

**INTERNATIONAL PLANT PRODUCTION SOCIETY
SOUTHERN REGION of NORTH AMERICA (SRNA)**

49th Annual Business Meeting

October 23, 2025

**DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld, Orlando, FL
Orlando, Florida**

President Michael Roe called the meeting to order at 9:15 am He recalled Brie Arthur asking him to serve as SRNA President – and seeing his life flash before his eyes. But it has been an epic experience! We all have each other's backs – and SRNA works as a team in getting stuff accomplished. At the core of the SRNA is the trio of Secretary-Treasurer Donna Foster, Digital Communications Director Brie Arthur, and Editor Fred Davies. This has been a highly successful meeting with 252 registered attendees, 262 paying members, 36 new members, excellent nursery tours, and the educational program - chaired by Anthony Witcher. This is the 50th year of the SRNA as an organization – and our 49th meeting, due to Covid cancelling the 2020 meeting.

Necrology Report. Richard May acknowledged the passing of Green Industry professionals: Silvia Parsons, mother of Payton Parsons of Parsons Nursery Georgetown, SC; and Dr. Elwin Orton, Jr., Eastern Region IPPS member – retired Rutgers University professor and plant breeder who did landmark work in dogwood (Cornus) breeding and disease resistance. May asked the membership to bow their heads in a moment of silence. President Roe thanked May for his report.

Minutes of 2022 Annual Business Meetings. Editor Fred Davies acknowledged the awesome venue, educational program and tours in Orlando! He then presented the minutes of the 48th Annual Business meeting of 30 October 2024 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Davies remarked that the minutes are available on the SRNA website - so members can become better prepared for the annual business meeting. The SRNA is the most progressive region in the IPPS with all its educational, early career professional exchanges and professional opportunities. A motion was made by Tom Saunders and seconded by Jim Berry to accept the minutes, which were unanimously approved. President Roe thanked Davies for his report.

Treasurer's Report. Secretary-Treasurer Donna Foster remarked on the great 50th anniversary conference. We have 262 full-time, paying members this year – compared to 259 last year. The current membership is the highest in 11-years. With increasing cost of operations, the annual dues will be increased in 2026 from \$105 to \$150. This was the first dues increase in six years; the increased rate will be locked in for five years. The International receives \$41 for annual fees with \$109 allocated to the SRNA.

There were 252 registered at the Orlando conference – which was excellent. This compares to 203 at 2024-Tulsa, 277 at 2023-Durham, and 271 at 2022-Athens. Much was accomplished this year by the SRNA: 1) full-audit was conducted for the 1st time; 2) successful brand refresh to IPPS: International Plant Production Society – led by the SRNA - which should help with membership recruitment, marketing, and sponsorships; 3) implementation of the 2024 Strategic Plan, which Cheryl Boyer will be reviewing; 4) hiring of Brie Arthur as the Digital Communications Director – which will help tremendously with membership recruitment, social media & communications; 4) SRNA hosted North American IPPS social event at Cultivate; 5) four SRNA members serve on Intl Board: Intl. Chair Tom Saunders, Intl. Treasurer Donna Fare, Intl. Delegate Brie Arthur,

Intl. Alternate Delegate Dennis Neimeyer; 6) four students received Vivian Munday Work Scholarships; 7) five industry professionals who were awarded Margie Jenkins Scholarships as first-time industry attendees in Orlando; 8) Coach Dooley Scholarship; 9) six Charles Student Research participants; 10) Max McKeown was the 2024 Early Career International Exchange recipient. The 2025 Early Career North American Exchange Professional was Preston Sherwood – who attended the Western Region meetings; 11) Josh Taylor of Australia was awarded a Margie Jenkins scholarship – and he along with Max McKeown were part of Brie Arthur's "IPPS Super Exchange" – visiting nurseries in the SRNA; and 12) Svea Siefken from Baumschule zur Mühlen in Germany was the European Professional Exchange awardee, hosted by Sandy Wilson and Teagen Young of the University of Florida.

Foster thanked the “4-pack” students/ Vivian Munday Young Horticultural Professional Scholarship Work program: Ashley Jackson -University of Florida, Taylor Sherer -University of Florida, Devin Stage-Stephen F. Austin State University, and Yan Zhang, University of Georgia – they were excellent! They had an awesome experience and were incredibly helpful for Sec-Tres, Foster - in running this year's meeting. In exchange for their work, students were given free registration, and a double occupancy hotel room to share. She recognized the 2025 Vince Dooley scholarship recipient: Martha Vilchez Herrera, University of Florida.

The SRNA-IPPS membership remains steady. For 2025 there were 262 paying members – and 73 comped student members. This compares to 259 paying members in 2024; and 245 with 67 comped student/military veterans - in 2023. So, we are holding our own compared to previous years. For 2022, there were 242 paid members and 19 comped students/ military veterans for a total of 261 members. For 2021, there are 244 paid members and 26 comped student members for a total of 270 members. Prior to Covid, in 2019, there were 245 paying members and 18 student members; compared to 253 members in 2017 and 231 members in 2016. The Student Membership program was started in 2018 and expanded to include recent military veterans. Foster prefers the quality control of the SRNA Student membership program - where the applicant has to write about themselves - and have a mentor/professor account for them. [The key is to get students to our annual conference so they can see the potential value of IPPS membership!]

Foster reported on the SRNA Financial Report from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. She then presented the proposed budget for 2025-26, which is attached. Strong sponsorship and the SRNA-HRI Education Endowment will enable our region to keep annual registration costs as low as possible for members. The 2024-25 total assets on 1 June 2025 were \$168,060. Annual budget assets were lower than usual in part due to expenses of conducting a full audit, and supplementing travel of four SRNA Intl Board members to New Zealand. Next year's assets will be more in line with previous years. She asked members to thank the sponsors who are critical in keeping the SRNA financially solvent. This year the silent and live auctions netted \$15,519 which goes towards the SRNA-HRI Educational Endowment Fund. She thanked chair, Richard May - for his help in raising \$69,000 in sponsorship money – a new record!

President Roe thanked Foster for her report and acknowledged the tremendous service she does for the organization.

Audit Report. President Michael Roe reported that this year a full-audit was conducted for the first time - as best practices for a non-profit – and to protect Sec-Tres Donna Foster. Foster does an excellent job with accounts – sending out monthly statements to the Board (EC). The professional, full-audit came back clean with a recommendation for more checks and balances – that Editor Fred Davies review the monthly credit card expenses & monthly statements. For the past 16-years, Foster has faithfully and efficiently conducted the financial affairs. The EC is extremely pleased with Sec-Tres Foster's work– and the SRNA finances are in good shape.

International Director's Report. International Delegate Brie Arthur recognized Tom Saunders for serving as International Chair, Donna Fare as International Treasurer, and Dennis Niemeyer as Alternate Intl.

Delegate. She previously gave a full report during the education program. We need to increase International membership for a critical mass to support the IPPS. She would like the SRNA to set a goal of increasing membership from 262 to 300 in 2026. The Intl. board has been very frugal and the IPPS remains in good financial health. The 2026 SRNA dues increase to \$150/year aligns with other IPPS regions. She discussed the recent brand refresh: IPPS – International Plant Production Society – which will help with recruiting and sustainability of the IPPS; and the new International Webpage which she and Intl. Executive Sec-Tres Director, Katy McDavid, launched this year.

She encouraged members to attend the 2026 International tour hosted by the Eastern Region. She encouraged members to reach out to other green industry professionals to join IPPS. She urged members to attend and financially support the North American IPPS social gathering at Cultivate. She thanked the SRNA for the opportunity to represent them as Intl. Delegate. President Roe thanked Arthur for her report and long-term service to the SRNA.

Long-Range Site Committee Report. Chair Cheryl Boyer gave the report. She recognized Local Site Chair, Todd Gentry and his committee for the excellent nursery tours and venue in Orlando. She encouraged anyone interested in hosting the SRNA in their area and serving on the local site committee - to please volunteer. There is a *SRNA Operations Manual* (on the webpage) that makes the process easier to follow. Boyer also designed a *Bus Captain's Handbook* for Tulsa to share with future local site committees.

The next annual meetings are as follows:

2026 Houston, Texas	Paul Winski is the local site chair. October 18-22, 2026, at Doubletree by Hilton Intercontinental Airport.
2027 Charlottesville, Virginia	Tom Saunders is the local site chair. October 24-28, 2026, at the Omni Charlottesville.
2028 Huntsville, Alabama	Anthony Witcher and Max McKean. Local Site Chairs/Committee. Date and hotel TBD.
2029 Tallahassee, Florida	Richard May is the local site chair. Date and hotel TBD. ct

President Roe thanked Boyer for her report.

Membership Committee & Technical Communications Report. Digital Communications Director, Brie Arthur gave the report. As the new Digital Communications Director, Arthur has been putting major effort into social media, updates, *SRNA Newsletter*, transforming the webpage, recording & marketing of the 2025 Orlando conference, etc. Arthur was actively involved with Katie McDavid in development of the recently launched new international website. She wants to develop a Digital Communications Platform “template” that could be applied to all International regions – to bolster meeting attendance, membership, sponsorship, relevancy. Arthur requested that the membership email her on how communications can be made more effective at briennegluvna@gmail.com. The SRNA has the opportunity to lead by example – and improve communications among ALL the regions.

Arthur has been coordinating a happy hour event – for North American IPPS members with the goal of attracting new members at the Cultivate conference. The event – was co-hosted by Arthur and Eastern Region President, Liz Dunham (Knight Hollow Nursery, Middleton, WI of the ERNA). They will co-host again in 2026 thanks to the financial support of the 3 NA IPPS regions and BSAF.

Arthur reported for 2025 there were 262 active/paying members with 36 new members. The 36 new SRNA members recognized earlier in the conference were:

Laura	Payne		Stillwater,	OK
Scott	Dunham	BASF	Bryan,	TX
Megan	Stine	Saunders Brothers	Piney River,	VA
Joshua	Geiger	Plant Development Services	Silverhill,	AL
Justin	Leavitt	Moleaer	Meadowview	VA
Christopher	Allen	The Plant Food Company	Ponte Vedra	FL
Brian	Brown	Alabama Cooperative Extension System	Guntersville,	AL
Jamie	Powell	YC Nursery	Fort Worth,	TX
Kadin	Bieberich	Sunshine Nursery/ Bieberich Tree Service	Clinton	OK
Sam	McCoy	Dig Plant Company	Mount Pleasant	SC
Martin	Hamilton	South Carolina Botanical Garden - Clemson University	Clemson	SC
Paul "Ben"	Cutrer	Windmill Nursery of Louisiana	Folsom,	LA
Joe	Harden	Mortellaro's Nursery, LTD	Schertz	TX
Paul	Meehan	Natchez Tree Company	Lamar	MS
Shawn	Miner	Renewed Earth	Kalamazoo	MI
Frank	Poole		Four Oaks	NC
Cynthia	Mayenschein		Four Oaks	NC
Vincent	Debrock	Blue Jay Tree Farm	Buda	TX
Adam	Salcedo	Blue Jay Tree Farm	Red Rock	TX
Michael	Ingram	Gnarly Nursery	Jacksonville	FL
Joe	Hayden	Earthbalance	Arcadia	FL
Caleb	Saunders		Smiths FL	
Ben	Hughes	Oglesby Plants International	Altha,	FL
Dr. Caitlin	Sollazzo	University of Florida	Palmetto	FL
Jack	Strickland	Gainous Shade Tree, Inc.	Cairo,	GA
Erin	Ganey	Dean's Nursery, Inc.	Lucedale,	MS
Brenda	Garcia	Magnolia Gardens Nursery	Waller,	TX
Jerrin	Victor	Magnolia Gardens Nursery	Waller,	TX
Kristopher	Criscione	Virginia Tech	Virginia Beach	VA
Lee	Wonders	Anderson Injectors	Muskogee,	OK
Sharon	Coke	LSD Flower Farm	Summerville,	SC
Chase	Norris	Simplot	Daphne,	AL
Fritz	Myers	OHP, Inc.	Ocala,	FL
Leynar	Leyton	University of Florida	Quincy	FL
Matthew	Roth	The Magnolia Company	Barberville	FL
Martin	Hackney	Hackney Nursery	Greensboro,	FL

Unlike some other world regions, the SRNA is maintaining its membership numbers – but there is plenty of room to grow. It is important that each of us bring a new person to SRNA meeting every year. President Roe thanked Arthur for her report, efforts – and remarked on how incredibly organized she is – and the energy she brings.

Student Research Awards. Chair, Mack Thetford reported on the *IPPS-SRNA Charles Student Research Awards* program. The *IPPS-SRNA Charles Student Research Awards* is in recognition of Charles Parkerson and Dr. Charles Gilliam for their long-term support and mentoring of students. He thanked the EC board for their support of student programs, which enhance the quality of the SRNA educational program. This year there were four students participating in the oral presentations and two poster presentations on their research. The six students submitted high-quality papers in the competition. Our submission process is all online, with consistent deadlines, instructions, and examples for students to follow.

On Tuesday night, the top four student oral presenters were recognized at the annual banquet. They were: **1st place – Sisi Chen**- “Advancing Tropical Hibiscus Breeding Through Pest and Disease Resistance Screening”, University of Florida; **2nd place – Martha Vilchez** - “Evaluating Wood Materials Made from Hammermilled Heat-Treated Boards as Peat Moss Alternatives in Greenhouse Production of Tomato and Marigold”, Louisiana State University & University of Florida; **3rd place – Yan Zhang** – “Can Organic Mulches Effectively Manage *Thrips parvispinus* (Thysanoptera: Thripidae) in Ornamental Plants?”, University of Georgia; **4th place - Masroor Ul Hasan Syed** - MagCount: A Digital Framework for Automated Counting of Southern Magnolias for Inventory Management in Nurseries”, University of Texas at Tyler.

