Assistance to the California Department of Food and Agriculture Pierce’s Disease/Glassy-Winged Sharp Shooter Board on Grapevine Viruses and Grapevine Disease Research

Committee

Anna E. Whitfield

Chair

Anna Whitfield is a professor of entomology and plant pathology at North Carolina State University, which she joined in 2017 as a Chancellor’s Faculty Excellence Program cluster hire in Emerging Plant Diseases and Global Food Security. Previously, she was a professor of plant pathology at Kansas State University. She is known internationally for her work on plant-virus-vector interactions. The long-term goal of her research is to develop biologically-based strategies for controlling viruses and arthropod vectors. Whitfield’s research scholarship around virus-vector relationships is enabling development of innovative strategies that disrupt the cycle of disease in the field. Her awards include a National Science Foundation (NSF) Faculty Early Career Development Award for her work addressing the molecular mechanisms of virus-vector interactions, the KSU College of Agriculture Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award (2014), the 2016 Diversity Award from Kansas State University College of Agriculture, and the Sigma Xi Kansas State University 2016 Outstanding Scientist Award, and the Syngenta award from the American Phytopathological Society for her research and teaching accomplishments (2017). Whitfield received her Master of Science degree from the University of California-Davis and her doctoral degree from the University of Wisconsin.

Olufemi Joseph Alabi

Member

Olufemi J. Alabi is a plant virologist and an Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in the Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology, Texas A&M University System. His applied research and extension program addresses economically important diseases of fruit (such as citrus and grape) and vegetable crops (such as cucurbits) in South Texas via conduct of translational research into disease causation, management, and education/outreach to growers, industry stakeholders and the public. He is a member of the American Phytopathological Society (APS), current chair of the APS Virology Committee, member of the International Council for the Study of Viruses and Virus-like Diseases of the Grapevine (ICVG), and member National Clean Plant Network (NCPN) Education and Outreach Committee. He also serves on the Technical Advisory Committee of the Texas Citrus Pest and Disease Management Corporation and the Emerging Viruses in Cucurbits Working Group (EVCWG) Steering Committee. Dr. Alabi holds a Master of Science degree in crop protection and environmental biology from University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria (2003). He received his doctorate degree in plant pathology from Washington State University (2009), where he worked on grapevine leafroll disease and other grapevine viruses. His research program in Texas also focusses on grapevine red blotch and leafroll diseases and their associated viruses.

Ozgur Batuman

Member

Ozgur Batuman is currently an assistant professor at the Department of Plant Pathology at the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center, University of Florida. His current research focuses on pathogen identification and disease management in citrus and tomato production systems. To develop integrated pest management (IPM) in these crops, he studies plant disease etiology, pathogen biology, and epidemiology and develops novel disease management strategies. Dr. Batuman’s current research and extension activities cover fundamental and applied aspects of citrus diseases and emerging resistant-breaking viral diseases of tomato, including orthotospoviruses and tobamoviruses. He also studies plant-pathogen-vector interactions and characterizes insect-specific viruses of the vectors in these pathosystems. Previously, he was a postdoc and project scientist at the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of California-Davis, where he worked on thrips population dynamics and tomato spotted wilt virus incidence in processing tomato, pepper, and lettuce and developed effective IPM strategies. He also identified and characterized several viruses and virus-like diseases (i.e., viroid and phytoplasma) of other vegetable crops in various countries, including the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mali, and Ghana. Dr. Batuman holds an M.Sc. degree in plant pathology from the University of Cukurova, Turkey, and a Ph.D. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.

Elizabeth J. Cieniewicz

Member

Elizabeth Cieniewicz is an Assistant Professor of Plant Virology at Clemson University since 2019. Her research is focused primarily on the ecology of virus diseases of fruit crops including stone fruits and various small fruits such as blackberry, strawberry, and grapevine, and virus-vector interactions. Her professional background is in vector-borne grapevine viruses, especially grapevine red blotch virus. In addition to teaching responsibilities at Clemson, she also directs the Clemson Clean Plant Center, which is affiliated with the National Clean Plant Network to ensure the supply of virus-negative propagation material for the fruit tree industry. She is also a member of the American Phytopathological Society and Entomological Society of America. She currently serves as senior editor for Plant Disease journal.

