

## ***PLANT SCIENCES WEEKLY NEWSLETTER – August 28, 2009***

### **What happens on your lawn does not stay on your lawn**

The department's Loren Oki, environmental scientist and landscaping expert, is the leader of a research project that found that water runoff from residential yard is filled with far more pollutants than the theoretical models would predict. Speaking at a recent press conference at the American Chemical Society, Oki said residential yards have been found to have "a chronic level of pesticides, specifically fipronil and bifenthrin, sometimes at very high concentrations." Oki and his colleagues periodically collected samples from storm drain systems in eight neighborhoods in California to check for pesticides, nitrates, and other pollutants. Most of those pesticides are often meant for killing ants. The team discovered the poisons tend to be commingled with high levels of nitrates, from fertilizer, and other pollutants. Oki's team has been reaching out to several communities throughout the state offering this key suggestion to reduce their toxic runoff: Design your sprinkler system, and your lawn, so that none of its irrigation water runs into the gutter.

### **Regulatory woes blocked flow of agbiotech innovations**

Regulatory changes enacted a decade ago appear to be responsible for dramatically slowing the flow of quality-improving agricultural biotechnology innovations to a mere trickle, reports a team of agricultural economists and biotechnology experts. Findings from the study, published in the August issue of the journal *Nature Biotechnology*, suggest the slowdown may have lasting social welfare costs, such as the delay of nutritional improvements, production efficiencies and environmental protections. "One of the great frustrations in the agricultural biotechnology community has been the failure of many new products with enhanced quality traits -- such as nutritional content, ripening control and processing attributes -- to reach consumers and processors," said Gregory Graff, an agricultural economist now at Colorado State University. Graff led the study as a postdoctoral researcher at UC Davis, working with Professor Alan Bennett. "While biotech innovations with on-farm production traits -- such as insect resistance and herbicide tolerance -- moved through the research and development pipeline relatively quickly, commercialization of product-quality innovations failed to materialize," Bennett said.

### **Fresh Produce and Cut Flower Irradiation Workshop comes to UC Davis**

On September 1-2, UC Davis will host a Fresh Produce and Cut Flower Irradiation Workshop with a top-notch slate of instructors and a modest enrollment fee of \$50, thanks to a grant from USDA and sponsorship of Produce Marketing Association. For more information and to enroll, see <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Announce/irradiation-workshop.shtml>.

## **Sminars/Conferences/Field Days**

### **Plant Sciences Fall Seminar**

**PES 3001, noon**

**Thursday, September 24** - Valerie Eviner will present "Using plant traits and plant-soil interactions as tools for managing and restoring ecosystems."

### **California Seed Association tour**

**September 9-10, UC Davis**

Seed industry professionals will lead the annual CSA tour, designed to give students a hands-on understanding of the seed industry's role in agriculture and horticulture and learn more about traditional plant breeding, biotechnology and the value-added benefits of seed development. Contact Betsy Peterson, 916-441-2251.

**Weed Science School 2009  
September 21-23, UC Davis**

Weed Science School is an intensive 2-1/2 day course focusing on the mode and mechanism of herbicide activity in plants and the fate of herbicides in the environment. The school is designed for those involved in consulting, research, development, or sales of agricultural chemicals. Emphasis is on herbicides registered for use in California and important weeds within the state. Course fee is \$550 for those who register before September 4 and \$600 after that date. Fee includes handout materials, refreshments and lunch each day. Class size is limited. For more information, visit <http://wric.ucdavis.edu> or contact the UC Weed Research & Information Center at [wric@ucdavis.edu](mailto:wric@ucdavis.edu) or (530)752-1748.

