

*Plant Science
Says*



*Merry
Christmas!*

December, 2003

Annual Christmas Party

The Departmental Christmas party will be on Saturday, December 13 from 4-8 p.m. at Country Lanes (go west out of town for about 3 miles-it will be on your left; if you go down a hill, you have gone too far). Following is the schedule of events:

Bowling 4-6
Dinner 6-7
Santa 7-7:30
Cleanup 7:30-8

Please bring one of the following to share: Hors d'oeuvres, a vegetable or potato

meat, rolls, and drinks (non-alcoholic) will be provided. Please join us for any or all of the above.



Several people are helping with the party this year and I would like to thank them. First of all, thank you to the faculty for making this party possible with their generous donations. Also, thank you Shirley Gerhardt for letting us have this party at Country Lanes, Matt Lavin for being a wonderful Santa and his son Gabe for being a very helpful elf, Jack Riesselman, Norm Weeden, and Bob Johnston for bringing the turkeys and hams (and to Dave Sands for doing so in the past), to Mareika and Nina for shopping for the children's gifts, to Angie for generously giving of her creative ability and photography skills, to Bob and Jeffrey Johnston for transporting tables, to Jeanne Briggs and the Hort Club for donating the poinsettias and to all of you who bring wonderful dishes to share every year. (I am sorry if I am forgetting anyone). Please join us this year for a fun opportunity to get to know others in the department better.

Those Who Have Worms Are Never Alone

Richard Sikora

This is my research team's logo and if you are a nematologist, a piece of reality at the same time. I have been working with nematodes, ever since my 22nd birthday in one form or another in what I term the



"living soils in the underworld". The latter term was taken from the ancient Egyptians who used it to describe the place where their spirits went after death. My name is Richard A. Sikora and I am a visiting professor from of the Institut für Pflanzenkrankheiten or Department "for"

Plant Diseases of the University of Bonn in Germany. I am spending a six month sabbatical leave in MSU's Department of Plant Science and Plant Pathology where I am teaching a course in Nematology and Biological System Management to graduate students and conducting research on biological control of nematodes within Barry Jacobsen's team. I consider myself to be a soil-ecosystem plant pathologist and nematologist and in that capacity I support a 22 member team of young scientists and graduate students in moving science in this field forward. As a pathologist, I tend to described everything in the form of an organism's life-cycle. Life began when I emerged in Norfolk Virginia in 1943; early development took place in Chicago; and was followed by an eight year training phase at the University of Illinois in Champaign ending in 1970. The life-cycle ended after an international molting process that involved leaving the USA at 25 years of age to work in India and then Germany as well as in a number of countries in Africa, West Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific. The 60th year of the cycle will be reached in Bozeman where I believe chances for survival have been greatly strengthened. With the department's support I have been given the opportunity to come to Montana where I have been able to: Read pertinent literature, do independent research, teach American students what I teach German students, as well as time to revise my book on plant nematology in tropical agriculture (not an

advertisement). I must admit it has also given me the once in a life time chance to live a childhood dream to go fly fishing for trout instead of the scrappy bluegill found in farm ponds in Illinois.

Someone asked me if I notice differences or felt different being in the USA for a prolonged period of time after 35 years abroad. This is hard to answer in that Bozeman and Montana are not typical for much of the USA, and Bonn is not typical for all of Germany.



Richard and Ingrid Sikora

However, as expected, I have been impressed with the friendliness of the people. I have experienced interactions with people in Bozeman I have not experienced anywhere else in the world. There is definitely less traffic here - you can cross a street here without getting run over. You dance the jitterbug differently than we do in Germany. Oh, and the unlocked doors concept of living – we have locked ourselves out twice. Another major difference is the ease with which one can make acquaintanceships in Bozeman. In many areas of Europe one is accustomed to interacting within a small circle of very close friends and a much smaller number of acquaintances. Bonn is a young active city much like Bozeman, therefore the outdoor activities here fit me and my family perfectly. In general, the fact that we were able to integrate ourselves into the department and community with a minimum amount of effort seems to mean that America has not changed drastically over the past 35 years. I don't feel foreign in the USA at all – I actually feel very much at home. What do I miss in being here? – German rye breads, local smoked sausages, meats and cheeses and pastries of the Rhineland. I do not miss work – it has reached me through the Internet! Before I sign off - thank you all for a great experience and homecoming. Richard

MAES Proposal Presentation Schedule:

John Sherwood - 12/3/03 - 108 ABS - 3 p.m.

“Control of Fungal Diseases of Cereals”

Yousef Zadegan - 12/12/03 - 108 ABS - 1:30 p.m.

“Naturalization: A New Approach to Landscape Restoration in Urban and Disturbed Landscapes”

Jeanne Briggs - 12/16/03 - 108 ABS - 9 a.m.

“Pesticide Fate at Container Plant Nurseries”

Adam Richman - 12/16/03 - 108 ABS - 1 p.m.

“Maintenance of Immune Gene Variation”

Jack Martin - 12/17/03 - 108 ABS - 8 a.m.

“Quantitative Genetics and Cultivar Development”

Norm Weeden - 12/18/03 - 108 ABS - 3 p.m.

“Genetic studies and germplasm enhancement in cool season legumes with potential for Montana agriculture”

New Diagnostician



Cheryl Moore will start in January as our new disease clinic diagnostician. She is taking Martha Mikkelson's place for the year she is on leave. Cheryl received her Master of Science in Plant Sciences – Horticulture option in November and sees this as a great opportunity to learn more about the plant diseases in Montana.

Plant Conservation Biology Certificate of Merit Program

By Robyn Klein



Your interest in plants keeps increasing, but your knowledge of plants is hard-pressed to keep up. You care deeply about the environment and plant diversity in particular and want to learn more about preserving both. If this describes you, then you will be interested in pursuing the Plant Conservation Biology Certificate.

This program is designed to provide you with a fundamental, comprehensive learning experience in plant conservation biology. It includes rigorous, relevant courses in the plant sciences, from biology and ecology to physiology and genetics, all taught from a plant conservation perspective. Expert course instructors will help you understand the more theoretical aspects by utilizing extensive examples from field applications, hands-on learning activities and laboratory exercises. The Plant Conservation Biology certificate is offered collaboratively by the School of the Chicago Botanic

Garden and Loyola University of Chicago (LUC). Courses will be offered at both institutions, though not all courses may be offered at each institution. Students may choose to take courses simply for personal enrichment or choose to apply for academic credit.

Bob's Byte

Spyware – It's just not for the KGB

Ok – You've been good boys and girls and have been applying your security patches and keeping your virus database up-to-date. Do you think that your



computer and all that important data is now safe from hackers? Well, think again. Unfortunately, all that web browsing that you do may be at fault. When you visit websites, cookies, adware programs, keystroke loggers and, in some cases, Trojan horses that hackers can use to take over your PC can be automatically downloaded to your computer. Should you be concerned? In most cases the cookies placed on your computer are harmless and only serve to identify your computer as one that has visited the website before. If the site has a commercial basis, the cookie may keep track of what pages you visited and what things you were interested in. Based on this information, the web page can be designed to produce popup ads promoting products that you have shown an interest in. "High end cookies" can also share this information between web sites.

Keystroke loggers and Trojan horses are the real danger though. Keystroke loggers can keep track of the data you enter via the keyboard and relay this information to another party. This data can include passwords and credit card numbers for items ordered online. Trojan horses can allow small pieces of computer code to take over control of your computer and give complete access of your machine to someone else.

How can you tell if your machine has been compromised? In most cases you can not without specialized software to look for known "spyware". Although if your web browser has a different look to it and the menu choices or homepage have been modified without your approval, you may have fallen victim. One software package that works well against most spyware is a program called **SpyBot Search & Destroy**. You can download a free copy at <http://www.safer-networking.org/>. Another option is a program called **PestPatrol** which can be downloaded at <http://www.pestpatrol.com/>. They have a free version that will identify potential problems but will not fix them unless you pay for the full version.

Are Poinsettias Poisonous?

by Bob Gough

With the Christmas season upon us, the stores are filled with decorations and with colorful plants traditional to the season.



Most of these are harmless if eaten, but some are quite toxic. And some are traditionally much maligned without good cause. The poinsettia is one of these.

So are poinsettias poisonous or not? Unsubstantiated and hearsay evidence, ignorance, and confusion of this plant with poisonous members of the same family have caused it to be maligned for years. Under controlled conditions, researchers at Ohio State University force-fed rats a homogenate of both the upper and lower leaves, the red bracts, and even the small yellow flowers of poinsettia. They had to force-feed because the rats wouldn't eat the material on their own. And even when the animals consumed the plant at a rate equivalent to a 140-pound person ingesting 7 pounds of the tissue all at once...nothing happened. The rats showed no ill effects. Not even a bellyache was reported. The researchers went one step further and tested the latex, stems, bracts, and leaves for materials commonly considered toxic, and they found not a trace. All of this means that the common poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, has gotten a bum rap.

Now to be fair, some people are allergic to the milky sap and get a slight skin irritation when they handle it. The irritation is similar to that produced by contact with poison ivy, but far less severe. And just because the poinsettia should not be considered a poisonous plant doesn't mean it is an edible plant either. Don't eat any part of it.

New Arrival

Congratulations to Eric and Lynn George on the birth of their son, Calvin Hayes. He was born November 2 and weighed 7lbs 2 oz. He joins an older brother Emmett who is 11.



Lynn will be starting work at VTMB with Dr. Ed Schmidt in January. We wish her well.

Kody Graduates

Kody Tache has been a faithful student labor employee in our department for the past 4 years. We especially have appreciated her efforts during the times we had no account tech. She is graduating in December and will be moving home until she becomes gainfully employed. Thank you to Kody for all of her hard work and we wish her the best!

Birthdays

Ted Clack	3
Bill Grey	4
Fletcher Meyer	4
Cathy Seibert	21
Cheryl Moore	23
John Ansley	23
Sue Brumfield	26
Dick Pohl	29
Lucy Cooke	30

HAPPY
Birthday

Recipe of the Month

Scalloped Chicken Casserole

Submitted by Shirley Gerhardt

5 c skim or lowfat milk

1 c. lowfat low sodium cream of mushroom soup

2 cups uncooked elbow macaroni

—g plus 1 egg white, beaten

4 c. diced cooked chicken or turkey

2 c. diced lowfat Velveeta

½ each finely chopped celery and carrots

¼ c finely chopped onions

¼ t. ground thyme

1 T. parsley flakes

2 cups Italian or plain bread crumbs or dressing mix

2 T melted margarine

Spray 9 x 13 glass pan with Pam. Spread macaroni, top with cheese and vegetables. Mix together 1 c. milk, egg and soup. Pour over macaroni. Add rest of milk. Cover with foil and refrigerate overnight. Mix bread crumbs and margarine, sprinkle evenly over top of casserole. Bake at 375 for 1 hour (start in cold oven). If too brown, lower heat.



Your clerical staff would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We also wish you all the best in 2004 and thanks for being so great to work for!
Jody, Elaine, Joice and Irene