



Cornell University
New York State
Integrated Pest Management Program

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Duo Wins Award Promoting Green Practices

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by Elizabeth G. Thomas

Ithaca, NY--Being surrounded by attractive trees and shrubs is one of the joys of visiting park and garden landscapes. Thanks to the work of Dawn Dailey O'Brien and George Hudler, plants will continue to hold the advantage over pests. Since 1994, these two have diligently produced *Branching Out*, an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) newsletter used by arborists, landscapers, and growers and which, this year, won them an Excellence in IPM Award from the New York State IPM Program.



Branching Out connects the research community with landscape professionals, supplying information to safely keep ornamental trees and shrubs from being ruined by insects or diseases. The newsletter not only helps arborists, landscapers, and growers to identify pests, but also predicts their arrival in locations across the state. Since many insects can only be kept in check when very small, the timing of when to take action is critical. "We not only provide details of when to look and potentially treat problems, but when the window of opportunity has passed" says Hudler, Chair of the Department of Plant Pathology and Director of the Northeast Plant Diagnostic Network.

O'Brien and Hudler focus on other tenets of IPM too. Selecting the optimal site for plants, using resistant varieties, and paying close attention to soil health and fertility are all critical tools. Naturally occurring predators can keep destructive insects at bay, and *Branching Out* includes strategies to protect and maximize the benefits from these free, safe, and battle-ready allies. Most importantly, Hudler feels *Branching Out* helps customers understand that some pests and pathogens, while present, pose no threat. In these cases treatments are not required – reducing overall use of pesticides.

In tight budget times, there is never a dull moment for O'Brien, an Extension Plant Pathologist. She fills the role of writer, editor, layout designer, webmaster, and most recently videographer for *Branching Out* — this on top of cooperating with other Extension field staff to cruise the state, seeing firsthand what pests are poised to cause problems. Senior Extension Associate



Margery Daughtrey, based in Long Island, values O'Brien and Hudler's work compiling information into a one-stop IPM resource for trees and shrubs.

Among the tree care community, praise runs high for *Branching Out*. Plant Health Care Manager for Koch Tree Services, Robert Ciliento says, "This publication has vital information that helps my technicians achieve optimal results in diagnosis and treatment of plant pests." Elizabeth Lamb, NYS IPM Program Coordinator for Ornamentals, notes that "*Branching Out* is an essential tool for many Christmas tree growers. Whenever we hold educational programs at Cornell we talk about resources and always have very positive responses from growers on how useful *Branching Out* is."

To read the newsletter, go to <http://branchingout.cornell.edu/>.

They will receive their award at Cornell University at the New York State Arborist's Fall Educational Seminar in Ithaca, N.Y. on September 26, 2010.

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