



Keynote speaker, Dr. Charlie Hall from Texas A&M University addressed the group on “Positioning for the Future of the Green Industry Marketplace.”

Joint Winter Meeting NHLA, NHPGA, and UNH Cooperative Extension

The Joint Winter Meeting sponsored by the New Hampshire Plant Growers’ Association (NHPGA), New Hampshire Landscape Association (NHLA), and UNH Cooperative Extension was held on January 15th at the Marriott Grappone Center in Concord. Over 160 attendees and 28 vendors participated in the event. Flex time at the beginning of the day allowed an opportunity for visiting vendors, networking, and participating in “Table Topics”. These informal round table discussions covered a broad range of topics from legislative issues to training videos for garden center employees.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Charlie Hall from Texas A&M University addressed the group on “Positioning for the Future of the Green Industry Marketplace.” His discussion of current and forecasted economic trends was both insightful and entertaining. Dr. Hall incorporated information from his areas of specialization that includes market situation outlook, strategic management, and financial analysis to offer attendees a snapshot of the future of the Green Industry. In 2012 OFA, the Association of Horticulture Professionals, appointed Dr. Hall as Chief Economist to provide vision and leadership. His thought provoking presentation illustrated the guidance he provides to our industry. Concurrent sessions covered six topics including “Current Plant Disease Issues” and “Updates on State and Federal Quarantine Pests.” Dr. Bill Fonteno from North Carolina State University delivered presentations on “The Truth About Mulches” and “Creating the Optimal Root Environment.” The issue of “Sustainable Landscaping- Changing the Conversation on Ecological Design”



Winter Meeting attendees sit in rapt attention to keynote speaker, Dr. Charlie Hall.

Photo courtesy Jon Batson

was addressed by Lisa Cowan of Studioverde Landscape in Portland, ME. Finally, a session on “Health Insurance Options in NH” helped to clarify the current obligations and options available within our state.

A last minute addition to the program was a brief presentation regarding the Leafy Green Machine, also known as the Freight Farm at the Grappone Center. This new on-site installation houses high tech hydroponic equipment inside a repurposed shipping container to cultivate greens and herbs used for Grappone Center functions. Attendees were able to learn about the growing process after enjoying these greens in delicious salads offered during the lunch buffet.

Many thanks go out to the vendors who participated in the event as well as to UNH Cooperative Extension and USDA Risk Management Agency for their sponsorship of the keynote speaker.



Steven Courcy is the propagation grower at D.S. Cole Growers in Loudon NH. He studied ornamental horticulture at the University of New Hampshire and has been working in the horticulture industry for over 8 years.

D.S. Cole Shares Its Experience Using Predatory Mites

Spider mites are one of the most difficult pests to control in greenhouse operations. They are an annual problem that many growers find difficult to control using cultural and chemical means. Biological agents may be the weapon that allows you to succeed controlling mites. D.S. Cole Growers in Loudon has been having great success integrating a predatory mite release schedule with chemical controls to finally get the upper hand in this endless battle.

Biological control of spider mites generally revolves around the release of predatory mites from the family Phytoseiidae, which prey upon insects, and other mites. The main advantage of these little hunters is that many species can establish themselves in the crop. They are quite adept at finding mites and consuming them before they become a much larger problem.

Spider mites have several qualities that make them very difficult to control. They feed on the underside of leaves and the action of feeding often causes the leaves to curl downward creating a protected mite-metropolis difficult to treat with chemicals. The life cycle of a spider mite is quite short which creates many overlapping generations. With multiple life stages at any given time, a chemical that only targets one or two stages (most available chemicals) is unable to eliminate the problem. Another effect of the short lifecycle is the rapid acquisition of resistance.

Frustrated with the increasing challenge of killing mites using chemicals, D.S. Cole Growers propagation grower, Steven Courcy, took a tip from a skilled grower in Florida and began aggressively releasing predatory mites on several mite prone crops in July 2013. As an experiment, californicus mites were released onto some tropical plants that had an established spider mite population already. Over the course of about 4 weeks the californicus mites overtook the spider mite numbers. Californicus mites established on the plants and the spider mite population plummeted. By August the underside of once



P. Californicus attacking a spider mite.

infested leaves was a field covered with the dry husks of dead spider mites.

After this experiment, pesticide applications were halted and the release of *californicus* mites was integrated into the production of Cordyline, Dracaena, Hedera, and other mite-prone plants. The grower has not needed to apply a single miticide on these crops since July. Weekly scouting has not located a single mite on these crops.

Predatory mites have been shown to be a cost competitive alternative to miticide applications in most growing situations. By using these predatory mites as the backbone of your mite control strategy, you can reduce your dependence on chemical controls. In addition, the use of predatory mites offers a benefit for the end consumer because the plants come preloaded with a colony of predatory mites.

As published in *Greenhouse Grower* magazine

Visit

The University of New Hampshire
Macfarlane Greenhouses



**Annual Open House
Friday and Saturday,
March 28 and 29, 2014
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

This year's event will again provide displays and plenty of information to help chase away the winter blues and welcome spring. The greenhouses will be open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. both days.

UNH faculty, staff and students will present colorful displays and educational lectures of interest to home gardeners and landscapers. Visitors can attend seminars to explore new gardening ideas in depth.

Visitors may also participate in guided explorations of the conservatory or aquaponics research. UNH experts and master gardeners will be on hand to answer questions that help get gardens off to a great start. Publications by UNH authors also will be available for sale.

Other open house activities include a plant sale hosted by the Thompson School horticulture program and tours of both the Macfarlane Greenhouse and the UNH high tunnels, two greenhouse-style structures associated with the sustainable agriculture and food systems program where students produce greens for on-campus consumption.

Learn More about the
NHPGA, visit NHPGA.org

