IPM Award Winners Announced At Hort Show

ROCHESTER, N.Y. - A dedicated crop consultant and an innovative scientist were honored at the NYS Horticultural Society meeting on Jan. 22 for their achievements in integrated pest management (IPM).

Elizabeth Graeper Thomas, who owns Liz Thomas Orchard Consulting, and David Gadoury. senior research associate at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, received their awards from IPM Program director James Tette.

Half a dozen state IPM awards are presented each year to individuals or groups showing leadership in biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks. According to Tette, the purpose of the award is to "honor people for developing new IPM methods or for sharing IPM with others."

Thomas, a crop consultant since 1982, works with commercial apple growers in Wayne County whose farms range from 15 to 600 acres. One of her greatest contributions to the field of IPM has been interpreting and putting to use the information provided by Cornell. Specifically, she has encouraged growers to manage apple scab by relying on rainfall data, rather than by applying calendar sprays. "We've finetuned the process," said Thomas. "I care about how much pesticide is out there."

Thomas also cares about growers' interests and is able to provide what she calls a "bird's-eye view" of what works and what doesn't.

In previous years, by advocating a "soft program" that is less detrimental to beneficial organisms in the orchard and by pinpointing the timing of pesticide applications. Thomas was able to save her growers money. Today she thinks everyone has to work harder to ensure that new, softer pesticides are economically viable. Thomas advocates the use of predatory mites and sometimes sees growers shift perspective, changing their tolerance for damage, or becoming more willing to try biological control.

Sixteen years of experience has enabled Thomas to become well respected by growers and Cornell University staff and faculty. After earning a bachelor's from Cornell University in 1981, she was hired by Seneca Foods to be their pest management supervisor for fruit orchards. In later years, she teamed up with consultant Jeff Alicandro of AgrAssistance and still cooperates closely with him.

Thomas is on the board of directors of NEWA (the Northeast Weather Association).

The second winner to receive an IPM award is David M. Gadoury, senior research associate in the Department of Plant Pathology at Cornell University in Geneva, N.Y. Gadoury works on the biology and ecology of plant pathogens, and how this information can be used to better manage diseases of grapes and apples. He emphasizes practicality, simplicity, economy, and biologically based solutions.

Focusing on powdery grape mildew, Gadoury, together with

the late R.C. Pearson, determined how the fungus survived winter to cause infection in the spring. They then revised the grape disease management program to target the early part of the growing season, when the disease is inconspicuous, but easier to control. This new approach reduced the annual number of fungicide applications by as much as 50 percent in some cases, and simultaneously improved disease control. As a direct result of these changes. New York grape growers save nearly \$1 million a year in lower fungicide

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) ---- Penn State Cooperative Extension has planned a series of tobacco production meetings in Lancaster County during the last two weeks of February.

The first series of meetings will deal with tobacco pest management from the seedbed to the shed. The meetings will include information on weed control, insect control, and disease control, especially blue mold.

Blue mold could become a major problem during the 1998 growing season. Last summer's weather offered the best control possible for the disease - dry weather and the crop avoided a major disease outbreak. Strategies to prevent and treat blue mold will be discussed.

The tobacco mangement meetings are scheduled as follows:

• Feb. 16 starting at 1 p.m. in the Summit Valley Elementary School in New Holland.

costs, and produce higher quality of fruit.

Gadoury's research is expanding our knowledge of how other major grape diseases, such as downy mildew and black rot, develop. New information about diseases developing in sequence as they weaken a plant is helping growers to select fungicides that target each disease at the proper time. Gadoury is also involved in controlling powdery mildew with beneficial mites.

In the field of apples, Gadoury

• Feb. 17 starting at 7 p.m. in the Penn Manor High School Vocational Agriculture Classroom, Millersville.

• Feb. 18 starting at 1 p.m. in the Salisbury Township Municipal Building, White Horse.

• Feb. 19 starting at 1 p.m. in the Bart Township Fire Company, Georgetown.

These meetings will have category pesticide credits.

A second series of meetings will be held to discuss the growing of tobacco transplants using the "float system." Many of the southern growing regions are already using this system to produce more than 75 percent of their transplants. The system saves labor while producing excellent quality plants. Transplants grown this way start in the field with very little trouble. However, the system offers many unique management challenges.

Tobacco Meetings Set be Dr. Dewitt Gooden, South Carolina state tobacco specialist. He has had many years experience with the system and is well known for his expertise.

> Also on the program will be James Windson from the University of Delaware, Georgetown Research Facility. He will be discussing the experiences he has had using the float system to produce vegetable transplants.

The float culture meetings are scheduled as follows:

• Feb. 23 starting at 1 p.m. in the Leacock Township Building.

• Feb. 23 starting at 7 p.m. in the Penn Manor High School Vocational Agriculture Room, Millersville.

• Feb. 24 starting at noon in the Colerain Township Municipal Building, Kirkwood.

For more information, contact Bob Anderson at the Lancaster County Extension Office, (717) 394-6851.

Speaker for these meetings will

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on both apples and grapes has been incorporated into disease management programs in New York, the northeast region, and other parts of the world. Gadour earned both an M.S. and a Ph.D. in "Botany and Plant Pathology" at the University of New Hampshire.

worked on managing apple scab

for some 20 years, developing the

"Potential Ascospore Dose" prin-

ciple and a simple heat-maturity

model that likewise predicts the

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