Mamadou Lamine Fall

Member

Mamadou L. Fall is a research scientist for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) and associate professor at Université de Sherbrooke. He completed his Ph.D. in plant pathology from Université de Sherbrooke and was a postdoc at Michigan State University. He worked for the private sectors for plant diseases monitoring and management before leading the virus epidemiology laboratory at the Science and Technology Branch of AAFC. Dr. Fall’s research ranges from host-virus interaction studies to applied field research focused on disease management in horticultural agroecosystem (e.g., grapevine, small fruits, etc.). His team developed virus detection tools and has demonstrated that the hybrid grapevine cultivars (ex.Vidal) were symptomless despite the presence of grapevine leafroll viruses (GLD). Therefore, removing of symptomatic grapevines, which is proven to be efficient, will not be effective in vineyards where Vidal grapevines are grown. He is currently an associate editor and senior editor for the Canadian Journal of Plant Pathology and Plant Disease journal (APS), respectively. He is acting as guest editor for Frontiers in Virology, Frontiers in Genetics, and Frontiers in Microbiology journals.

Alana Jacobson

Member

Alana Jacobson is an associate professor at Auburn University. She holds an M.S. degree from Purdue University and Ph.D. from North Carolina State University. In 2014, Dr. Jacobson joined the faculty in Auburn University's Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology. Research on insect vectors of plant viruses has been a primary focus of her research, and includes understanding the biological, ecological, and genetic factors that influence vector-virus interactions underlying the transmission, spread, evolution, and management of plant viruses. This includes studies on thrips-transmitted tomato spotted wilt orthotospovirus, aphid-transmitted cotton leafroll dwarf virus, and whitefly transmitted begomoviruses including tomato yellow leaf curl virus, tomato mottle virus, and viruses that cause cassava mosaic disease. She also has ongoing projects evaluating tools and strategies for management of insect pests of row crops, as well as projects aimed at understanding factors driving the evolution of resistance to management strategies.

Kirsten Pelz-Stelinski

Member

Kirsten Pelz-Stelinski is the Center Director at the University of Florida/Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Mid-Florida Research & Education Center and is a professor at the University of Florida's Department of Entomology and Nematology. Her research program focuses on the biology and microbial ecology of insect vectors of plant diseases, with an emphasis on developing microbial-based management strategies for insect pests. Currently, she is investigating transmission of the Huanglongbing (HLB) pathogen Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus by the Asian citrus psyllid (ACP; Diaphorina citri) to further the development of successful ACP management programs. Aspects of this research include evaluating the effects of antimicrobials on ACP fitness and pathogen transmission, and investigating the function of ACP endosymbionts. She is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Entomological Society of America, and the American Society for Microbiology. Dr. Pelz-Stelinski received her PhD (2008) and MSc (2004) in entomology from Michigan State University.

Wenping Qiu

Member

Dr. Wenping Qiu is Research Professor in the W. H. Darr College of Agriculture, Missouri State University where he also directs the Midwest Center of the National Clean Plant Network-Grapevine that provides virus-tested clean grapevines and services of testing viruses. His research group focuses on understanding the molecular and genetic basis of disease resistance in grapevines and finding effective strategies for preventing and managing diseases that cause significant losses to the grape industry. Among his research teams' achievements is the discovery of the first DNA virus of grapevines, grapevine vein clearing virus (GVCV). Dr. Qiu has been awarded with the Clif & Gail Smart Professorship 2012-2019 and the Missouri State University Foundation Award in Research in 2020. He serves on the National Clean Plant Network-Grapes Tier II Committee and is a member of American Phytopathological Society. He received his Ph.D. in plant pathology/biotechnology from North Carolina State University in 1997 and his MS degree in plant virology from Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Science in 1988.

Naidu A. Rayapati

Member

Naidu Rayapati has served as Director of Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center at Washington State University since May 2018. As a faculty member since 2004 in the Department of Plant Pathology, College of Agricultural, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences (CAHNRS), he leads an integrated program of research, teaching, and extension and outreach in plant virology with a strong focus on grapevine viruses and viral diseases in Washington vineyards. He has made significant advances in basic and applied research on economically significant grapevine viruses, leading to a better understanding of their molecular biology and epidemiology and improved management in vineyards. Previously, Dr. Rayapati worked as a senior scientist at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics contributing to crop improvement against viral diseases in subsistence agriculture in Asia and Africa. Dr. Rayapati received the International Service Award in 2007 from the American Phytopathological Society, and the IPM Team Excellence Award at the 6th IPM International Symposium in 2009 for his superior contributions in plant pathology, and the Land Grant Mission Award in 2020 from CAHNRS for his outstanding contributions to research, teaching, and Extension. He is a member of several professional organizations, including the American Phytopathological Society. He received his doctoral degree in plant virology from Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati, India.

Stuart R. Reitz

Member

Stuart Reitz is the director of Oregon State University's Malheur Experiment Station and a professor of cropping systems. His research addresses the management of arthropod pests, especially vectors of plant pathogens, and interactions between pest management and cultural management in cropping systems in the inland Pacific Northwest. Prior to joining Oregon State University, Dr. Reitz served as a Research Entomologist for USDA-ARS, where his research focused on the ecology and management of insect vectors of plant pathogens, in particular thrips and tospoviruses. He was a member of the W-2008 research team that was recognized in 2018 with the Western Region Excellence in Multistate Research Award for their efforts in managing onion pests and diseases. During his tenure with USDA-ARS, he received the Florida Entomological Society Research Award and was a member of the team that received the Southern Region IPM "Pulling Together" Team Award. He holds a PhD in entomology from Clemson University. Dr. Reitz served as chair of the NRC Insect Control Panel and member of the NRC Committee on Review of Research Proposals on Citrus Greening from 2008-2009.

Thomas H. Turpen

Member

Tom Turpen currently serves as President and CEO of Sensit Ventures, Inc. He is an advisor with the Food System 6 organization, a member of the Sustainability Council of the 2Blades Foundation and a Principal Consultant with Technology Innovation Group. Dr. Turpen is a serial entrepreneur, a registered patent agent and a founder of both for-profit and non-profit organizations including Eliance Biotechnology–acquired by MacroGenics (MGNX), and the Citrus Research Development Foundation. His synthetic biology research contributed to the understanding and design of disease resistance traits in agriculture and helped pioneer the use of plant biomass for industrial biotechnology applications including self-assembling nanoparticles, vaccines and pharmaceuticals at Zoecon Research Institute (Sandoz Crop Protection), Biosource, and Large Scale Biology. Tom has a passion for connecting innovation to societal needs and has served as a director of early-stage life science companies and as an appointed volunteer in several institutional and civic advisory committees. He was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 2017. He received his Ph.D. in plant pathology from the University of California at Riverside.

Camilla Y. Ables

Staff Officer

Alexander V. Karasev

Vice Chair

Alexander V. Karasev is a Professor of Plant Virology at the University of Idaho. He held faculty positions at Thomas Jefferson University and University of Florida prior to coming to Idaho in 2006. He has been studying plant viruses and plant virus diseases for over 30 years, pioneering research in molecular biology of closteroviruses, and in particular citrus tristeza virus at UC Riverside and University of Florida. At the University of Idaho, Dr. Karasev's research over the past 17 years focused on understanding interactions between plant viruses and their hosts, and how resistance genes drive virus evolution. A major emphasis of his current research is on genetic determinants of pathogenicity of plant viruses affecting potato, common beans, grapevines, and sugar beet. In 2019, Dr. Karasev was elected a Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society (APS), and in 2022 he was promoted to the rank of the University Distinguished Professor at the University of Idaho. For three years, 2019-2021, he served as an Editor-in-Chief of Plant Disease, and a member of the APS Publication Board. Dr. Karasev received his Ph.D. in virology from the Moscow State University (Russia) and continued his training as a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of California, Riverside.