Thetford remarked that it is important to reach out to new faculty at institutions normally not participating at the IPPS – about opportunities for their students to participate. Kristopher Criscione at Virginia Tech is going to assist Thetford in reaching out to institutions to get them to participate. The dates for Charles Student Research participants to submit their titles are August 15; and September 1 for submitting papers for review. He encouraged members to help with evaluating papers and judging presentations. President Roe thanked Thetford for his report.

Nominating Committee Report. Judson LeCompte gave the report for Chair, Bobby Green and Cheryl Boyer. He encouraged anyone interested in participating to please contact him or Donna Foster to have their name submitted for consideration.

LeCompte then reported that the slate of officers for 2025-2026 was:

EXECUTIVE

Dr. Anthony Witcher	President
Richard May	1 st Vice-President
Dr. Kevin Parris	2 nd Vice-President
Dr. Ping Yu	Director (1 yr.)
Jim Crocket	Director (1 yr.)
Jane Stanley	Director (2 yrs.)
Keith Mearns	Director (2 yrs.)
Michael Roe	Past President
Brie Arthur	International Delegate
Dennis Niemeyer	International Alternate Delegate
Donna Foster	Secretary-Treasurer
Dr. Fred Davies	Editor
Brie Arthur	Digital Communications Director

Appointed Positions

Donna Foster	Secretary-Treasurer
Dr. Fred Davies	Editor
Brie Arthur	Digital Communications Director

MEMBERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

Brie Arthur	Chair, Digital Communications Director
Richard May	1 st Vice-President
Dr. Kevin Parris	2 nd Vice-President
Dr. Ping Yu	Director (1 yr.)
Jim Crocket	Director (1 yr.)
Todd Gentry	Local Site Chair (1 yr.)
Dennis Niemeyer	International Alternate Delegate

Donna Foster

Secretary-Treasurer

SPONSORSHIP COMMITTEE

Kevin Parris	Chair (2 nd VP)	(1 yr.)
Paul Winski	Local Site Chair	(1 yr.)
Jim Crocket	1-year Director	(1 yr.)
Dr. Ping Yu	1-year Director	(1 yr.)

LONG-RANGE SITE COMMITTEE

Todd Gentry, Chair	(FL)	(1 yr.)
Paul Winski, Vice-Chair	(TX)	(2 yrs.)
Tom Saunders	(VA)	(3 yrs.)
2028 Local Site Chair		(4 yrs.)
Michael Roe	Past-President	

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Michael Roe, Chair (P Pres)	(1 yr.)
Anthony Witcher, (Pres)	(2 yrs.)
Brie Arthur, (Intl. Delegate)	(1 yr.)

FINANCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

George Rude, Chair	(1 yr.)
Matthew Sawyer	(2 yrs.)
Bobby Green	(3 yrs.)

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

Dr. Judson LeCompte, Chair (PPP Pres)	(1 yr.)
Dr. Cheryl Boyer (PP Pres)	(2 yrs.)
Michael Roe (P Pres)	(3 yrs.)

SECRETARY/TREASURER, EDITOR, DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS**DIRECTOR REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Michael Roe, Chair	(P. Pres)
Jane Stanley	(2-yr Director)
Keith Mearns	(2-yr Director)

FELLOWS SCREENING COMMITTEE

Dr. Kevin Parris, Chair (2 nd VP)	(1 yr.)
Dr. James Robbins, Kevin Gantt, 2022 winners	(1 yr.)
John Hoffman, 2023 winner	(2 yrs.)
Bobby Green, 2024 winner	(3 yrs.)

MEADOWS AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE

Dr. Judson LeCompte (PPP Pres)	(1 yr.)
Dr. Cheryl Boyer (PP Pres)	(2 yrs.)
Michael Roe (Past President)	(3-yrs.)
Dennis Niemeyer (2023 winner)	(1 yr.)
Kevin Gantt (2024 winner)	(2 yrs.)

CHARLES STUDENT RESEARCH COMPETITION

Dr. Mack Thetford Chair
 Dr. Sandy Wilson Co-Chair

EDUCATION ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Dr. Mack Thetford (Charles Student Res. Chair)
 Dr. Fred Davies (Editor)
 Richard May (1st Vice-President)
 Dennis Niemeyer (Intl. Alternate Delegate)
 Donna Foster (Sec-Tres)
 Kevin Gantt (Member)

DR. VIVIAN MUNDAY WORK SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION COMMITTEE

Dr. Mack Thetford Chair
 Dr. Jim Robbins & 2022 Fellows (1 yr.)
 Kevin Gantt
 John Hoffman 2023 Fellow (2 yrs.)
 Bobby Green 2024 Fellow (3 yrs.)
 Donna Foster Secretary-Treasurer

EARLY-CAREER, PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM SELECTION COMMITTEE

Brie Arthur International Delegate
 Dennis Niemeyer International Alt. Delegate
 Donna Foster Secretary-Treasurer

