In This Issue

"This Is Purdue" Podcast Features Turf Alumni

This month's "This is Purdue" podcast features **Dan Kiermaier** (BS 2012/Turf Management and Science), head groundskeeper for the Chicago Cubs.

In this episode, you'll learn about his journey through Purdue's College of Agriculture, his experience during the Cubs' 2016 World Series win, and his family's baseball legacy, including his brother Kevin Kiermaier. You'll also get a behind-the-scenes look at preparing Wrigley Field for various events and maintaining its historic charm while ensuring player safety and innovation.

Listen to Podcast Ep. 127: Behind the Scenes of Wrigley Field with Cubs Head Groundskeeper Dan Kiermaier wherever you get your podcasts.

Wenjing Guan and Liz Maynard at Tri-State High Tunnel School

In collaboration with The Ohio State University, a team of Extension specialists and educators hosted the Tri-State High Tunnel School on March 14, 2025. In Indiana, the event was held at two locations—Wayne and Elkhart Counties. **Wenjing Guan** and **Liz Maynard** participated in the event.

Karen Mitchell Quoted In Washington Post

Karen Mitchell was quoted in the Washington Post article How to not kill your houseplants when you take a vacation.

Morning Ag Clips Spotlights Purdue's Spring Fest

Purdue's Spring Fest, including the "iconic" plant sale by the **Purdue Horticulture Society** and the **Purdue Student Farm Organization** and the Boilermaker Hot Sauces (a collaboration between the Department of Food Science and the Purdue Student Farm), was featured in Morning Ag Clips on March 20: 2025 Spring Fest: A Celebration of Family Fun, Flora and Fauna.

Thumbs Up to Lora White

Lora White received a thumbs up in this week's Purdue Today: https://www.purdue.edu/newsroom/purduetoday/2025/Q1/this-weeks-thumbs-up-recipients-58/

MS Defense Seminar: Jean Pierre Zavala

JEAN PIERRE ZAVALA

Major Professor: ARIANA TORRES

MS DEFENSE SEMINAR

MARCH 31 @ 2:00 PM

Room: HORT 222

"Economic Feasibility of Biological Aphid Control in High Tunnel Spinach Production: Evidence from a Farm-Level Financial Tool"

Abstract: Spinach (Spinacia oleracea) is a widely cultivated leafy green, often grown in high tunnels in the Midwestern United States. While high tunnels can extend the production season and increase yield, they can also create favorable conditions for pests (e.g., aphids), which can reduce both yield and marketability. Biological control agents have shown potential in mitigating aphid infestations, but their economic viability remains a critical concern for growers. This study evaluates the economic feasibility of aphid management control with and without of biological control agents (i.e., Adalia bipunctata, Chrysoperla carnea, and Orius insidiosus) in high tunnel spinach production. To assess economic feasibility, we developed a financial tool that integrates research-based data on yield, marketability, and the costs associated with biological control. Field data were collected in Lafayette, IN, while additional farm financial data—including variable costs, labor, fixed costs, overhead expenses, and revenue—were gathered from high tunnel farms to refine the tool's framework. The tool generates five financial outputs: cost analysis, profitability analysis, sensitivity analysis, breakeven analysis, and financial performance indicators. Using this tool, we conducted a case study on two distinct farm systems to compare the economic outcomes of biological control versus conventional aphid management. Results indicate that while conventional methods had lower input costs, C. carnea significantly increased net profits in both farm systems due to improved yield and marketability. Marginal benefit-cost ratio and return on investment analyses further confirmed that C. carnea can provide a favorable economic return for aphid control in high tunnel spinach production.

Keywords. biological control agents, economic feasibility, aphids, marginal benefit cost ratio, return on investment.

JEAN PIERRE ZAVALA

Major Professor: ARIANA TORRES

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HLA 2025 Spring Seminar Series

PURDUE UNIVERSITY | Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

Coffee and light snacks will be provided!

HLA 2025 Spring Seminar Series

Date & Host	Seminars	Seminars will be in person with a zoom option unless otherwise noted Thursdays @ 3:30pm in HORT 117 or via Zoom
February 6	**Jeongim Kim** - University of Florida Associate Professor – Horticultural Sciences	
February 6	**Olinger Lecture** - ***TBA*** 5:30 PM PFEN 241	
March 3	**Clarenda "Farmer Cee" Stanley –** Green Heffa Farms CEO Monday, 1:30 PM	
March 6 Torres	**Samuel Zapata –** Texas A&M University Associate Professor Department of Agricultural Economics	
March 13 Adair	**Yichao Rui** –Purdue University Assistant Professor - Agronomy and Agroecology Lab	
April 3 Widhalm	**David Braun** –University of Missouri Professor of Biological Sciences Co-sponsored by the Purdue Center for Plant Biology PFEN 241	
April 10 Percevault	**Brian Schundler**– Nelson Byrd Woltz Architects	
April 17 Hirst	**Sherif Sherif –** Virginia Tech Associate Professor – School of Plant and Environmental Sciences	

Spring Fest

Save the Date: Purdue Small Farm Education Field Day

Newsletters:

Facts for Fancy Fruits: https://fff.hort.purdue.edu

Vegetable Crops Hotline: https://vegcropshotline.org/

Purdue Landscape Report: https://www.purduelandscapereport.org

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Editor: Pamela J Fisher | Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, 625 Agriculture Mall Dr., West Lafayette, IN 47907