural Experiment Station), 25% Extension (UF/IFAS Extension Service), and 15% teaching (College of Agricultural and Life Sciences). The position is based in Gainesville, FL, USA. The primary focus within the research assignment is the pollination ecology and/or conservation of non-Apis bees. The Extension responsibilities will include developing and implementing an effective statewide Extension education program to support conservation efforts and stakeholders who rely on the pollination services that non-Apis bees provide. The teaching responsibilities will include developing an undergraduate/graduate course in pollinator ecology/conservation and participation in revolving topic seminars in the candidate's area of expertise.

Please share this announcement with all interested parties. More information about the position can be found at <http://explore.jobs.ufl.edu/cw/en-us/job/501323>. The University of Florida is an Equal Opportunity Institution. 

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Meetings

**August 5–9, 2017**  
2017 APS Annual Meeting  
San Antonio, Texas

**August 12–17, 2017**  
National Plant Board 2017 Annual Meeting  
Savannah, Georgia

**November 5–8, 2017**  
Entomology 2017  
Denver, Colorado

**March 19–22, 2018**  
Ninth International Integrated Pest  
Management (IPM) Symposium  
Baltimore, Maryland

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH

Laurel wilt, *Raffaelea lauricola*, 10-day-old culture on CSMA medium



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## 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](mailto:rachel.mccarthy@cornell.edu)



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