

## Finding a cure: CALS' first Doctor of Plant Medicine fights against invasive species

BY AMANDA ALLEX

The first graduate of the University of Florida's Plant Medicine Program now aids Florida in the fight against invasive species.

Adam Silagyi became the first of the program's 34 graduates in August 2003 when he received the Doctor of Plant Medicine degree.

Now, he is one of just four pest survey specialists working in the state of Florida through the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service within the Plant Protection and Quarantine agency.

As part of his job, Silagyi spends a significant amount of time educating the public about invasive species and pest management practices. Silagyi said he is able to use the knowledge he gained in the Plant Medicine Program to do so.

"With invasive species in my job, we deal with plant pathogens, insects, nematodes and plants; everything that I studied," Silagyi said. "For my type of job now,

in invasive species and regulatory agriculture, the Plant Medicine Program at the University of Florida was the perfect fit."

Plant Medicine Program Director Robert McGovern said he attributes much of Silagyi's success in the program to his

pioneering spirit and productive work ethic. It is these same qualities that Silagyi said drive him to further his career within the PPQA.

"I see myself moving up in this agency, possibly in international services, where APHIS employees work overseas, usually at an embassy or near an embassy, and collaborate with other countries to create safe trade," Silagyi said.

Traveling abroad won't be anything new for Silagyi, who has spent time in Paraguay, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Costa Rica. Silagyi said his overseas work has helped him successfully work with the agency's many partners.

"Being a people person is a very important aspect of this job, because you can't do this job alone. This job requires you to work with several other agencies and organizations," he said.



Adam Silagyi, the first graduate of the Doctor of Plant Medicine Program at UF, inspects an avocado grove in South Florida for a new mite species that has been affecting groves in the area.

## Graduate student wins GREEN from greenhouse industry

BY TOCCARA SHAW

One food and resource economics graduate student gained both knowledge from her undergraduate internship experience and a \$3,000 scholarship award.

Alma Lovelace Hanna was the recipient of the 2006 GPN (Greenhouse Product News magazine) and Nexus Intern Scholarship.

"I learned about the scholarship from my professor, Dr. Jim Barrett. He is the one who really encouraged me to apply," Hanna said.

Barrett, a professor in the environmental horticulture department, said he first met Hanna when she was a sophomore student in his nursery productions class, a class that normally consists of only juniors and seniors.

"It is a course that is a little bit more advanced," Barrett said. "However, with Alina's ability to learn real fast and her interest in the subject, she was clearly the outstanding student in the class from that standpoint."

GPN, an industry trade publication, and Nexus Corp., a company that builds state-of-the-art greenhouses, offer the scholarship to encourage students who have completed a

greenhouse internship to write about their experiences. Only one scholarship is presented annually.

"I did an internship with Deroose Plants in Apopka, Fla., focusing mainly on sales and marketing but also learning all about the business aspect of a greenhouse company," Hanna said. "So, I applied for it and turned in my essay."

Competing for this scholarship is not an easy task. One of the requirements is that students must be working toward an undergraduate degree in floriculture or a related field.

After their greenhouse internship, students are asked to submit a 1,000-word essay. Hanna's essay was sent to several industry members, as well as to individuals within the GPN and Nexus companies - all of whom voted her essay as the unanimous winner.

"When I was told I was one of the five finalists for the scholarship, that made me really excited because I had learned so much, and I wanted other people to know about the great opportunities and need for marketing

within the industry," she said. "The fact that it [the vote] was unanimous really made me feel great."



Jeff Warshauer, Nexus Corp. (left), and GPN Editorial Director Tim Hodson (right) recognize Alma Lovelace Hanna as Intern of the Year at the Ohio Floriculture Association Short Course in Columbus, Ohio, in July.