

October 2007

Faculty News

Dr. **Christine W. Miller** recently joined the Gainesville faculty as an Assistant Research Scientist specializing in evolutionary ecology. This appointment is 80% research and 20% teaching. Dr. Miller's research interests focus on the evolution of behavior and morphology, and the majority of this research has been conducted with the Coreidae. Her research interests include: 1) Maternal effects and sexual selection, 2) Genotype-by-environment interactions on behavior, and 3) Phenotypic plasticity in color. She has conducted much of her previous work at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, and plans to continue this research as well as to study local species of coreids. Miller received her doctoral degree at the University of Montana. She has received numerous grants and fellowships from the National Science Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution, and recently declined a National Evolutionary Synthesis Center Postdoctoral Fellowship to join our department.

Last month, Dr. **Rudi Scheffrahn**, Fort Lauderdale REC, was the guest of Solange Issa of Simon Bolivar University and the Bolivariana Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects at their biennial meeting in Higuerote, Venezuela. Scheffrahn gave a plenary talk on Caribbean termites and met many faculty and students

from South America working primarily on ants, bees and wasps. Before and after the meeting Scheffrahn, with Jim Chase and John Mangold of Terminix International, conducted a survey of the relatively undiscovered termite fauna of north central Venezuela. Additional travel support was provided by a grant from the IFAS International Programs Office.

Dr. **Philip A. Stansly**, Southwest Florida REC, recently spent two weeks in the People's Republic of China (PRC) as part of a scientific cooperation exchange program discussing the management of *Bemisia tabaci* following introductions of the Q Biotype of this species to the USA and PRC.

Dr. **James P. Cuda** and his graduate student **Abhishek Mukherjee** traveled to India in September to begin a project on classical biological control of the aquatic weed *Hygrophila polysperma*. Cuda and Mukherjee met with collaborators from CAB International in Delhi and India's Project Directorate for Biological Control in Bangalore. Mukherjee will visit herbaria in Kolkata (Calcutta) and Delhi to examine plant specimens and then conduct preliminary field surveys to collect plant samples for genetic analysis before returning to the U.S. at the end of October.

Dr. **Marjorie A. Hoy** recently returned from Mauritius, where she conducted foreign

exploration for predatory mites that suppress red palm mite, *Raoiella indica*, populations. While there, she was hosted by the Mauritius Ministry of Agro Industry and presented a seminar on "Classical Biological Control of the Red Palm Mite." Dr. Hoy returned with predatory mites (Phytoseiidae) that appear to be excellent natural enemies and hopes that colonies can be established for evaluation in quarantine. The red palm mite is an invasive pest in the Caribbean that recently colonized Puerto Rico and is expected to invade Florida soon. It is a pest of palms and, in the Caribbean, attacks bananas and plantains, as well. See her Featured Creatures publication on this species at http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/orn/palms/red_palm_mite.htm.

Dr. **Marc Branham** was recently elected as Vice President of the Systematics, Evolution and Biodiversity Section, Entomological Society of America for 2008.

Staff News

The holidays are fast approaching. The social committee will meet in the next few weeks to plan activities. Anyone interested in serving on the committee or just helping out should contact **Chris Pickles**.

Student News

Leticia Gonzalez is new to Dr. **Oscar Liburd**'s lab. Gonzalez is with the Global Outreach Program, a nonprofit organization that arranges internships for young professionals who want to learn about U.S. agriculture. Leticia was born and raised in Paraguay and in 2006 graduated from National University of Asuncion with a degree in agricultural science. She plans to continue her education with a Master's in agribusiness, but one of her greatest passions

is playing piano. She also wants to see the world and learn about other cultures. Leticia will be studying at UF until December and is eager to sharpen her English language skills, so please stop by for a chat with her.

Publications

Thomas MC. (2007). Primitive Weevils of Florida. *Featured Creatures*. EENY-400. http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/trees/beetles/primitive_weevils.htm

Ulmer BJ, **Duncan RE**, Prena J, **Peña JE.** (2007). A weevil, *Eurhinus magnificus* Gyllenhal. *Featured Creatures*. EENY-417. http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/orn/beetles/Eurhinus_magnificus.htm

Toth PL. (2007). Elongate twig ant, *Pseudomyrmex gracilis* (Fabricius). *Featured Creatures*. EENY-418. http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/misc/ants/elongate_twig_ant.htm

Stelinski LL, McKenzie D, Gut LJ, Isaacs R, Brunner J. 2007. Comparison of female attractiveness and male response among populations of *Choristoneura rosaceana* (Harris) in western and eastern U.S. apple orchards. *Environmental Entomology* 36:1032-1039.

