

SUMMARY OF CIPWG 2006 SYMPOSIUM

Charlotte Pyle, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

"Working Together for the Landscape of Tomorrow", the symposium of the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) was held October 12, 2006 in Wallingford, CT. The symposium was a day for people to catch up with old friends and meet new people while getting updated information on invasive plant legislation and technical information on alternative species for planting, propagation techniques for site restoration, and planning for control and restoration. The day began with a short welcome from CIPWG co-chairs Donna Ellis and Betsy Corrigan who then introduced CIPWG co-founder, Les Mehrhoff. Following his talk, "The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group: Leading the Way", Les and other members of the Invasive Plant Atlas of New England awarded Donna Ellis a Golden Geek Shovel award for her leadership and good work on invasive plant issues.

Gina McCarthy, Commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Environmental Protection gave an update on what the state is doing in both the aquatic and terrestrial invasive plant realms. Then, observing that the audience was composed of "baby boomers" and beyond, McCarthy noted that "getting the necessary long-term commitment to deal with invasive plants is tied to the larger issue of the need to reconnect young people with nature and spark their interest in environmental issues." The Commissioner added, "As I attend meetings with various organizations around the state, I am struck by the age of people in the room. Too often I am one of the youngest people there. We cannot succeed in protecting our environment and natural resources in the long run if we do not engage young people in this issue."

Mary Musgrave, head of the University of Connecticut Department of Plant Science, represented the Connecticut Invasive Plants Council with an update on what the Council has tried to accomplish since the January 2004 establishment of the official list of invasive and potentially invasive plants and the subsequent banning of a subset of those plants. She noted the need for funding of the activities recommended by the Council.

Following the Council update, Brad Mitchell, Director of the Division of BioSecurity and Regulatory Services at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, explained how an Invasive Species Advisory Group used a consensus process to establish a list of invasives that led to regulation of the sale of certain species. The regulations are enforced through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources which has been successful in explaining them and changing the behavior of storekeepers, particularly those with out-of-state management who were unaware of the new regulations.

Mark Brand, Professor of Ornamental Horticulture in the Department of Plant Science and Co-Head of the Plant Biotechnology Facility at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, explained what a cultivar is and presented a summary of research he has been involved in concerning the potential for invasiveness of Japanese barberry cultivars.

The plenary speaker, Peter White, Professor in the Department of Biology and Director of the North Carolina Botanical Garden at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill gave two talks in one. From his experience as botanical garden director, he talked about how botanical gardens as well as horticulturalists have a responsibility to make sure they do not engage in activities that promote the possible introduction and spread of invasive plants. Switching to his biologist's hat, he presented information on how plants are distributed in nature and how this affects their chances of becoming invasive.

For some attendees, lunch was a working affair with lunch time discussion sessions held on two topics, (1) "Nurseries as Suppliers to Restoration Projects: Exploring opportunities" and (2) "Strategies for Preventing Human-mediated Spread of Invasives on Trails".

Lunchtime also was a good time to view the many displays coordinated by Chris Donnelly and Rose Hiskes. Some posters reported research results, including tests of control methods, while others showcased management case studies. Co-sponsor exhibits were colorful and informative, offering a variety of handouts (including non-profit book sales). The "ID Room," coordinated by CIPWG co-chair Betsy Corrigan, was a popular corner of the display area.

Three concurrent afternoon sessions covered technical topics. In "Alternatives to Invasive Plants", Adam Wheeler, Steve Taylor, and Mark Sellew introduced the audience to some native plants available in nurseries. Kristin Schwab concluded with a talk on design considerations for using alternative plants to create sustainable landscapes in a variety of settings.

In the second session, "Restoration: Establishing a Native Landscape", Mark Gormel and Martin Cubanski spoke on the how to's of seed collection and growing native plants. Peter Picone spoke on the values of particular native species for wildlife food and cover.

The third session, "Management: Planning and Control", carried the audience through considerations for carrying out invasive plant management including planning for restoration (Betsy Lyman), understanding how herbicides work (Todd Mervosh), and the logistics of successful control using mechanical and chemical techniques (Christopher Mattrick). Jessica Murray completed the session with a case study of the broad scale control efforts of the Berkshire Taconic Landscape Program of The Nature Conservancy.

The formal end of the symposium day was the panel discussion, moderated by Charlotte Pyle. Panel members Ann Camp, Paul Larson, Christopher Mattrick, Kristin Schwab, Mark Sellew, Patricia Sesto, and David Sutherland each gave a short presentation concerning what *the landscape of tomorrow* should look like and how diverse groups of people can work together to create this landscape. Following this, the panel responded to questions from the audience.

The informal end of the symposium was the social hour. It must have been good because it lasted more than the designated hour!

For further details of specific presentations and presenters' contact information, you may download the 2006 Symposium Program & Abstracts booklet also here on the CIPWG website (www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg).