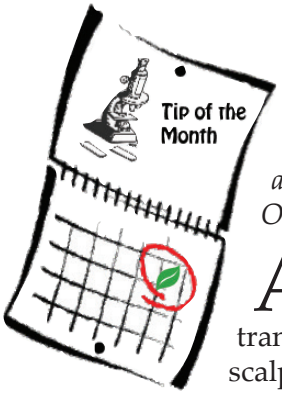

Diagnostic tip – Transfer Tools for Fungi

Jennifer Olson, Plant Disease and Insect Diagnostic Laboratory, Oklahoma State University

About a year ago, we needed to purchase replacement tools for transferring fungi. I prefer not to use scalpels mainly due to the sharp blades. I went searching through the scientific catalogs trying to find replacements and found myself scratching my head trying to figure out what these things are called—spatula, transfer tool, scalpel? Try as I might, I just could not find what I was looking for. I wanted something inexpensive (most options I found were $15+ for a single tool) and made of a durable material (ie. stainless steel) which could be disinfected repeatedly by flaming or autoclaving.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Somehow, in looking at online images, I came across carving and sculpting tools. Why didn't anyone tell me about these? Super cheap and exactly what I was looking for! We purchased a set of 12 tools for about $9 from Amazon (www.amazon.com/Hawk-SE-Pick-Set-12Pc/dp/B001LJGMXI). That's totally affordable! There are many different sets, but this is the set that we selected (Fig 1). Each tool is double sided (different shaped tool at each end) and out of the 24 heads, there is only one that I have not come up with a laboratory use for. Aside from transferring fungal cultures, some of these tools can also be used a spatulas for weighing small amounts of chemicals or as dissecting needles. In the center of each tool, there is a rough area which helps with dexterity and control.

We have used these tools for a year now and I am still delighted with the purchase. The silver color has darkened due to repeated flaming, but they have held up well (Fig 2). And when they "walk out of the lab" without asking, I don't mind since the tools were inexpensive and easily replaced. I felt this was such a great find, I had to share it with my colleagues.

2013 Advanced Diagnostic Workshops

TIME IS RUNNING OUT…BUT SPACES ARE STILL AVAILABLE!

Were you hoping to fit a diagnostic technique workshop into your schedule in the next few weeks? This is our final call for participants. We had a number of recent cancellations for the upcoming Beltsville workshops and have openings in the following sessions:

Week 3: Potato Wart, March 11–12, 2 days
Week 3: Bioinformatics, March 13–15, 3 days
Week 4: Citrus pathogens, March 19–22, 4 days
Week 5: Citrus Greening-HLB, March 26–28, 3 days

If you are interested in any of these workshops, you need to act quickly as time is running out. Please contact Karen Snover-Clift, kls13@cornell.edu, as soon as possible.