Dunford JC, Kovarik PW, Somma LA, Serrano D. 2007. First state records for *Merope tuber* (Mecoptera: Meropeidae) in Florida and biogeographical implications. *Florida Entomologist* 90: 581-584.

Somma LA, **Dunford JC.** 2007. Etymology of the earwigfly, *Merope tuber* Newman (Mecoptera: Meropeidae): Simply dull or just inscrutable? *Insecta Mundi* 13: 1-5.

Skelley PE, **Dunford JC**, Somma LA, Serrano D. 2007. *Merope tuber* Newman, (Meropeidae-earwigfly), male genitalia. *American Entomologist* 53: 93, 124.

Weihman SW, **Liburd OE**. 2007. Seasonal distribution and evaluation of two trap types for monitoring grape root borer *Vitacea polistiformis* (Lepidoptera: Sesiidae) in Florida vineyards. *Florida Entomologist* 90: 480-487.

PD Shirk, Bossin H, Furlong RB, **Gillett JL**. 2007. Regulation of *Junonia coenia* *densovirus* P9 promoter expression. *Insect Molecular Biology* 16: 623-633.

Merritt JL, **Leppla NC**, **Gillett JL**. 2007. Tomato & Pepper Insects. University of Florida/IFAS. Card Set. SP 436.

Hall DW, **Buss LJ**. (2007). Leaf-rolling weevil, *Homoeolabus analis* (Illiger); and thief weevil, *Pterocolus ovatus* Fabricius. *Featured Creatures*. EENY-420. http://creatures.ifas.ufl.edu/misc/beetles/H_analis_P_ovatus.htm

Bredow E, Pedrosa-Macedo JH, **Medal JC**, **Cuda JP**. 2007. Open field host specificity tests in Brazil for risk assessment of *Metriona elatior* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae), a potential biological control agent of *Solanum viarum* (Solanaceae) in Florida. *Florida Entomologist* 90: 559-564.

Meetings and Presentations

Dr. **Julio Medal** attended the 9th International Conference on the Ecology and Management of Alien Plant Invasions in Perth, Australia, 17-21 September. Medal presented the paper "Biological control of

Solanum viarum (Solanaceae) in the USA: Current status and perspectives." Medal also gave the poster presentation "Open field host-specificity tests in the area of origin as a risk assessment tool of potential weed biocontrol agents: case study." The presentations were co-authored by Drs. **Philip Stansly**, **William Overholt**, Amy Roda (USDA-APHIS), Kenneth Hibbard (FDACS-DPI), Stephen Hight (USDA-ARS), and **James Cuda**. During his stay in Australia, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food invited Medal to present a talk on his research on invasive plants in Florida.

In September, Dr. **Lukasz Stelinski**, Citrus REC, presented the paper "On the physiological and behavioral mechanisms of pheromone-based mating disruption: Effective control of Lepidoptera in crops ranging from pome fruit to citrus," at the 5th International Conference on Arthropods: Chemical, Physiological and Environmental Aspects in Bialka Tatrzańska, Poland.

Fall Entomology Seminars

Graduate students **Murugesan Rangasamy** (Chair), **Amit Sethi**, **Craig Roubos**, **Seth Bybee**, **Andrew Derksen**, **Corraine Scott** and **Jennifer Zaspel** serve on this semester's Seminar Committee. Seminars are held on Thursday afternoons in room 1031: refreshments at 3:45 pm; seminar at 4:00 pm. A listing of seminars is available online in the September 2007 issue.

McGuire Seminars

Listed are the remaining Fall seminars at the McGuire Center for Biodiversity and Lepidoptera. The presentations are in the McGuire Conference Room from 12:00-1:00 pm and include lunch.

