

Montgomery District Honors Members



CREAMERY (Montgomery Co.) — Ernest D Yocum Jr., far left, chairman of the Montgomery County Conservation District, congratulates recipients of 1991 conservation awards for their efforts in conserving soil and protecting Pennsylvania waters from the effects of soil pollution.

Lee Reinford, Schwenksville, received the Outstanding Conservation Farm Award for conservation practices utilized at Breezy Slope Farm. Conservation tillage, strip cropping, and a nutrient management system are some of the conservation measures and practices employed at the Schwenksville farm.

Barry Davis of Pottstown received the Conservation Tillage Award for the production of no-till legumes and cover cropping. The conservation tillage method conserves approximately six tons of soil per acre.

The Conservation District also recognized nonagricultural conservation practices employed by developers to restrict soil loss during the building process. Alastair R. Ross, vice president of administrative affairs for Sterling/Winthrop Inc., Upper Providence Township, was presented with the Cooperator/Developer of the Year Award for team effort in protecting the natural resources through the implementation and maintenance of soil and water conservation practices.

Also recognized was Rich Hansen of Hansen Properties, Douglass Township, who received the Long-Term Conservation Practices For the Production of Nursery Crop Award.

Artist, Subject Are Rare Breeds

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — A visit to a contemporary art gallery might convince you that realism is dead. But to one group of artists, it still reigns supreme.

"Very few people have the patience necessary to draw the intricate design on a butterfly's wings," said Christine Jung, biological illustrator in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences and one of more than 1,300 members in the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators.

Biological illustrators aren't your stereotypical starving artists. They work closely with scientists, recording in precise detail the appearance of common and exotic plant and animal species.

While their work rarely hangs in museums, it is widely published in textbooks, field guides, popular magazines, and academic journals. Their drawings teach us about the intricacies of the natural world and record its unique genetic traits.

"Many biological illustrators specialize in one scientific discipline," said Jung. "Some work with doctors to illustrate the human body and present patient-care information. Others draw fish or wildlife. My specialty is entomology, the study of insects."

Jung's pen-and-ink drawings grace the covers of pest sheets prepared by Penn State researchers. The sheets help homeowners and agricultural producers identify and control troublesome insects. Jung's work also appears on Penn State computer programs that help growers across the nation find better ways to deal with insect pests.

To prepare each drawing, Jung

first studies the insect under a dissection microscope. "Some specimens are so tiny they can barely be seen by the naked eye," she said. "For instance, tracheal mites live inside the lungs of bees, so you can imagine how small they are."

"Because I repeatedly have to check my drawings against the specimen, a single drawing may take more than 10 hours. The researcher who needs the illustration for a publication has to approve it for accuracy."

"I used to just squash bugs," Jung said, "but after spending so much time examining them and learning about their behavior, I've really come to appreciate them."

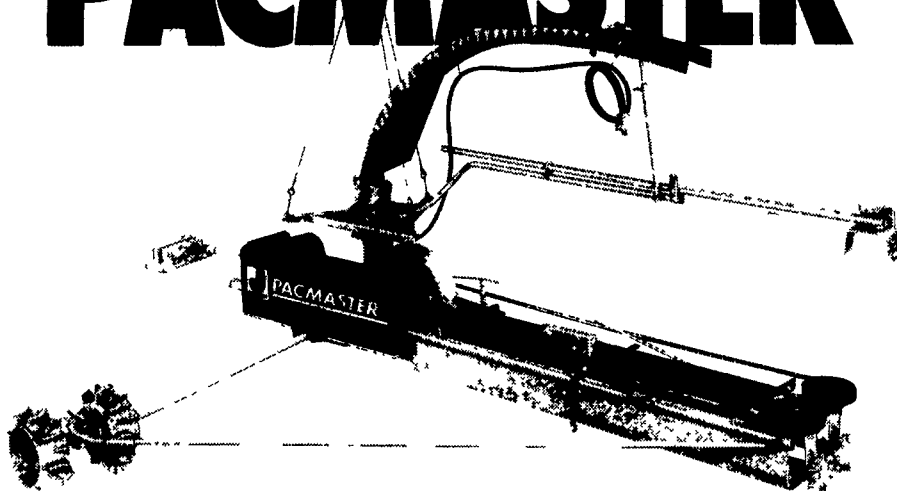
"My favorite assignment so far has been drawing the masked bedbug hunter. This insect looks and acts like an armored tank. It throws dust on itself and waits for bedbugs to come along before it attacks."

Many biological illustrators are drawn to this career because they are skilled artistically and scientifically and are unwilling to specialize in one discipline at the expense of the other.

Jung studied art at Iowa State with a minor in biology, then pursued an MFA in visual arts at Penn State. She recently exhibited her work at the annual meeting of the Guild of Natural Science Illustrators at Duke University.

"To survive in this field, you have to have excellent scientific and drawing skills," said Jung. "You have to communicate well with scientists to find out how to interpret the subject matter and present it in a way both experts and lay people can understand."

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