

Inspection Stations

# THE LOOKING GLASS

A Newsletter for USDA-APHIS-PPQ  
Plant Inspection Station Staff Members  
Volume 6, Issue 1



## INSPECTION OF BUTTERFLY EXHIBIT AT FAIRCHILD TROPICAL BOTANIC GARDEN



Elyfredo Marin (PHSS, Miami PIS) and Dr. Cheryle O’Donnell (Entomologist/Identifier, Miami PIS) conducted facility inspections for the new butterfly exhibit at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Miami, FL. The PPQ officers met with Fairchild staff members Martin Feather (Butterfly Exhibit Manager and Containment Director) and Dr. Richard Campbell (Director of Horticulture and Senior Curator of Tropical Fruit), and contractor Eduardo Gomez, to verify that the new butterfly house is compliant with USDA APHIS regulations. The facility includes an enclosed rearing room where chrysalises and emerging butterflies can be viewed during education tours. The adult tropical butterflies are collected from the rearing chamber and released, at regularly scheduled times, into the open air screened exhibit. The facility inspection was conducted to ensure that safeguards are in place to prevent the escape of the exotic tropical butterflies into the local environment. On the final inspection on September 18, 2012, the facility passed all safeguarding requirements. The exhibit opened on November 30, 2012. **Article contributed by: Dr. Cheryle O’Donnell and Elyfredo Marin, Miami, FL. Facility photos provided by: Elyfredo Marin; butterfly photo provided by: Dr. Cheryle O’Donnell.**

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### Editors:

Kyle Beucke and Cheryle O’Donnell

# CHANGES IN PPQ POLICY

## VESPIDAE AND APIDAE (HYMENOPTERA)



*Vespa* sp.



*Vespula* sp.

There have been recent changes made in APHIS-PPQ policy regarding Vespidae and Apidae (Hymenoptera); these changes are a result of the efforts of Identifier and National Apoidea/Vespoidea Specialist Allan H. Smith-Pardo of the South San Francisco PIS. Although PPQ generally does not require quarantine action for predatory species, it has made an exception in the case of the wasp subfamily Vespinae because some species are known to prey heavily upon honeybees (they can destroy entire colonies) and thus are a potential threat to the U.S. beekeeping industry. The changes in policy regarding Apoidea will help protect both native bees and honeybees from the introduction of non-native bees and bee parasites.

The changes in policy are summarized below:

### **Apoidea**

- **All bees (Apoidea: Anthophila) are now reportable except when identified as a native species or *Apis mellifera* containing no parasites.**
- ***Apis mellifera* must be free of parasites** to be allowed into the United States. Sampling protocol depends on the number of specimens intercepted (see the Plant Inspection Stations Manual).

### **Vespidae**

- **PPQ requires action on exotic species in the genera *Vespa* and *Vespula* (Vespidae: Vespinae).**
- **Identifiers must forward all interceptions of wasps in the subfamily Vespinae as urgents** (see Manual for submission instructions).
- **Identifiers are conferred Full Identification Authority for adult wasps (from all origins) in the following non-reportable vespidae subfamilies: Eumeninae, Polistinae, Euparagiinae, Massarinae, and Stenogastrinae.**
- **The family Vespidae is no longer on the CRA list.**

**Article contributed by: Kyle Beucke and Allan H. Smith-Pardo, South San Francisco, CA**

# PPQ EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

## DR. ALLAN SMITH-PARDO



Dr. Allan Smith-Pardo, Entomologist/National Apoidea specialist (South San Francisco, CA), was selected as PPQ's Employee of the Year. The following is the text of the message from Deputy Administrator Rebecca A. Bech:

Dear Allan:

As Deputy Administrator, I am honored to lead nearly 4,000 scientists, specialists, and generalists in our mission to protect America's agriculture and natural resources. Whenever a program, team, or person achieves notable results, PPQ shines more brightly. Your work at PPQ's South San Francisco Plant Inspection Station epitomizes excellence in service to PPQ and its mission. Therefore, I am pleased to name you as PPQ's Outstanding Employee in 2012—the first year I have presented this award.

