Getting the Best of Pests

Commercial and Private Green Industry Webinar Series for 2025

16th January 2025

Management of common (and uncommon) landscape tree pests in the southeastern U.S.

Dr. David Coyle, Department of Forestry and Environmental Conservation, Clemson University

Abstract: Trees in managed landscapes are subject to many different abiotic and biotic stresses, which can increase their susceptibility to several native insects and diseases. At the same time, the Southeast is now home to a few non-native tree pests such as the emerald ash borer and Asian long horned beetle. This webinar will help viewers learn to identify native and non-native pests on trees in managed landscapes in the Southeast. We will discuss chemical and non-chemical management options and consider ways to mitigate underlying stress on the trees which can help increase a tree's resilience in the face of insect and disease pests.

Delicious Designs: Incorporating Edibles into Everyday Landscapes

Dr. Heather Kirk-Ballard, Department of Horticulture, The University of Georgia

Discover how to transform your outdoor space into a stunning and productive garden by integrating edible plants into your landscape. This presentation will explore the benefits of edible landscaping, share practical

design principles, and highlight sustainable practices for creating a functional and visually appealing garden. You'll also learn how to address key plant health concerns, including pest control, soil care, and disease prevention. Whether you're starting small or planning a larger area, this talk will equip you with the knowledge and tools to blend fruits, vegetables, herbs, and edible flowers seamlessly into your yard. Create a space that is as beautiful as it is bountiful!

13th March 2025

Tackling Plant Diseases in Urban and Controlled Environments: Integrated Approaches

Dr. Ruchika Kashyap, Department of Plant Pathology, The University of Georgia

This talk will explore the plant disease challenges in urban and controlled environments, such as greenhouses, hoop houses, and hydroponic systems, with a focus on food crops. The presentation will highlight key pathogens, effective disease management strategies, and the role of integrated approaches that combine cultural, biological, and chemical controls. Attendees will gain insights into ongoing research and extension efforts aimed at developing the best management practices, emphasizing the importance of early detection, prevention, and tailored disease management strategies to support healthy crop production in these specialized environments.

Focus on PGRs in the Greenhouse and Retail

Dr. Brian Whipker, Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina State University

This session will focus on new PGR resources available and the latest in use and research updates. Topics include the use of ethephon drenches, PGR adherence to plastic, PGR overdose ID and correction strategies and strategies for using PGRs to hold plants at retail.

15th May 2025

Role of plant growth regulators on turfgrass

Clint Waltz, Department of Crop and Soil Science, University of Georgia

Major diseases affecting turfgrass

Dr. Jim Kerns, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, NC State University

The speaker will review major pathological issues affecting turfgrass in the southeastern US. The current and improved management tactics consistent with the identification and biology of the pathogen will be discussed.

17th July 2025

Mulch Management for Landscape Beds: A Research-Based Approach

Dr. Damon Abdi, LSU AgCenter – Hammond Research Station

Maintaining a healthy landscape bed involves multiple practices aimed at creating a conducive environment for plant growth, a weed-free surface, and an aesthetically appealing installation. Research focusing on mulch management in the landscape has been conducted at the LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station, offering insights towards common questions landscape contractors and their clients have such as “how much mulch should I apply?” and “does mulch color affect soil temperature?” This presentation will highlight results from past and ongoing mulch research at the Hammond Research Station, as well as some practical tips and considerations to help contractors and their clients achieve a more sustainable landscape.

Dr. Mike Arnold, Texas A&M University

Extreme Weather Events and their Impact on Ornamental Shrubs and Trees
Whether extreme cold or heat wave, ornamental shrubs and trees are exposed to significant environmental stressors which can have negative impact on plant health and performance. This talk will discuss abiotic stresses and share historical information from Texas A&M Gardens.

18th September 2025

Vascular Streak Dieback Research Update

Dr. Fulya Baysal-Gurel, Associate Professor, Tennessee State University

Vascular streak dieback (VSD) is an emerging threat to the woody ornamental industry. This session addresses the research updates regarding the identification of the causal agent/s of the VSD, fungicide efficacy trials, and redbud cultivar screening. Finally, the best management practices for VSD will be discussed.

Sustainable Management of Turf and Ornamental Pests

Dr. Zee Ahmed, Assistant Professor, Clemson University

One of the main problems in the Turf & Ornamental industry is dealing with invasive pests, especially in the southeast US. Most of these pests are sucking insects, which are hard to spot at an early stage and very invasive. The first step to managing them is identifying and understanding how they differ from local pests. Knowing their identities helps us understand their biology, such as how long their vulnerable stages last and how many generations they have. I will discuss their identities and biology in the first part of my talk. The turf & Ornamental industry mainly relies on chemical controls to manage new invasive species. This method often fails without understanding the pests' identities and biology, leading to more outbreaks. Chemical controls also kill natural enemies and non-target species, worsening the problem of honeybees and biodiversity loss. In the second

part of my talk, I will discuss combining chemical controls with other control methods, especially biological control. Due to the high cost and environmental concerns of chemical controls, there is a growing demand for sustainable pest management. Understanding how to apply sustainable control methods is crucial for customer satisfaction.

13th November 2025

Industry Update: Turfgrass

Dr. Clint Waltz, Dept of Crop and Soil Sciences, University of Georgia; and, Dr. Alfredo Martinez, Dept of Plant Pathology, University of Georgia

Plant pathogens and weeds continue to be major challenges for turfgrass managers, including golf courses, sod farms, and residential and public landscapes. The speakers will update the audience regarding the recent research findings on effective insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides against various pest species. The speakers will discuss any new information affecting the turfgrass industry, such as new cultivars, changes in existing regulations, etc.

Industry Update: Ornamentals

Dr. Shimat V. Joseph, Dept of Entomology, University of Georgia

Insects and plant pathogens remain major challenges for ornamental nursery managers and landscape managers. The speaker will update the audience on recent research findings on effective insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides against various pest species. The speaker will discuss any new information affecting the ornamental industry, such as new cultivars, changes in existing regulations, etc.