**Fresh-cut Products Workshop  
September 22-24, UC Davis**

The UC Davis Postharvest Technology Research & Information Center offers its 14<sup>th</sup> annual Fresh-cut Products: Maintaining Quality & Safety, September 22-24 at UC Davis. This three-day course will inform food professionals of underlying principles that govern fresh-cut produce quality while providing practical tools for application in the processing plant. Topics include product biology, quality and preparation; temperature management; microbiology; modified atmospheres; and marketing and consumer issues. There will be product demonstrations and material on the biology of taste and aroma and how to set up a sensory panel to evaluate product quality. The \$1050 fee includes all program handouts, lunch and morning and afternoon snacks each day. For more information see <http://postharvest.ucdavis.edu/Announce/freshcut.shtml> or contact Pam Devine, (530) 752-6941, [pwdevine@ucdavis.edu](mailto:pwdevine@ucdavis.edu)

**California Weed Science Society Conference  
January 11-13, 2010, Visalia**

"Looking Into the Future of Weed Control" is the topic of this 62<sup>nd</sup> annual conference, featuring the latest in weed control. To register, visit [www.cwss.org](http://www.cwss.org) or call CWSS at (831) 442-0883 to obtain a program agenda and registration form.

**REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS/SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS**

For more information on funding opportunities, go to OVCR's Web site at <http://www.research.ucdavis.edu/home.cfm?id=OVC,0,1154>

**Saratoga Horticultural Research Endowment**

The Saratoga Horticultural Research Endowment invites representatives of California institutions of higher learning and California horticultural organizations to submit proposals for funding from the endowment for the period of October 1, 2009 - September 30, 2010. The maximum project award will be \$15,000. Send proposals via email to [ldodge@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ldodge@ucdavis.edu) no later than 5 p.m. on Tuesday, September 1, 2009. For details, see [http://groups.ucanr.org/Saratoga/Call\\_for\\_Proposals/](http://groups.ucanr.org/Saratoga/Call_for_Proposals/)

**Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology**

The Directorate for Biological Sciences (BIO) awards Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology to recent recipients of the doctoral degree for research and

training in selected areas of biology supported by BIO and with special goals for human resource development in biology. The fellowships encourage independence at an early stage of the research career to permit Fellows to pursue their research and training goals in the most appropriate research locations regardless of the availability of funding for the Fellows at that site. Submission deadline is Oct. 14. For more information, see [Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Biology \(PRFB\)](#)

## **Job Opportunities**

### **New Listings**

#### **Assistant Watermelon Breeder**

Syngenta Seeds, Inc.-Vegetables in Woodland, CA, is seeking an assistant breeder responsible for watermelon genetic improvement support duties including trial preparation, data collection, horticulture trait evaluation and disease resistance selection. The breeder will also coordinate with various research projects and assist with evaluation of new experimental hybrids. M.S. degree in horticulture, plant breeding or related field and 3-5 years comparable experience in a commercial breeding/agricultural research program preferred. To apply, please send resume to [xingping.zhang@syngenta.com](mailto:xingping.zhang@syngenta.com)

#### **Tree Fruit/Citrus Breeder**

Wawona Packing Co. in Cutler, CA, is seeking a breeder to develop a tree fruit and citrus breeding program utilizing the latest in breeding technologies. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills are essential. Bachelors degree is required; Masters or PhD preferred. Experience with tree fruit and/or citrus is a plus. For more information, contact Brett Zall, 559-268-5966.

### **Repeat Listings**

#### **Food Microbiologist**

Del Monte Fresh Produce Company is recruiting for a food microbiologist or Research Associate to work in its Research and Development Laboratory located in Richmond, Ca. Applicants must have a B.S. or M.S. in biological or agricultural sciences with training and experience in food microbiology. Excellent organization and communication skills and ability to work with others are required. Some of the responsibilities for the position are to test protocols for fresh cut R&D projects, conduct microbiology and sensory analysis on fresh cut fruits and vegetables, evaluate shelf life of samples, record, analyze and report the data. To apply please send your resume to [EFiroozabady@freshdelmonte.com](mailto:EFiroozabady@freshdelmonte.com), [Xliu@freshdelmonte.com](mailto:Xliu@freshdelmonte.com) or to the following address:

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