

NTNGA March Newsletter



This month's meeting will be held on Thursday, March 12th at Traditions in Tyler starting at 6 pm. Steve Stansy with Foster Quan out of Houston, an immigration law firm, is going to sponsor the March meeting. He will do an overview of immigration laws, and answer any questions that anyone may have. **Please RSVP to Chess immediately at (903) 245-1207.**

Thank You to Tom McCarter of Valent for sponsoring our last meeting in January. There were 33 members and 2 visitors present. He gave a presentation on weed control and new products available. Thank You again for your support.

Putting Nursery's To Work Recycling

During 2008 a new recycling program was created by Environmental Co-op and partner JLG Brokerage. With the help of JLG providing balers to the nursery's and the recycling expertise of Environmental Co-op a sustainable nursery recycling program was born. The first nursery to allow us to install a baler was Bruce Miller Nursery at their Wills Point location during the summer of 08. Since that time Bruce Miller Nursery's has recycled 15,797# or 8 Tons of plastic and cardboard. Bruce Miller Nursery is offering a container take back program to their customers at both their Wills Point and Richardson Stores. This program will grow as more and more customers find out it is available in 2009.

Tree Town USA was next to install two balers. "On our first visit Tree Town USA literally had a mountain of plastic waiting to be disposed of. The cost of landfilling all that material would have been monumental. Now that the balers have been installed they have recycled 85,922 pounds or 43 Tons of pots, containers and drip line." states Marilyn May, Executive Director of Environmental Co-op. Environmental Co-op is a member owned non-profit environmental organization who's mission is to reduce solid waste going to the landfill. They are located in Terrell, TX and work mainly in the Kaufman County and surrounding areas.

Next in line for a baling system is Tawakoni Plant Farms. Theirs will be delivered during the first part of March. Andy Marcee of Tawakoni can see that this program will help them greatly with decreasing disposal of their waste, keep the farm clean and organized and they will be able to recycle which most of the nursery's have wanted to do but without the proper equipment, like a baler, and having the right markets for their materials it was just too difficult.

After the materials are baled JLG has the bales picked up and sends them to the proper recycling facility. Environmental Co-op handles any problems or questions the nursery's have and works with them to make sure the materials are picked up in a timely manner.

Nurseries are required to have a large enough amount of plastic and cardboard waste to be considered for this program. The balers are contracted to the nursery for a minimum of 3 years at no cost with the agreement that the nursery will provide a concrete pad and electricity for the baler.

All in all with the program just getting started mid-year of 2008 a total of 101,719 # or 51 Tons were recycled in 2008. How many pounds of material will be recycled in 2009 is yet to be decided. "We feel this is a win-win situation for members of the Northeast Texas Nursery Growers Association. Right now this group is the only association in the U. S. that has this type of program that I know of." Says Marilyn May. If you would like more information on how to get involved please call Marilyn at 972-839-6051 or e-mail her at mmay@cebridge.net
A big thanks goes to Martin Farnsworth for contacting Marilyn to see what could be done to get a recycling program started for the nursery's back in 2007.

Submitted by Marilyn May, Executive Director, Environmental Co-op,
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Texas Extension Specialist Wins Regional Award

by Rosemary Hallberg, Southern Region IPM Center

Right after Scott Ludwig, an Extension Program Specialist with Texas AgriLife Extension Service, took the microphone to accept a regional award for integrated pest management education, he began to do what he does best: to educate.

With a Friends of IPM Educator Award in his hand, Ludwig began to update the audience about what they could expect to see in the next few months. Spider mites, thrips, diseases—Ludwig explained when each one might be appearing and recommended ways to minimize losses.

Ludwig received the Friends of IPM Educator Award on February 6 at the 15th Annual Trade Show of the Northeast Texas Nursery Growers Association. Sponsored by the Southern Region IPM Center, this award recognizes professionals in the region who have proven excellence in teaching or training. Ludwig's combination of workshop training, conference sessions and education through articles in the media made him an excellent candidate for the award.

