

## **U. Florida Prof Sheds Light on Plant Medicine**

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By *Alex Rojas*

“Plant medicine encompasses the study of plant health problems of all types including prevention, diagnosis, management and local and international production for the next generation,” Bob McGovern ’83 said during a lecture on the “University of Florida Plant Medicine Program: Changing the Paradigm for the Plant Health,” in the Plant Science Building, last week.

The lecture was part of a weekly seminar funded by the Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology, and was attended by members of the plant community.

Plant medicine is a growing field that started in the University of Florida and has expanded domestically and internationally to Japan, South Korea, Thailand and Egypt, McGovern said. To meet the critical needs of the food industry, he added, plant doctors serve as trained consultants to agricultural firms, liaisons between researchers and producers and educators to the general public.

“Florida is the gateway for intrusive species,” McGovern mentioned, citing the need to train the next-generation of scientists that will tackle plant health problems.

Asked what the employment success rate for plant doctors are, McGovern said that nine out of every 10 graduates from the University of Florida’s plant medicine program find jobs in consulting, pest and landscape management, sales, production, diagnostics and government services.

While Cornell does not have a plant medicine program, a professor from the molecular biology department said, the agriculture college houses two departments of plant pathology. The Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-microbe biology tackles plant health from a molecular perspective, and it emphasizes field biology while the Department of Plant Pathology stresses the study of plants as a whole.