

Title: BRANCHING OUT: Focusing on Feature Articles

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Abstract: **BRANCHING OUT:** *An IPM Newsletter for Trees and Shrubs* has been published (10 issues per year) since 1993. Each issue has a 1-2 page feature article describing either a single pest or pathogen or a closely related group with detailed illustrations. The forum allows authors to explain the conceptual bases behind IPM strategies as well as the strategies themselves. We propose here to consolidate the feature articles into a single booklet, with suitable rearrangement of topics to provide a logical framework (either via host, symptom, or pest/pathogen group) for reference by practitioners. Management options from some of the older features will be updated as needed and some new articles will be written to fill obvious gaps.

Background and Justification: For the past 16 years, the P.I and a team of contributing staff members have published **BRANCHING OUT:** *An IPM Newsletter for Trees and Shrubs* for an audience of tree care professionals, nurserymen, Christmas tree growers, Cooperative Extension educators and turf managers that numbers about 2000 per year. **BRANCHING OUT** was recognized by the NYS Associate of County Agents as the best new extension publication when it first appeared, and it has since received numerous accolades from readers. The P.I. received the Richard W. Harris Author's Award from the International Society of Arboriculture in 2007, following nomination by the New York State Arborists Association primarily for his efforts on the newsletter.

In addition to sections with a scouting report (with field observations less than 4 days old), a growing degree day monitor, and "miscellaneous news", each issue has a 1-2 page feature article. The feature, complete with color illustrations, describes in some detail either an individual pest/pathogen, a group of closely related (by symptoms or hosts) pests/pathogens, plant problems caused by non-infectious agents, or some other important issue. The feature articles are different from traditional industry or academic generated fact sheets in that writers do more than illustrate pests/pathogens and detail life cycles; they use the opportunity to develop IPM concepts that justify recommended management strategies. Emphasis is on least toxic alternatives to "traditional" chemical controls and, more often than not, recommendations urge plant health care professionals not to intervene at all, but rather to allow pest outbreaks that our experience tells us are temporary, to pass. So far, 160 unique feature articles have been prepared. If printed as is, they would total about 240 pages.

Procedures:

We propose to consolidate and organize the 160 feature articles published in BRANCHING OUT into a booklet that will enable plant health care professionals, educators, Master Gardeners, etc. to have ready access to up-to-date tree and shrub pest management information. In some cases, the articles will be used *verbatim*, but in others there will be need to update information on host and geographic ranges and management strategies and to upgrade illustrations. Many

feature articles deal with pests and pathogens that have similar symptoms (e.g. conifer twig problems, witches' brooms, leaf scorch) but for purposes of this booklet, an alternative organizational scheme that leads IPM practitioners more directly to relevant information will be employed. The booklet will also have a table of contents and an extensive index to direct readers to important information quickly and easily. About 1/3 of the feature articles in the early years of Branching Out were not illustrated in color because we couldn't afford what was, at the time, such luxury. Those illustrations will be replaced for this effort and everything will be in color unless we decide that a line drawing provides a better way to illustrate a particular point. We would also plan to make the booklet available electronically, either on a dedicated web site with links to it from the current Branching Out site, the Insect and Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab web sites and the NYS-IPM website. For the future, the electronic site would allow for easy revision, additions, and links to YouTube videos like the one we recently prepared to guide arborists in selection of suspect oak wilt samples. We expect to complete the project by June 1, 2010.

Results to date:

We are about 1/3 of the way through the first 5 years of Branching Out feature articles. These had all B&W pictures that need to be replaced with color and, more importantly, they were formatted in a completely archaic program that requires complete transfer to the newer system we've been using. The latter is extremely time-consuming but we're on track for completion of the biggest part of the project by January 30 and total completion by our original June date.