

## **We Came, We Learned, We Laughed, We Gave 2017 Conference Program Highlights**

By Brian Decker, Victoria Holden and Peggy Walsh Craig

Hats off to 2017 Conference Program Chair Brian Maynard and his committee for hitting it out of the park with both the caliber and flow of the speaker presentations in IPPS Eastern Region's conference held in Grand Rapids in October. The event seemed to succeed beyond everyone's wildest expectations.

Some of the highlights of the Friday presentations were: Brad Rowe, professor of Horticulture at Michigan State University (MSU), showing some amazing green roofs. David Smitley, professor of Entomology at MSU, shared a buzzing presentation on plants that provide ecosystem services to insects and urban landscapes. President of Spring Meadow Nursery, Dale Deppe, spoke about how he started and grew his business, including some mistakes he made and how Spring Meadow overcame them. Dale was very frank about what he believes are the limitations to greater success for nurseries.

The annual general meeting was most memorable due largely to a brave Brian Decker explaining the need to support Eastern Region's Foundation and asking those present to join him in making significant donations. In the space of about five minutes, over \$30,000 was raised from the audience of generous and dedicated IPPS members. Remarkable experience revealing just how much IPPS means to so many!

On Saturday, Aren Phillips from Spring Meadow Nursery presented data on the murky topic of foliar application of rooting hormones during a winter propagation season. Todd West gave a very exciting talk about plant breeding, testing, and plant massacres at North Dakota State University. Bob Geneve spoke about Cyclophysis or phase change in plants. Brian Decker commented that, "Every time Bob gives a talk I realize just how much I don't know about plants. Have you ever noticed that Bob Geneve giving a presentation is reminiscent of the highbrow comedian Bob Newhart? You have to admit though, understanding phase change explains a lot about why some plants do or don't root."