



Cornell University
College of Agriculture
and Life Sciences

Department of Plant Pathology
& Plant-Microbe Biology
334 Plant Science Bldg.
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853
Ph. 607-255-3245
gwh2@cornell.edu

IPM Project Report

Title: *Branching Out: Features from the Past for the Future*

Project Leader: George W. Hudler, Professor and Chair, Dept. of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. 14853.

Cooperator(s): Gregory Hoover, Pennsylvania State University; Daniel Gilrein, Suffolk County Cooperative Extension

Newsletter and Book Editor: Dawn Dailey O'Brien, Cornell.

Background and Justification: For the past 19 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. And the P.I. and his assistant together won the 2009 Excellence in IPM award for their continued publication of *Branching Out*.

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.

Conversations with readers suggest to us that there was an audience for a compilation of the information included in the feature articles and that that could best be presented in a book format, where the topics could be arranged in a logical framework. This project supported the development and distribution of that book, *Branching Out: Features from the Past for the Future*.

Procedures: The 135 feature articles published in *Branching Out* between 1994 and 2011 were consolidated and organized into a book that enables 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 have been used *verbatim*, but in others there was a 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 book, an alternative organizational scheme that leads IPM practitioners more directly to relevant information was employed. The book also has a table of contents and an 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 were replaced for this effort and everything is in color unless we decided that a line drawing provides a better way to illustrate a particular point.

Outcome: *Branching Out* features contain information on a wide array of the most important pest management issues that plant health care professionals are likely to face in any given year. Practitioners use the resource to hone their diagnostic skills and to put a conceptual framework behind whatever management strategy they are proposing to implement. They now also have a bit of an historic record of some unusual outbreaks or epidemics inasmuch as those also would have been worthy of extended treatment in a feature article. Together, the collection provides end-users with ready answers to vexing questions and enables them to make informed decisions about pest management strategies. The 296 page book consists of 135 unique feature articles with over 720 color photos.

To promote the publication of the book there has been an IPM press release, a feature article in the *Branching Out* newsletter (Vol. 19, No. 10), an article in the NPDN Newsletter (Vol. 7, Issue 10), and a display at Cornell Diagnostic Clinic's booth at the NY Turf & Grounds Exposition in November 2012. The book was printed in late August 2012 and reprinted in November 2012. To date almost 200 books have been distributed. Buyers include landscapers, Christmas tree growers, nursery growers, CCE educators and others in 17 states and Canada.



Features from the Past for the Future