MARGIE JENKINS INDUSTRY SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Brie Arthur International Delegate
 Dennis Niemeyer International Alt. Delegate
 Donna Foster Secretary-Treasurer

COACH VINCE DOOLEY SCHOLARSHIP SELECTION COMMITTEE

Brie Arthur International Delegate
 Dennis Niemeyer International Alt. Delegate
 Donna Foster Secretary-Treasurer

LeCompte stated that the International Delegate and Alternate International Delegate are voted on by the membership. The elected positions of the EC Board are voted on by the membership – and nominations are always open to the floor. The membership does not vote for the Sec-Tres, Editor, or Digital Communications Director – who are appointed by the EC. Committee positions are appointed via *Standard Operations Procedure (SOP)*. After the slate of nominees was presented and nominations were open to the floor - a motion was made by Tom Saunders and seconded by Jim Berry that the slate of candidates be accepted, which was unanimously approved. President Roe thanked LeCompte for his report.

The Resolution Committee Report. Richard May presented the report which is attached. President LeCompte thanked May for his report.

Endowment Report. Sec-Tres Foster reported that the SRNA-HRI Education Endowment is \$171,937: \$156,418 balance + \$15,519 raised at Orlando auction. She thanked everyone involved with setting up and contributing to the auction. The Endowment is being converted to an interest-bearing/ restricted account to partially support The SRNA Scholarship Program which includes the Charles Student Research Competition,

Vivian Munday Work Scholarship, Coach Vince Dooley Scholarship, Early Career International Exchange, and Margie Jenkins Industry Scholarship.

Old Business. President Roe asked for old business issues.

Past-President Cheryl Boyer reviewed the *attached 2025 Strategic Plan document (10/19/2025) and its implementation*. The EC chose to set long-term goals for the SRNA's future - based on our strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities (SWOT). There was an extensive membership questionnaire developed by Boyer, Jeremy Pickens and Michael Roe. Boyer sent the questionnaire out to 490 members; there were 103 surveys completed – for a 22% response - which is a decent response for a survey. Boyer later compiled the questionnaire responses - which was used at the Strategic Retreat in conjunction with the 2024 mid-year EC, June meeting in Orlando. Harvey Cotton helped facilitate the Strategic Retreat. There was a lot of good discussion and ideas presented. Boyer and the EC are currently involved in developing a path forward, with action steps and goals – some of which have since been accomplished. She asked the membership for their feedback about the path forward – to contact her and the Board. President Roe thanked Boyer for her report.

New Business. President Roe asked for any new business issues. There was none.

Passing of the Gavel. President Roe remarked that it was a humbling experience, honor and privilege to have served as President. He encouraged the membership to volunteer to serve on committees and then become members of the board. You will be deeply rewarded for all the hard work you put in.

He then passed the gavel to incoming new President, Anthony Witcher.

Closing Remarks of new President Anthony Witcher. New President Witcher presented a plaque to Roe in recognition of his outstanding leadership during the year, and for being such a good mentor and President.

Witcher remarked that it is an honor and privilege to take the helm as President. He thanked everyone – and observed that the SRNA is run as a strong team. He was excited about the SRNA strategic planning - to set 5-year strategic goals. He reflected that in 2009 he attended his first SRNA meeting as a graduate student — and he's been hooked ever since. He noted that Donna Fare pointed out that - four of the first seven SRNA Sidney Meadows Award of Merit recipients were in attendance: Charlie Parkerson, Fred Davies, Bill Barr and Jim Berry.

The SRNA will be reaching out to the membership for ideas and suggestions moving forward – to seek and share. It has been a great 50-years! The SRNA is very excited about 2026 in Houston. He thanked 2026 Local Site Chair, Paul Winsky – and the excellent team and tours he has put together. Winsky was to make a presentation in the next session. Witcher then adjourned the meeting at 10:15 am.

The *Sidney B. Meadows Award of Merit* was presented to Dr. Sandy Wilson, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida on 21 October 2025.

Laura Miller, Texas A&M University, Agri-Life Extension, Ft. Worth, Texas became a *Fellow of the SRNA* on 21 October 2025.

There was \$69,000 received in sponsorships – a new record!

The silent and live auctions netted \$15519 which goes towards the SRNA-HRI Educational Endowment Fund.

