New Jersey News

Ernie Christ Memorial Lecture, 2016
Mid Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention

Win Cowgill
New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

The Ernie Christ Memorial Lecture is presented at the Mid Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention in February each year, held in Hershey, PA. The lecture was established in memory of Ernie Christ, the long time New Jersey Tree Fruit Specialist at Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Ernie passed on September 12, 2000. He was loved and respected by fruit growers across North America. Ernie's passion was the furthering of knowledge of peach culture and science.

Ernie was a great friend and mentor to dozens of young scientists, extension workers, and farmers, including Rich Marini, Sue Brown, Jerry Frecon, Mark Robson, Robert Best, Peter Melick, Ken Wightman, Bob Schutzki, Al Caggiano, Ralph DelSanti, Jack Springer, Spence Davis, John Gerwig, Gary Mount, Bill Smith, Galetta Farms, Santo Maccherone, Spitz Tomasello, and me, to name only a very few! We referred to him as Mr. Peach. The fruit industry thought so much of Ernie they named a NJAES breeding program selection after him, 'Ernie's Choice' which is still grown today.

A speakers fund was established by the NJ State Horticultural Society with an initial gift by Adams County Nursery, with continued funding from grower donations. The fund supports an invited speaker each year at the Mid Atlantic Conference. The first Ernie Christ Memorial Lecture was presented by Dr. Rich Marini, Horticulture Department Head, Penn State University, in January of 2002.

Professor Dean Polk, Rutgers, presented the 2016 annual Ernie Christ Memorial Lecture, titled "Getting Back into an IPM Program in Peaches & Nectarines." Meredith Compton, President, New Jersey State Horticultural Society, presented Professor Polk with a certificate and a cash award for his invited lecture.

Two Awarded Distinguished Service to New Jersey Agriculture Citations

Lynn Richmond
NJ Department of Agriculture

In Atlantic City, New Jersey at the NJ Agricultural Convention, January, 2016, Rutgers Cooperative Extension retirees Drs. Gerald M. Ghidiu of Bridgeton and Bradley Majek of Pittsgrove, were honored February 10 with Distinguished Service to Agriculture Citations by the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture.

Gerald Ghidiu

"New Jersey is fortunate to have such outstanding individuals who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of the Garden State's agriculture industry," said New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture Douglas H. Fisher. "The state's farmers owe a lot to Dr. Ghidiu and Dr. Majek. Their contributions have had a lasting impact on farmers and young people interested in agriculture."

Dr. Gerald Ghidiu's service to New Jersey agriculture began in 1980 when he became a Rutgers University extension Entomologist. His career spanned 33 years during which he worked with farmers and conducted research to assist them in controlling vegetable pests.

Dr. Ghidiu earned a BS in Biology and Secondary Education from the State University of New York and a PHD in Economic Entomology from Iowa State University. He then worked for the USDA Federal Corn Insects Research Unit in Iowa, focusing on the European corn borer.

While at Rutgers, he presented many educational sessions to students, growers, ag specialists and agribusiness personnel. His research centered on the Colorado potato beetle, European corn borer, and insect pest management of vegetable insect pests. He developed many practices that are now commonplace in the industry.

Dr. Ghidiu gave presentations and lectured throughout the country on his work and was published in numerous journals, papers, magazines and newsletters.

From 1996 to 2000, he was the Director of the Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Bridgeton. He served as Supervisor of the IR-4 Regional Research Center at RAREC and was the IR-4 State liaison. IR-4 activity helps connect growers, the agrichemical industry and federal agencies to secure clearance for pest control products on vegetables, eventually becoming a registered label for use on that crop. He completed a total of 84 IR-4 projects for insecticides over his career. He was editor of the Journal of Economic Entomology, Entomological Society of America. And he served as Editor of the insect control section of the NJ Commercial Vegetable Production Recommendations. Dr. Ghidiu retired Professor Emeritus from Rutgers in September 2012.

Secretary Fisher awards Gerald Ghidiu with Lilly Ghidiu the Distinguished Service Award from the NJ Department of Agriculture.

Bradley Majek

Dr. Bradley Majek has played an important role in New Jersey agriculture for more than 34 years. He worked at Rutgers University conducting research and extension programs in tree fruit and vegetable crops since1981 and has filled a critical need of improving crop productivity in New Jersey. Majek earned his BS from Cornell University, his Masters in Weed Science and Botany from Oregon State University and doctorate from Cornell.

As a weed specialist, Dr. Majek studied the growth, development, reproduction and competitive ability of weeds, using this information to develop new weed control practices. He evaluated the effectiveness of crop response to and cost potential of cultural, biological, mechanical and chemical methods of controlling weeds in vegetables and tree fruit. He also worked to determine the fate of herbicides in plants and the environment.

A long-time member of the Northeastern Weed Science Society and the Weed Science Society of America, Majek held many leadership positions in those organizations, including President.

Prior to retiring in 2013, Majek was the Director of the Rutgers Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Bridgeton.

Since 1932, the New Jersey State Board of Agriculture has awarded the prestigious Citation for Distinguished Service to Agriculture to men and women who have given unselfishly of their time and talents to the advancement and betterment of the agricultural industry and rural life in New Jersey. This award is given to recognize and honor those individuals who have made outstanding contributions of public service to New Jersey agriculture.

Secretary Fisher awards Dr. Brad Majek the Distinguished Service Award from the NJ Department of Agriculture.

Kurt W. Alstede Receives 2016 New Jersey State Horticultural Society Outstanding Fruit Grower's Award

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Kurt Alstead, was presented the New Jersey State Horticulture Societies Outstanding Fruit Grower's Award at the 71st North Jersey Fruit Meeting Held in Flemington NJ on February 24, 2016.

Located in Chester, New Jersey, Morris County Alstede Farms, LLC has evolved to a retail based business raising nearly 350 acres of tree fruits, small fruits, vegetables, and flowers. http://alstedefarms.com/

Kurt functions as the General Manager and is supported, by a strong management team that includes his wife of 19 years, Barbara.

Today 100% of the farm's output is sold through the on farm store, PYO, tailgate markets, and CSA. Agritourism also compliments the farm's retail offerings. The farm currently employs 22 full-time year round staff members and seasonally up to 200 people in both the production and retail segments of the business.

Kurt has been an active volunteer firefighter for nearly 35 years and has served or is currently serving in several different capacities of local, county, state, and federal government. He is also engaged in a variety of agricultural organizations and has served in church leadership roles.

He has served as past president of the Morris County Board of Agriculture, NJ State Horticulture Society Board of Directors, NJ Small Fruit Council Board of Directors,

Morris County Farm Service Agency, USDA, Past Committee Member and NJ Highlands Council Vice-Chairman. As a member of the Highlands council helped facilitate $150,000 in grants to Rutgers Tree Fruit IPM program for Northern New Jersey.

Kurt has been an active member and supporter of the fruit and agricultural community in New Jersey.

From left to right: Craig Steely, Hector Ruiz, Kurt Alstede, Win Cowgill, and Peter Nitzsche.

Gary Mount, Terhune Orchards, Princeton, NJ with their new “Wine Barn” under construction, March 2016. The new 3,600 sq foot faciltiy will be used for wine production, storage and hospitality. It also includes public bathrooms and staff lunchroom. http://terhuneorchards.com/winery/

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