

IPPS Eastern Region Program: Louisville 2025

Keynote with a game-changing message!

The program this year for IPPS Eastern Region was three half days of education followed by two half days of tours. The Keynote on the first day was highlighted by one of the most fascinating talks on a research study conducted on health and wellness by Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar, Ph.D., FAHA. Professor of Medicine Chief, Division of Environmental Medicine at the University of Louisville - Green Heart Study- How Plants affect our Health. This study has so many collaborators from around the country and with many different facets related to our health and wellness. This is not a feel-good study but one of true scientific testing, blood samples, and all. It is the most comprehensive study on how plants can change our physical and mental outcomes. If you are not aware of this study and Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar do yourself and your businesses a favor and look this up. This is going to be a game-changer with a very encouraging message. To medically show how planting large evergreens and trees in our communities will positively affect our health and wellness is music to all our ears. This study will have worldwide implications that will positively affect our industry, the Green Industry!

Oaks, oaks, oaks!

Oaks were featured prominently throughout the morning based on their importance to the bourbon industry! Woody Warehouse shared their propagation and growing methods on White Oak as well as many of the other Oak species they grow. Robinson Nursery shared how they graft White Oak onto Swamp White and Bur Oak rootstocks. Short student presentations were shared showing off the new talent that will be the future leaders of our industry. The morning finished with a special presentation on using Cryobiotechnology to help bank Oaks for the future.

Focus on Plants

Day two was focused on plants! We were treated to some of the best plantsmen in the country talking about their favorite plants. Bill Hendricks, Tim Brotzman, Brian Jorg, Steve Castorani, and Paul Cappiello. One of the best talks of the morning came from Mike Hayman, titled, "Contributions from Past Plantsman." Mike paid tribute to so many legendary plants people in our industry, from Don Shadow, Earl Culley, Bob Simpson, Theodore Klein, Buddy Hubbuch, Roy Klehm, Dr. Elwin Orton and so many more. Mike was a photographer for the Courier Journal. He spent time with each of these legends, photographing their plant selections and took the time to photograph them. Anyone who knows Mike knows how enthusiastic he is in finding the newest and latest in trees to add to the plantings in the City of Louisville. It was such a touching presentation.

Seed dispersal, bugs and more!

Day three started off by our favorite IPPS International editor Dr. Bob Geneve. Seed dispersal, running away from Home was the title. Bob always has such fascinating presentations. Dr. Theresa Culley presented her research on finding Cultivars that are more resistant to the Box Tree Moth. This is based on DNA samples in Box Tree hotspots. This is work being done thanks

to an HRI grant studying this super critical issue. This talk was followed up by Buggy Joe Boggs presentation on “Sneaky Bugs.” Joe is also working with Dr. Culley on the Box Tree Moth problem as well. Adding a new twist to the program was a talk on how Brokers, Breeders, Wholesalers, Garden Centers, Botanical Gardens and Arboretums can work together to promote great plants to the public. Jordan Holtkamp from EHR and Matt Bartlett from Natorp’s Nursery showed how they are collaborating on such a project that is a win-win for all parties. The day ended with the New Plant forum, always a fan favorite.

Musings

There were two things that really resonated with me. First, was the power of plants. We are a plant driven Society. The knowledge of how to propagate and produce plants at the conference was amazing! Second, the deep appreciation everyone had for the time and expertise shared by the mentors that have been a part of this society for years was truly touching! It shows what it means to Seek and Share! So, to all the speakers who shared their expertise and time, and to all the attendees who came out to support the organization, and to all the sponsors who supported the Conference I want to say Thank You!!!

Steve Foltz, 2025 Program Chair



Program Chair Steve Foltz (left) with speaker Mike Hayman (center) and site committee member Melvin Moffett (right).