Others regard you as a world-class expert in pollination and the taxonomy and biology of bees. You have shown a deep understanding of our mission and its relationship to the health and sustainability of the global environment, and you have also shown dedication to preserving America's honeybee industry and the biodiversity of our native bees. Your significant identifications have raised PPQ's awareness of threats to bees in the United States. Your work is vital to our nation's prosperity and food security because a significant portion of America's agriculture depends on bees.

Your work has produced literature, documents, and training used nationwide by identifiers, field entomologists, and officers with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). You are known as a teacher who freely shares his knowledge, skills, and abilities, and your enthusiasm has increased the determination of PPQ and CBP inspectors to find pests. Your professionalism contributes greatly to a conducive work environment, and you are seen as treating your colleagues and coworkers with respect and dignity.

I am happy to select you as the first recipient of the Deputy Administrator's Outstanding Employee Award because you have exemplified the traits and qualities the award is intended to recognize. Thank you for your enthusiastic support of and your essential contributions to Plant Protection and Quarantine.

**Article contributed by: Arthur Berlowitz, South San Francisco, CA**

# LOS INDIOS PIS TRAINS CBP AG SPECIALISTS



The Los Indios Plant Inspection Station (LIPIS) Identifiers deliver four training sessions each year to CBP Agriculture Specialists within its area of responsibility. The Inspection Station has been offering such training since 2004; to date, at least 29 sessions have been completed.

At the start of the fiscal year, the LPIS Identifiers and the OIC decide when to offer the training sessions. The training dates are sent to the CBP District Field Office Agriculture Program Manager, who schedules the participants for each training session. Up to five CBPAS participants are trained per session; each session includes two days of entomology and one day of plant pathology/botany training. Two levels of training are offered, a more basic level intended for new Agriculture Specialists and an intermediate/advanced level as a refresher for seasoned Agriculture Specialists. The Inspection Station will tailor the training according to the needs of the trainees.

The training spans a wide spectrum of topics, including the identification of pests (insects, diseases, and weeds, with an emphasis on high risk pests and pathways), specimen submission, digital imaging, and information on new and emerging pathways for pest introduction. Instructors include Alejandro Garza (PHSS), Patrick Haslem (Entomologist), David McCoy (Entomologist), and Oscar Mireles (Plant Pathologist/Botanist). **Article contributed by: *Elias Gonzalez, Los Indios, TX***



# OUTREACH

## MIAMI PIS STAFF PARTICIPATE IN 50TH AGRICULTURAL FARM TOUR



Two members of the South Florida Partnership on Education Committee (an outreach committee of the Miami PIS), Supervisor Terrance Washington and Identifier Margarita Dotres, participated in the 50th Annual Agricultural Farm Tour on February 19, 2013. Among the other participants were agriculture and science professors, 4-H representatives, University of Florida representatives, and farm and agriculture related workers. Participants gathered in the morning at the John D. Campbell Agricultural Center in Homestead. The tour included a variety of agricultural locations in the Homestead and Redland area, including a vegetable farm, a packing house, an Asian guava and dragon fruit grove, an orchid greenhouse nursery, and an exotic fish farm. The tour ended with a luncheon at the Redland Golf and Country Club, including a celebration in honor of the Rutzke Family, who were pioneer farmers of the area. This event was a great opportunity to interact with local farmers, teachers, 4-H representatives, and other members of the community. **Article contributed by: Margarita Dotres-Perez, Miami, FL**

