

Technical sessions, Monday morning, 12 October 2015[©]

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OPENING PRESENTATION

The 40th Annual Meeting of the International Plant Propagators' Society-Southern Region of North America convened at 7:30 am at the Sheraton Tampa Riverwalk Hotel, Tampa, Florida with President Maarten van der Giessen presiding.

PRESIDENT MAARTEN VAN DER GIESSEN

President van der Giessen welcomed everyone to Tampa, Florida for the 40th Annual Meeting of the International Plant Propagators' Society-Southern Region of North America. He thanked Local Site Committee Chair, Shawn Steed and his committee and volunteers for the long hours in arranging the excellent tours, hotel, other planning activities and all their attention to detail. He welcomed IPPS International Board members, students, first time attendees, and new members, asking them to stand and be recognized. van der Giessen thanked the Executive Committee, and Kevin Gantt's Sponsorship Committee, which raised \$30,000 in cash sponsorships and \$2500 in-kind sponsorship; this was outstanding for the challenging economic times. van der Giessen encouraged the membership to visit and show their support of our sponsors during the meeting. He encouraged all members to make new members and first-time attendees feel welcome – share with them and seek from them. He pushed for good questions and enthusiastic participation at the Tuesday night question box.

van der Giessen announced that this is the 3rd year our region has participated with European Region (former Region of Great Britain & Ireland) in the *Young Propagator Exchange* program between the two regions. He recognized Ben Gregory from Great Britain, who was on the International IPPS tour of the Southern Region USA, led by International President, Dr. Patricia Knight. Adam Blalock of the Southern Region of North America was our designee to European Region. Both of these young professionals had an incredible exchange experience in our respective regions. This is the fourth year we are doing the *Vivian Munday Young Horticultural Professional Scholarship Work Program (former Vivian Munday Scholarship)*. We currently have a five young professionals (Amny Rose, Judson Lecompte, Jeremiah DeVore, Connor Ryan and Drew Payton) who are making a strong contribution to this year's program. van der Giessen thanked Program Chair and 1st Vice-President, Laura Miller, for the excellent program and slate of speakers she assembled.

PROGRAM CHAIR LAURA MILLER

Program Chair Laura Miller welcomed all members, guests, and students. She thanked the membership for the opportunity to serve them, and then reviewed the scheduled program. The Question Box, scheduled for Tuesday evening, was to be co-chaired by Kevin Gantt and Tom Yeager. She then introduced the first moderator, Benjamin Berry.

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