The SRNA-HRI Education Endowment balance is \$171,937 with contributions made at the auction, and through additional contributions to the base donation of \$20,000 in 2017

- Reaching the \$150K threshold allows SRNA to move into a restricted, interest-bearing account. Our goal is to reach \$200K to be able to subsidize the SRNA scholarship programs - living off an average interest of 6% per year from the principal @ \$12,000/year.
- The SRNA Scholarship Program includes: Charles Student Research Competition, Vivian Munday Work Scholarship, Coach Vince Dooley Scholarship, Early Career International Exchange, and Margie Jenkins Industry Scholarship. There is the opportunity for "Legacy Gifting" by members to further solidify the Endowment - in "Seeking and Sharing" - and promoting the next generation of green industry professionals

Winners of the **Charles Student Research Competition** were: **1st place – Sisi Chen**- “Advancing Tropical Hibiscus Breeding Through Pest and Disease Resistance Screening”, University of Florida; **2nd place – Martha Vilchez** - “Evaluating Wood Materials Made from Hammermilled Heat-Treated Boards as Peat Moss Alternatives in Greenhouse Production of Tomato and Marigold”, Louisiana State University & University of Florida; **3rd place – Yan Zhang** – “Can Organic Mulches Effectively Manage *Thrips parvispinus* (Thysanoptera: Thripidae) in Ornamental Plants?”, University of Georgia; **4th place - Masroor Ul Hasan Syed** - MagCount: A Digital Framework for Automated Counting of Southern Magnolias for Inventory Management in Nurseries”, University of Texas at Tyler.

Max McKeown of Huntsville Botanical Gardens was the 2024 Early Career International Exchange recipient.

The 2025 Early Career North American Exchange Professional was Preston Sherwood – who attended the Western Region meetings. The SRNA coordinates with the Eastern Region sending a new industry professional to Europe in alternate years.

Josh Taylor of Australia was awarded a Margie Jenkins scholarship – and he along with Max McKeown were part of Brie Arthur’s “IPPS Super Exchange” – visiting nurseries in the SRNA.

Svea Siefken from Baumschule zur Mühlen in Germany was the European Professional Exchange awardee, hosted by Sandy Wilson and Teagen Young of the University of Florida.

This year’s “4-pack” **Vivian Munday Young Horticultural Professional Scholarship Work program** were: Ashley Jackson, University of Florida; Taylor Sherer, University of Florida; Devin Stage, Stephen F Austin State University; and Yan Zhang, University of Georgia.

The five recipients of the 2025 **Margie Jenkins Industry Scholarship** were Carly Batts, Stefan Bajak, Spencer Graybeal, Kendall Lewin, and Josh Talyor.

Martha Vilchez Herrera, University of Florida was the 2025 recipient of the **Vince Dooley Scholarship**.

There were 252 registered at the Orlando conference registered attendees at this year’s annual meeting in Orlando, Florida.

For 2025, 262 paying members; 2024 there were 259 paying members; 2023 there were 245 paying members, 67 comped student/military veterans for a total of 312. In 2022, there are 242 paying members and 19 comped student/ military veterans for a total of 261 members. In 2021, there were 244 paying members and 26 comped student members for a total of 270 members. In 2019, there are 245 regular members + 18 student members. This compares to 257 (2018) paid members [plus 13 new Student members = 270 total members]. Regular paid membership was 253 (2017), 231 (2016), 232 (2015) and 225 (2014). Annual membership for the past 10 years: range: **225-262 members**: 10-year average = **243 members**.

➤ Minutes submitted by Fred Davies

IPPS-SOUTHERN REGION NORTH AMERICA RESOLUTION REPORT

Orlando, Florida
October 20 – 24, 2025

Be it resolved that the membership of the International Plant Propagators Society-Southern Region North America recognizes the many hours of work and planning required to organize and execute our meeting and expresses its appreciation and thanks to the following people:

Michael Roe, President, for his guidance and leadership.

Dr. Anthony Witcher, 1st Vice President, for organizing an informative educational program.

Richard May, 2nd Vice President (Sponsorship Chair), Tom Saunders (International Sponsorship Chair), and Todd Gentry (Local Site Chair) for securing Sponsors for the meeting.

Dr. Fred Davies, Editor, for his continued dedication to the Society and detailed work on the Organization's proceedings.

Donna Foster, Secretary and Treasurer, for her sustained commitment to the administration of IPPS-SR's organizational and financial health. She never gets enough credit for all that she does; she is the best in the industry!

Brie Arthur, Digital Communications Director, putting together all of our communications, social media, and making sure we take pictures!

SRNA EC/Board Members for their service & dedication

Past President, Dr. Cheryl Boyer, for her leadership with the SRNA Strategic Plan & its Implementation;
Directors: Dr. Kevin Parris, Jim Crockett, and Dr. Pink Yu;
International Delegate, Brie Authur, and Alternate, Dennis Niemeyer;

Todd Gentry (Local Site Chair), and his committee: Jeb Fields, Chris Marble, Sandy Wilson, Brooke Moffis, Mitchell Ankney, Madelyn Greathouse, and Ty Strobe for countless hours volunteering to put together a fantastic meeting, tours, logistics, meals, and hotel.

