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February 27, 2008

Hello, Dahlia!

Ornamental flowers contribute an estimated \$1 billion in sales to Washington's "green industry," making the greenhouse and nursery industry one of the state's most valuable.

In order for the flower industry to remain so robust, it's vital for nurseries and growers to keep their plants free of disease and infection - especially when cuttings and bulbs are the primary means of crop cultivation. Since there is no effective means by which to cure an infected plant, preventive measures such as rapid identification and elimination of infected material are the only way to stop further propagation of an infection. Awareness is key, especially when dealing with ornamentals. That's where WSU researcher Hanu Pappu comes in.

As holder of the President Samuel H. Smith and Patricia Smith Distinguished Professorship in Plant Virology, an endowment established by the American Dahlia Society, Pappu's research focuses on viruses that affect dahlias. His efforts have resulted in many informational and diagnostic materials and disease-identification aides. "Growers want to know that the material they provide is clean," said Pappu, "and they want to be able to detect and intercept infected material."

Pappu has developed a cost-effective, practical, ELISA-based assay that can test multiple samples at once, which is already the most widely used testing method and complements the more sensitive but more expensive PCR assay. ELISA and PCR both test for antibodies that develop in the presence of a disease. Along with several others, Pappu's detection methods are being commercialized through licensing agreements with agri-diagnostic companies.

Dahlia mosaic virus, or DMV, is responsible for most diseases in dahlias, and is unique in that it is one of the very few viruses that can integrate itself into its host plant's genome. Once thought to be a single virus, Pappu and his research team, including Keri Druffel, have



"Say it with flowers." A dahlia bloom; WSU research scientist Hanu Pappu. Pappu has received emails from all over the world regarding his online informational resource, located at <http://dahlia.wsu.edu>. That's no surprise given that the flower industry relies heavily upon international trade.

shown that it is, in fact, a complex of at least three viruses. Graduate students in Pappu's lab are exploring the implications of this discovery.

Pappu is starting a lecture series on his research in Samuel Smith's name. A former WSU president and plant pathologist, Smith will deliver the inaugural lecture on April 7.

--Phil Cable, Marketing and News Services

"Vine to Wine" Workshop

WSU Extension viticulturists and enologists, in collaboration with wine-industry professionals, are offering a two-day intensive workshop April 12 and 13. The workshop is designed for anyone considering planting a new vineyard or establishing a winery.

On the first day of the workshop, participants learn how to start a vineyard. Starting a vineyard is a large investment that requires extensive financial, marketing, and horticultural planning. Workshop speakers will address the economics of starting a vineyard, site selection, establishment, and sustainable grape production.

On the second day, Washington winemakers and wine educators address what to look for in grapes, the intricacies of fermentation, the science of red and white winemaking, designing your winery, what equipment to purchase and how to clean it, and the economics of establishing and running a winery. Invited speakers include Wendy Stuckey, Chateau Ste. Michelle's new white winemaker, and Joe Chauncey of Seattle-based architecture firm, Boxwood, designer of Col Solare and the Walter Clore Wine Center.

The workshop will be held at the WSU Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center in Prosser, located at 24106 N. Bunn Road. Seats are limited and are filling fast. To register for the workshop, visit <http://winegrapes.wsu.edu/workshop.html>, or call Mercy Olmstead at (509) 786-9203 or Kerry Ringer at (509) 786-9324.



The Vine to Wine workshop is recommended for those considering starting a vineyard or winery or for those who have recently entered the industry. The goal of the workshop is to educate potential and new growers and winemakers in the essentials of high-quality grape and wine production practices.



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