

Title of project: Ornamental Crops Electronic Communications

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Abstract:

In an effort to effectively distribute Integrated Pest Management information to extension educators and growers of ornamental crops a three digital communication conduits have been established.

E-newsletter

We have developed an emailed newsletter on IPM topics for ornamental crops. It appears this email is an effective way for our team of two to reach out to extension educators, industry representatives and ultimately NY growers. Our distribution list has more than doubled, over the past three years and it now includes IPM professionals from outside NY. The articles from this newsletter are re-published in local newsletters with a combined distribution of over 1000 horticulture professionals.

Blog

Tree Integrated Pest Management: A Problem Solving Site for Tree Producers (<http://blogs.cornell.edu/treeipm/>) was set up in October of 2011. The content of this blog is derived from inquiries from nursery and Christmas tree growers. The blog was started with the idea that many growers see similar symptoms on their trees as we move through each unique growing season. The blog helps connect growers and specialists providing answers to problems caused by diseases, insects, weeds or cultural conditions.

Twitter

We started a Twitter feed (ornamentalIPM) to gather and provide information relevant to ornamental producers. In the coming months, we will promote the site to NY ornamental growers and evaluate their interest and use in it.

Justification: Many extension educators in the Cornell Extension system, who have responsibilities for ornamental crops, reach the growers in their area through regularly distributed newsletters. There is no other NY produced resource on ornamental IPM topics available to agents in the Cornell extension system. It is also valuable to provide information directly to producers during the growing season. The pest control information can often be time sensitive. So quick additions to the blog or announcements on subscribed twitter feeds can give growers the alerts they need.

Objectives: The information provided in these digital formats is an effort to assist commercial horticulture educators and growers with current reliable IPM information. The communication also serves as a link between university-based research and the New York growers who can benefit from this information.

Procedures: Elizabeth Lamb and Brian Eshenaur select current topics of interest then turn them into articles, blog posts or Twitter notices. Ideas come from our contact with growers and scouts and are the answers to current issues and questions. The articles are put together through lab diagnostic results, literature search, and contact with Cornell faculty. Other times recent research results will be put together in a grower-friendly format.

Articles are distributed as the text in an email and often include a selected photograph or two. More in-depth information and additional photographs are posted at the NY IPM website. The current issue and past newsletters can be found at this site.

Results: By the end of 2011, our e-newsletter distribution list had increased. We expanded to 106 educators or industry representatives. This includes several requests from colleagues outside New York. We feel including these individuals is important to enhance communication and help further our goal of collaborating with people who have similar responsibilities in other states. In 2011 our articles ran in at least three different publications. The combined distribution is over 1000 horticulture professionals. We have received positive feedback on the blog and twitter feed as well and look forward to evaluating growers using these in the coming year.

Implications:

This year's results indicate this is an effective way for our team to reach out to educators, industry representatives and ultimately NY growers. Encouraged by the continued use and informal feedback, we plan to continue and provide more IPM information in this format in 2012.

Publications that ran our articles included:

- *Long Island Horticulture News*, Suffolk County NY
- *Hudson Valley Horticulture*, Orange, Dutchess, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties.
- *NYS Flower Industries Newsletter*.
- *Real Tree Talk. Christmas Tree Farmers of NY*.