"If we need a speaker, we ask Scott," says Mike Yelverton, on staff at Texas Nursery and Landscape Association. "He's been a speaker on several different issues, and he's a regular contributor to our magazine. He's awesome."

His work resulted in a 50 percent reduction in insecticide use and a 24 percent reduction in the cost of pest management in a large hibiscus operation, through their transition from conventional to integrated pest management.

Ludwig is one of 22 IPM Agents or Specialists with the Texas IPM Program, a program within Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Based in Overton, Ludwig specializes in pest management for nurseries and ornamentals. His interest in ornamentals began at Virginia Tech, where he volunteered at the horticulture gardens.

Texas is rich in cotton, sorghum, and other field crops, so most of the university's researchers and Extension personnel have traditionally focused on field crops. But after 2000, the greenhouse and nursery industry began expanding in eastern Texas. In 2002, Ludwig started the state's first county-based IPM program in ornamentals. While his expertise is in education, Ludwig has had to conduct research experiments himself to ascertain the best pest management method for new pests.

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"We run into problems because there are few research positions dedicated to ornamentals in the state," Ludwig says. The Texas IPM program has a long history of conducting applied research programs that involve the growers. This enables the grower to see another option for them to incorporate into the production plans. But conducting those experiments has had its challenges.

Nurseries have a "zero tolerance" policy for pest damage, so very few nursery owners are willing to house a "control" area with untreated plants amidst the rest of their cash crop. To allay growers' fears that they would suffer huge losses from pests on untreated plants, Ludwig often takes plants back to his the Texas AgriLife Research and Education Center at Overton, Texas. Where he has research facilities, including a new greenhouse donated by the Northeast Texas Nursery Grower Association last year.

"There's no problem getting plants from the growers," Ludwig says. "Many growers have concerns with tests on their property. This is especially the case if the treatments may not work."

"This is the only guy who has come in to see the nursery and asked for plants with scale on them," says Bob Mallory, co-owner of Tram-Tex Nursery in Tyler. "And he pays for them! But with Scott's help, we're now controlling the scale."

Ludwig's preventative actions are helping save the Texas ornamental industry from losses from invasive pests, including chilli thrips. This new pest was first detected in 2007 as a result of alerts in his newsletters and newspaper articles contained descriptions of the pest. He also collaborated with USDA-APHIS-PPQ in Edinburg, Texas to evaluate control techniques for this pest. As a result, Texas landscapers and growers now have recommendations on how to better manage and prevent plant damage from this new pest. Several growers and landscapers who had not met Ludwig previously began contacting him after that.

"Everyone who is concerned about chili thrips knows Scott because is dedicated to helping them prevent damage to their crop," says Ben Fischer, an employee at Tawakoni Plant Farm in Wills Point. "He's very genuinely concerned about the industry and our success."

Ludwig works closely with the chemical sales representatives, since many growers obtain their pest control advice from the representatives. Because Ludwig can work with growers in the field, he can show them how to use each product and how to time the applications to reap the most benefit. Some of the chemical company representatives call Ludwig for advice themselves if a grower approaches them with a problem that they have not seen before.

"Scott does a lot of work with the products and tells the growers which one to use first," says Karl Steddom, plant pathologist with AgriLife Extension. "Chemical sales reps like that because he's telling them how to use the products correctly."

Growers who watched Ludwig accept the award on February 6 agreed that it was well-deserved. Many of them have depended on his advice season after season, whether they attend his workshops, read his articles in a grower magazine or just pick up the phone and call him.

"We couldn't get along without his help," Mallory says. "he's just a phone call away."

NTNGA Honorary Member

We wanted to apologize to Sherman Clem. It seems that he got left out of the 2009 NTNGA Buyer's Guide. He should have been listed as an honorary Member. We appreciate all that he does for our industry.

Sherman Clem is a Senior Inspector for the Texas Dept. of Agriculture and is the lead inspector for the Smith County/Tyler rose industry and the point of contact agency wide on rose related issues. More recently he has taken on the task of lead inspector to control the flow of regulated articles into the state of Texas.