New SPDN Portal Goes Live

The Southern Plant Diagnostic Network (SPDN) has been supporting two regional websites since 2007. As of February 1, 2009, the old SPDN website (http://spdn.ifas.ufl.edu) will no longer be supported. The new SPDN portal (www.sepdn.org) will be the online home of the SPDN.

The portal system is a new concept in NPDN web sites, allowing for distributed authorship of committee pages, secure members-only areas, and updated information for diagnosticians, first detectors, and the public.

The NPDN newsletters (both the member newsletter and the First Detector newsletter) are archived on the SPDN portal, as well as diagnostic recipes and protocols, new disease and pest detections, diagnostic news, and SPDN committee members and activities.

Please visit us at our new home, and update your bookmarks to www.sepdn.org.

Diagnostic Updates

Diagnostics Subcommittee Update

Karen L. Snover-Clift
Committee Chair
Cornell University
Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology

The NPDN diagnostics subcommittee held a conference call on January 15, 2009. During this meeting a number of issues were addressed. Please refer to the diagnostics subcommittee page of the NPDN web site for complete minutes (login and password required).

Topics of discussion included:

- Notification of participants for HLB and *Phytophthora kernoviae* workshops, Beltsville-NPDN Diagnostician Training.
- Diagnostician Survey- follow-up:
  - -basic technique workshop
  - -contacted APS
- Status of current SOP's and new select agent SOP's.
- Diagnostic recipe/protocol library.
- Scheduling of Lepidoptera Workshops.

The next conference call will be held on **Friday**, **February 13, 2009**.

*****Important Update*****
*****on Beltsville-NPDN*****
*****Trainings*****

Beltsville-NPDN Potato Wart Workshop Training dates moved to Fall 2009.

Diagnostic Tip of the Month: Two Basic Techniques for Enhancing Detection of Sporulating Fungi

Gail Ruhl
Purdue Plant and Pest Diagnostic Lab

I have found the following two simple techniques immensely useful for improving the success of inducing sporulation from plant material.

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These diagnostic procedures may be routine for many of you, however, if not, try them out and enjoy your new found success in detecting sporulation that previously alluded you when you 'just knew' it should be present.

Prior to incubation, thoroughly wash all types of plant material (especially foliage) to remove any chemical residues that might potentially inhibit sporulation.

When incubating foliage with leaf spots or blights, place part of the sample top-side up and the other part top side down (Figure 1).

This simple procedure often helps to increase ones' chances of finding sporulation that may occur only on the top or bottom of the infected leaf.

Figure 1. Top photo: Miscanthus foliage in moist chamber. Bottom photo: Sporulation of Colletotrichum on Miscanthus foliage. (Photos Gail Ruhl, Purdue University)

Pests and Plant Diseases Beware – NMSU Teaches 'First Detectors' to Spot Outbreaks

Plant pests and diseases are responsible for substantial economic losses every year in New Mexico and across the Southwest. Now, thanks to a series of first detector training courses hosted by the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, there is a small army of people around the region who are trained to spot outbreaks earlier – often before they get out of hand.

Education and Training

Over the last year, nearly 170 people attended training courses in Bernalillo, Sandoval and Dona Ana Counties. Those in attendance represented ten different counties in New Mexico as well as several counties in Texas and Arizona.

During the courses, NMSU extension plant pathologist Natalie Goldberg showed how to identify plant pests and diseases.

Additionally, those in attendance learned how to properly submit both suspicious and invasive samples to NMSU's Plant Diagnostic Clinic, which provides analysis of plant material for pathogens and environmental stresses. The clinic also suggests appropriate control measures when available.

Those who complete the course are now part of a national network of first detectors, receiving timely pest alerts and educational materials.

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