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## FFA DISTRICT CONTEST

### HOMESTEAD, FLORIDA



The South Florida Partnership on Education Committee of the Miami PIS participated in the FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America) District Contest on January 24, 2013. The contest took place at Redland Middle School in Homestead, FL. The Miami PIS personnel served as judges in the categories of Parliamentary Procedure, Prepared & Extemporaneous Public Speaking, Opening/Closing Ceremonies & Creed Speaking, Agriculture Mechanics Preliminary Test, and Tractor Driving. Big thanks to the employees who participated in the event: Jose Gerena, Camelia Muñoz, Milagros Guindin, Catalina Mendez, Rose Lopez, and Margarita Dotres. It was a great opportunity to interact with dedicated and well-prepared students who were eager to learn about agriculture. **Article contributed by: Margarita Dotres-Perez, Miami, FL**

# NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES AWARENESS WEEK

## KID'S DAY

### WASHINGTON, D.C.

National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) Kid's Day was held at the conservatory of the United States Botanic Garden (next to the U.S. Capitol Building) on Sunday, March 3rd, 2013. Four PPQ employees from the Riverdale and Beltsville, MD area participated: Al Tasker, Joel Floyd, Katrina Rudyj, and Mark Thurmond. Hundreds of children of all ages and their parents/relatives attended the event, which was intended to spread the word about invasive species and how they affect our country's agriculture and ecosystems.



Numerous government agencies and non-government organizations involved with plant inspection and invasive pest exclusion, control, and eradication were in attendance to share what is being done about invasive species. Handouts were distributed with information about problem pests and plants.

It was a festive event (with some MD Department of Agriculture staff dressed as Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs and the U.S. Forest Service owl mascot circulating the hall!) set in an excellent location, with many amazing plant specimens and photos on display at this treasured Conservatory in our capital. It was a pleasure to share information with the area's youth concerning our important mission of invasive pest exclusion and eradication. **Article and photos contributed by: Mark Thurmond, Beltsville, MD**

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### **CALLING ALL CONTRIBUTORS!**

If you have anything that you would like to share with other Plant Inspection Stations, please send it to us at: [kyle.a.beucke@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:kyle.a.beucke@aphis.usda.gov) or [Cheryle.A.O'Donnell@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:Cheryle.A.O'Donnell@aphis.usda.gov)

## S. F. A. OUTREACH COMMITTEE TPIE SHOW



The Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition (TPIE) is an annual trade event showcasing the latest trends in tropical foliage and flowers in South Florida. This year's show, which was the 40th, was held at the Broward County Convention Center in Ft. Lauderdale on January 23-25, 2013. With 44 states and 30 countries participating in this event, it was the perfect venue to introduce

horticulture professionals to the wide range of services and career opportunities within the USDA.

A big Thanks goes to Leo Castañeda, who once again managed this three-day event, to the volunteers (Oksana Korol, Vicki Rivera-Flores, Alvaro Iglesia, Miroslav Herejk, and Reggie Bazalais), and to the Ft. Lauderdale team, who donated the table and chairs for our USDA booth (Joada Garcia, Freddy Marin, and Lorenzo Bernal). Thank you everyone! **Article and photos contributed by: Pedro Millan, Miami, FL**



## SUMMER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AT MIAMI PIS



During the summer of 2012, four High School students and one undergraduate student from the University of Puerto Rico volunteered at the Miami Plant Inspection Station. The goal of the Miami Plant Inspection Station Summer Volunteer Program is to use a hands-on outreach approach to enable students to learn about the mission and functions of PPQ.

For five weeks, the students were involved in a wide variety of scientific and administrative activities, including insect collection and preparation (pinning and labeling), trap placement, Export and Import Division (including plant inspection and phytosanitary certificate inspections), and the recalibration of a sterilizer unit at Stericycle Inc. In addition, the students visited the fumigation site and became familiar with the use and hazards of the fumigant Methyl bromide. They also learned the importance of considering factors such as pest type, temperature, and structural dimensions prior to fumigation. **Article and photos contributed by: Milagros Guindin, Miami, FL**