Dr. Mack Thetford for his continued service as the Awards Committee Chair of The Charles' Student Research Awards program. Additional thanks to members who reviewed student papers, posters, and oral presentations - and the talented students who shared their research.

Special thanks to all the moderators and speakers for their willingness to seek and to share a world-class educational program.

Plant Auction Committee, Jeb Fields, Chris Marble, Sandy Wilson, and Brooke Moffis for their work in collecting, describing, displaying and selling unique plants. Special thanks to all members who donated in the spirit of sharing.

The assistance of the Vivian Munday Young Horticultural Professional Scholarship Work Program participants: is greatly appreciated: Ashley Jackson (Univ. of Florida), Taylor Sherer (Univ. of Florida), Deven Stage (Stephen F Austin State Univ.), and Yan Zhang (Univ. of Georgia).

Special thanks to Jake Brown for his auctioneering; and to Dr. David Creech for assistance in promoting auction plants during the social.

Thanks to Christopher Brown and Matt Nagel for moderating the Question Box.

Thanks to all those involved in the following committees for their continued dedication and service:

Audit Committee

Dr. Vivian Munday Young Work/Scholarship Selection Committee

Education Endowment Committee

Exchange Program Selection Committee

Executive Committee

Fellows Screening Committee

Finance Advisory Committee

International Delegation

Long Range Site Committee

Margie Jenkins Scholarship Selection Committee

Meadows Award Selection Committee

Membership Communications Committee

Nomination Committee

Secretary/Treasurer, Editor, and Digital Communications Director Review Committee

Sponsorship Committee

Student/Young Professional Awards and The Charles' Student Research Competition

Thanks to Scott Langlois for his technical expertise in managing the audio and visual systems during the conference.

Tour Hosts:

Special thanks to Southern Hill Farms, Flowerwood Nursery, Southeast Soils, Cherry Lake, Knox Horticulture, Amerigo, Agri Starts, and the University of Florida IFAS Mid-Florida Research and Education Center for their hospitality and willingness to share.

A distinct recognition to our sponsors for their continued generous support. Thank you:

International: Bailey Nurseries, Ball Seed, Harrell's, and Spring Meadow Nursery.

North American: BASF and Evertis (ICL Growing Solutions)

Platinum: Federation of Employers and Workers of America (FEWA), Syngenta, and Southern Ag.

Gold: BWI Companies, Gowan USA, Haviland Plastic Products, Howard Fertilizer, Plant Development Services International (PDSI), Profile Products, Airpot USA, Atticus, Biosafe Systems, BioWorks, Cherry Lake, Cravo Equipment, ENVU, Flowerwood Nursery, Graco Fertilizer, Klasmann-Deilmann Americas, Nufarm, and Pindstrup.

Silver: Alabama Nursery and Landscape Association, Buds and Blooms Nursery, Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association, Griffith Propagation Nursery, Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association, and Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association.

Bronze: Dr. Fred Davies, University of Florida Department of Environmental Horticulture, Fairview Nursery, Nousbo USA, R.A. Dudley Nurseries, and Plantworks Nursery.

And finally, we thank the DoubleTree Orlando as our host hotel for 2025.

□ Respectfully submitted
Vice-President



by Richard May, 2nd

2025 Strategic Plan [Updated 10.19.2025]

To: IPPS-SRNA Executive Committee and International Representatives
Submitted by: Dr. Cheryl Boyer, Past-President

Needs Assessment

IPPS is an international association of Horticulture/Green Industry plant production professionals, including those involved in horticultural research and education. The IPPS is focused on propagation and production – as part of a global plant production knowledge network. Activities involve educational conferences, written proceedings, videos, tours, student and industry scholarships and exchange opportunities for young professionals. There are 7 IPPS regions, and the Southern Region of North American (IPPS-SRNA) is comprised of the states in the Southeast portion of the United States of America. Currently, international membership is declining, however, the IPPS-SRNA remains strong in membership, conference attendance, and sponsorship. The Executive Committee (EC) seeks to be good stewards of our resources in order to sustain the long-term growth of our organization.

On April 11, 2024, we launched a survey to assist with strategic planning for IPPS-SRNA. Details of the survey are available in the Executive Summary of the strategic planning survey submitted in 2024. The full dataset was also provided to the EC. Preliminary results were presented at the 2024 conference in Tulsa, OK and supplementary feedback from members was received by the EC on an ad-hoc basis.

Broadly, members indicated that our organization is highly effective in meeting our vision and purposes (slightly less effective in “coordinating a global plant production knowledge network”), and they support continued improvement along with continuing the quality services we’re already delivering.

The objective of this document is to chart a course for the next 5 years and beyond of IPPS-SRNA.

