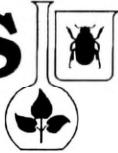


NEWS



New York State Agricultural Experiment Station
Cornell University, Geneva, NY 14456-0462

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NOTED GENEVA PLANT PATHOLOGIST DIES

Geneva, NY—Dr. Roger Pearson, 46, 99 Highland Avenue, Geneva, a professor of plant pathology at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station died yesterday (Sunday, April 4, 1993) in Rochester General Hospital following a serious illness.

A memorial service will be held at the Presbyterian Church of Geneva at a time to be announced. Other arrangements are being handled by Devaney-Bennett Funeral Home of Geneva.

"The passing of Dr. Pearson will have a world-wide impact on the agricultural scientific community," said Dr. Robert Seem, associate director of the Geneva Station. He was one of the most respected and knowledgeable grape pathologists in the world. Our sympathies and concerns are extended to Roger's family, friends, and Station community. We have truly lost not only an outstanding scientist, but a dear friend," Dr. Seem stated.

Prior to his death, Dr. Pearson had statewide responsibility for research and extension on fungal diseases of grapevines in New York. He has done pioneering research on all the important diseases of grapes caused by fungi in New York. His research on powdery mildew, the most important grape disease in the world, gained him particular recognition. Although the disease had been studied by various scientists for more than 100 years, the disease's life cycle was not properly understood until Dr. Pearson and his colleagues demonstrated that the spores that infect grapevines every spring in New York originate from small overwintering structures that survive the winter in cracks on the bark of vines. This finding is revolutionizing strategies for disease control and could result in the use of less synthetic chemicals.

Downy mildew, gray mold, and other serious diseases were studied by Dr. Pearson as well. He also discovered two "new" diseases that are potential threats to grape growing in New York. They are angular leaf scorch and grapevine yellows, both of which are related to diseases that cause serious problems in Europe.

Dr. Pearson was especially concerned that grape growers be aware of the latest information related to diseases of grapes. He traveled extensively throughout New York State, from Lake Erie to Long Island, looking at problems in the vineyards and talking to growers. He always stressed that only the minimum amount of chemical fungicides necessary to control any disease should be used. In this regard, he worked closely with the Cornell Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program. He also had a project on grapes under the Low Input Sustainable Agriculture (LISA) program for the Northeast states that was funded by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Dr. Pearson was born in Kingsburg, California on September 8, 1946. He was awarded his bachelor of science, master of science and doctorate degrees from the University of California, Davis, in 1968, 1969, and 1973 respectively. From 1968-1973, he was a research assistant in plant pathology at the University of California, Davis.

He came to Cornell in 1973 as a research associate in the department of plant pathology at Geneva and was stationed at the Hudson Valley Laboratory in Highland, New York. His research and extension responsibilities in the Hudson Valley were primarily on tree fruits. Dr. Pearson was appointed assistant professor in 1975. He moved to Geneva in 1977 and began his distinguished career studying grape diseases. He was promoted to associate professor in 1981 and to professor in 1990.

Dr. Pearson was named a Research Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in 1982 for his work on diseases of grape. He also was presented the Lee M. Hutchins award of the Phytopathology Society of America. He wrote numerous papers for the scientific literature, including authoring a book and several chapters in books. He was frequently asked to present lectures on grapes and their diseases.

In 1982, Dr. Pearson spent a six-month sabbatical at the Biologische Bundesanstalt, Institute für Pflanzenschutz im Weinbau, Bernkastel-Kues, Federal Republic of Germany; the Institute National de la Recherche Agronomique, Station de Pathologie Vegetale, Brodeaux, France, also in 1982; and the Eidgenössische Forschungsanstalt für Obst-, Wein- und Gartenbau, Wädenswil, Switzerland in 1988.

Besides his work at the Geneva Station, Dr. Pearson was active in community affairs including serving as a Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Church in Geneva.

He is survived by his wife, Karen J. Pearson; three children, Heather E. Pearson, Adam R. Pearson, and Alicia K. Pearson; his mother, Verna E. Pearson; a sister, Mrs. Marilyn Mathew of Fresno, California; and a niece and nephew.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to a charity of one's choosing.

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