10/16 - Project Ponceanus and notes on south Florida Lepidoptera activities in the 1970s. - Dr. **Charles V. Covell, Jr.**

10/30 - Conservation genetics and the Miami blue butterfly. - **Emily Saarinen**

11/13 - Biodiversity and taxonomy of the Castniidae (the butterfly moths). - Dr. **Jacqueline Y. Miller**

11/27 - Chemical communication in *Heliconius* roosting. - **Christian Salcedo**

12/04 - Title Pending. - Dr. **Andrew D. Warren**

Grants

Dr. **Mike Scharf**, along with Drs. **Drion Boucias, Aurelien Tartar, Joe Zhou, Faith Oi** and graduate student **Marsha Wheeler** received a 2007 IFAS innovation grant to work on functional genomics of the termite digestive system. The project, "Biomass Conversion Using Termite Ligno-Cellulases: A commercialization pilot study using recombinant enzyme technology," was selected to receive \$50,000 in support.

Center for Systematic Entomology

Ph.D. student **Jennifer M. Zaspel** is chair of the membership committee for the Center of

Systematic Entomology (CSE), and provides the following information:

For over 20 years, CSE has served as a non-profit corporation designed to further systematics in its broadest sense. CSE supports the Florida State Collection of Arthropods (FSCA), i.e., purchase of computer software, library materials,

museum study trips, and labor for bulk sample sorting, etc. CSE also provides grants for specialists to study at the FSCA. Because the Research Associate program supports insect systematics in many of the same ways, we believe that membership in CSE provides another way Research Associates can assist in this area.

Joining CSE does more than assist FSCA and CSE projects. Members receive the world-class insect systematics journal **Insecta Mundi**, along with the opportunity to publish in this journal without page charges; a newsletter of CSE activities and news; opportunities to participate in development of field facilities on a Caribbean island; and support activities related to Lacey Act considerations. For complete details, see CSE's Web site at

http://centerforsystematicentomology.org/default.asp?action=show_home .

Segments

The latest Web site to receive our **Best of the Bugs** award is **Australian Ants Online**. This site developed by the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, "...provides an overview of the fascinating and diverse Australian ant fauna. It includes information on all genera and many of the species known to occur on mainland Australia, Tasmania and nearby islands." Find this site and others via <http://pests.ifas.ufl.edu/bestbugs/>.

In Omachi, Japan, hunters catch digger wasps in nearby forests. The wasps are boiled, dried, then sprinkled over a cracker dough. The crackers are called **jibachi senbei** and are sold in packages of 20. See <http://www.slashfood.com/2007/09/11/wasp-crackers-are-creating-a-buzz/>.

Attend the ButterflyFest at the Florida Museum of Natural History during October 13-14. See <http://www.flmnh.ufl.edu/butterflyfest/> for details.

Once again, the Department participated in the annual UF/IFAS Share Banquet and Tail Gator event held in the O'Connell Center during the September 15th football weekend. Dr. **James P. Cuda** represented the department, and he worked with **Jane Medley** to develop a table top display focusing on weed biological control research and extension programs. A photograph of our display is available in the online HTML version of this issue.

Want to obtain usage data on your Featured Creatures publications for the UNIFAS report? Ask Thomas Fasulo for the file **How_to_Urchin.rtf**. IFAS IT recently licensed Urchin 5, a Web stats package owned by Google, to monitor Web statistics. This software is easier to use than LiveStats, the software previously used by IFAS, and is not restricted to Internet Explorer as LiveStats was.

Dr. **Marc Branham** was interviewed for an article on fireflies which will appear in an upcoming issue of "Texas Parks and Wildlife Magazine."

Bug Quote

"Academics have to be boredom-invulnerable. Otherwise we'd walk out of faculty meetings, and if you do that, you don't get tenure. You have to go get real jobs." - Dr. **Louisa Bourebonette**, a character in **The First Eagle**, a book by **Tony Hillerman**

Newsletter Minutiae

Thomas Fasulo is the newsletter editor. You can submit news anytime to him at **fasulo@ufl.edu**. Issues are published the middle of each month. Submit items for an issue by the 7th of that month.

Printed copies are distributed only within Building 970. **UF-Bugnews-L** listserv subscribers receive notices when HTML and PDF copies are posted on the newsletter Web site at <http://entnews.ifas.ufl.edu/>, which has instructions for subscribing and unsubscribing. **Pam Howell** and **Nancy Sanders** review the newsletter for errors and prepare the print version for distribution. Thomas Fasulo codes the HTML version.

In the last 12 months, the newsletter Web site recorded 61,722 visitor sessions, 81,202 HTML page views and 8,280 PDF downloads.