

EASTERN REGION FUNDS HRI RESEARCH GRANTS

Each fall, HRI forwards proposals representing the top-ranked projects, following their process of industry and scientific review, to the IPPS Eastern Region Research Grant Committee for input. The committee reviews the proposals and sends their ranking back to HRI. It is expected that about \$3,000 in IPPS-ER funds will be awarded to our top ranked proposals. Those projects being funded in 2020 are:

Commercial production of hickories

DR. N. BASSUK, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Growers' choice of what genera to grow has long range impacts, especially in the urban landscape. Easy-to-grow taxa are often preferred in production, sometimes inadvertently creating a monoculture in managed landscapes. Meanwhile, many attractive, superior, adaptable, and robust tree species remain underutilized due to difficulties in nursery production. Enter hickory. Dr. Bassuk and her team will provide new protocols to enable nursery growers to produce multiple species of hickory and eventually help diversify the urban landscape.

Fundamental aspects of auxin foliar spray applications to woody plant cuttings

DR. R. GENEVE, UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Applying auxin as a foliar spray has several advantages over traditional quick dip methods for rooting cuttings, such as potential improved worker safety and application efficiency. Foliar auxin sprays are also becoming an integral part of propagation systems using automated, machine-assisted sticking robotics. However, not all woody species respond to foliar spray as well as a quick dip application for rooting, and there are questions concerning application timing as well as the optimal number of applications. Basic questions about auxin movement in cuttings related to spray volume, single vs. multiple applications, and use of a surfactant will be addressed.

Enhancing the performance of SSG as a biocontrol agent for ornamental plant disease mitigation

DR. P. KONG, VIRGINIA TECH

Boxwood blight, caused by *Calonectria pseudonaviculata*, is a huge concern in the nursery and landscape management industries. Control options are currently limited to cultural practices and

fungicides. Biocontrol is a missing component. Bacterial endophytes (organisms that spend at least part of their life in plant roots) have been identified that show potential to reduce *C. pseudonaviculata* in culture. A team led by Dr. Kong will further evaluate these endophytes for real world applicability.

Biocontrol agents for the vector of rose rosette virus

DR. I. TZANETAKIS, UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

Rose rosette disease (RRD) threatens landscape and production roses alike, especially since it reemerged recently in California. A plant virus is responsible for this disease, and it is transmitted, in part, by a very small, eriophyid mite. Being a plant virus, control measures are challenging, as traditional fungicides are ineffective; however, one strategy focuses on control of the vectoring mite. Dr. Tzanetakis and Dr. Druciarek will work on predatory mites with the potential to control the vectoring mite and will evaluate their efficacy.