## SWEETWATER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAREER DAY



The South Florida Partnership on Education Committee of the Miami PIS visited Sweetwater Elementary School (Miami, FL) on February 20, 2013 to participate in the school's career day. PHSS Reginald Bazelais and supervisor Terrance Washington explained our PPQ mission of protecting American agriculture and safeguarding our natural resources by preventing the spread of plant pests and diseases. They outreached to more than 100 3rd-5th grade students and their teachers. Through hands-on activities,

students were introduced to the type of work that we do at the inspection station. The students were enthusiastic and eager to learn about insects and snails. **Article and photos contributed by: Margarita Dotres-Perez, Miami, FL**

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## HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS NATIONAL PROGRAM INTERNSHIP IN PUERTO RICO

From June 4th to August 17th, 2012, three (two undergraduate and one graduate) biology students from InterAmerican University, San Germán Campus who are members of the USDA Florida-Caribbean Consortium for Agriculture Education (FCCAgE) worked at the APHIS PPQ Carolina Inspection Station. The internship was designed to give students the opportunity to practice their skills in the identification laboratory. They rotated through a variety of tasks, including updating the wet and dry insect collections, slide preparation of Homoptera, and snail identification. They also participated with other programs at the PIS, including Domestic Program, SITC, and Safeguarding. In addition, the students contributed new ideas and received professional development advice. **Article and photos contributed by: Joel Perez,**



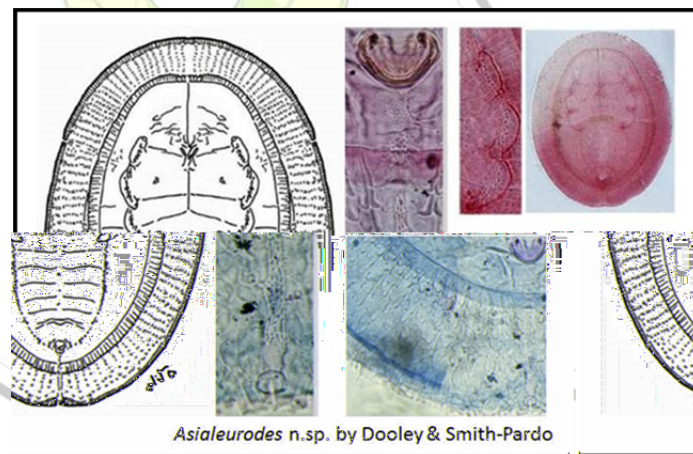
**Carolina, Puerto Rico**



## IDENTIFIER'S CORNER

### NEW WHITEFLY INTERCEPTED IN MAIL

A new species of whitefly (Aleyrodidae) in the genus *Asialeyrodes* was recently described by identifiers at the South San Francisco Plant Inspection Station (publication is pending). It was found on a mail shipment of *Syzygium* sp. (Myrtaceae) plants from Indonesia; the plants were intended for propagation. Little is known regarding the life history or potential agricultural impact of this whitefly, but it should serve as a reminder of the ever-present threat posed by propagative material as a pathway for the introduction of pest species - even ones we haven't named yet! **Article contributed by: John Dooley, Allan H. Smith-Pardo, and Kyle Beucke, South San Francisco, CA**



### TWO FIRST-IN-NATION MEALYBUG INTERCEPTIONS FROM MEXICO

Two species of mealybug (Pseudococcidae) from Mexico were intercepted for the first time in the nation by Customs and Border Protection personnel at San Francisco airport. Both species are in the genus *Phenacoccus* and were found on shipments of herbs.

*Phenacoccus gregosus* was intercepted on mint; it is distinguished from other species in the genus by the following characters: The presence of groups of multilocular disc pores on the dorsum behind the frontal cerarii, dorsal setae without trilocular pores next to setal collars, dorsal cerarii absent from the posterior abdominal segments, and the presence of quinquelocular pores on the venter.

*Phenacoccus multicerarii* was intercepted on basil; it is distinguished from other species in the genus by the following characters: The presence of numerous dorsal cerarii, multilocular disc pores present on all abdominal segments (dorsal as well as ventral), and the absence of quinquelocular pores. **Article contributed by: Kyle Beucke, Allan H. Smith-Pardo, and Philips Johnson, South San Francisco, CA**