Mission, Vision, and Core Value

- Mission/Purpose: [Why the association exists]
 - Striving to improve the knowledge, skills and professionalism of our members through the activities and services we offer.
 - Promoting the integration of horticultural research, education, and plant production.
 - Coordinating a global plant production knowledge network.
- Vision: To seek and share plant production knowledge globally.
- Core Value: To Seek and To Share’

Strategic Objectives and Goals

1. Setting sustainable goals for membership dues and event costs

- Membership Dues are levied on an individual basis, not a business-level basis. Therefore, membership follows the individual regardless of where their career takes them. The membership dues were raised in 2019 to \$105 (USD) annually, of which a portion (\$40) goes to support the international organization, and \$65 stays within the region. Most members indicated that this number is reasonable, and the structure is simple, though some considered the cost high. However, it is prudent to consider a reasonable rate of increase. Eastern Region North America dues are \$150 (USD), Western Region North America dues are \$130 (USD; they also offer a tiered system). New Zealand dues are \$125 (NZD). Australia dues are \$210 (AUD). Europe is \$128 (Euro). American Society for Horticultural Science is \$135 (USD).
 - *Goal: Raise membership dues to \$150 in January 2026 and review every 5 years.* ☒ [approved at June 2025 EC meeting]
 - *Goal: Review and consider a tiered membership structure by the EC meeting in June 2026.*
 - *Goal: Consider developing a need-based scholarship program for membership dues.*
- Event Costs vary each year but have averaged around \$500 per person for early bird pricing in recent years. Sponsorship from allied industry partners has helped to significantly defray costs. In comparison, the Perennial Plant Association's annual conference registration in 2025 is \$824 for early bird pricing plus a pre-conference tour.
 - *Goal: Retain current process for reviewing pricing based on actual event location costs and if increases are required, endeavor to limit registration increases to less than 15%.*
 - *Goal: Sustain and potentially limit conference participation at 250 to 300 attendees in order to maintain the event at a reasonable size for costs, venues, tour buses, and ability for quality participant networking.*
 - *Goal: Consider more economic venues not relying on a large, central hotel with minimum financial quotas (rooms, food, venues) to be met, i.e. renting out an events hall using smaller surrounding hotels, as occurred at the Valdosta, GA meeting.*

2. Building a roadmap for long-term change in plant production practices or professionalism in our region

- Educational Priorities:
 - Production Practices and Innovation: technological advancements; disease and pest management; new plants
 - Business Management and Market Dynamics: labor management
 - Resource Efficiency and Quality Assurance: water management and irrigation efficiency; education and training programs
 - *Goal: Provide speakers on these topics annually, with an emphasis on both practitioner experience and research-based recommendations.*
 - *Goal: Create a document highlighting IPPS-SRNA member interests in research to achieve improvements in priority areas to be posted to the website and shared with advocate organizations like AmericanHort.*
 - *Goal: Collaborate with Extension educators to create fact sheets on topics relevant to IPPS-SRNA members (guidelines and best practices, for example). Co-brand the documents with the university, host on their websites and link on IPPS-SRNA website.*
 - *Goal: Create an Education Committee to assist the Vice-President with speaker and topic ideas as well as identify opportunities for educational videos.*
 - *Goal: Create a video series based on 2 to 5 presentations delivered at the annual conference that can be hosted on our YouTube channel and promoted to educational institutions for use in courses (and promotion of IPPS).*
- Conference Professionalism

- *Goal: Move event off weekends to focus on keeping work related activities inside a traditional work week, including travel. Avoid holidays so that families can be together.*
☒ [effective with the 2025 conference]
- *Goal: Consider reducing days out of the office for limited disruption.*
- *Goal: Develop a tool to facilitate room sharing (cost reduction) and evening meal sharing (networking).*
- *Goal: Consider moving the Question Box away from the evening (to allow for more dinner networking and not staying up late).*
- *Goal: Provide more open evenings for networking time, when possible.*
- *Goal: Make more opportunities available for those who want to volunteer by making it easier to volunteer with a digital sign up or method to express interest.*
- *Goal: Facilitate engagement on bus tours while traveling. Develop a plan for bus captains to encourage conversation and networking.*

Limitations

- Reducing days out of the office and moving the Question Box away from the evening are somewhat mutually exclusive.
- Potential Achilles heel of organizing and executing the annual meeting is finding a willing and able Local Site Chair with the considerable time commitment required. How can we better facilitate the Local Site Chair and Committee?

3. Setting sustainable goals for membership numbers

- IPPS-SRNA membership is currently at 239 paid members and 85 student members. In the past 10 years, our membership has ranged from 225 to 259 members (average = 243 members). Meanwhile Total IPPS membership has gone down from 2,333 in 2006 to 994 in 2025 for all regions. There is legitimate concern that this level of international membership is not sustainable for the organization. Member retention and growth are significant issues. In IPPS-SRNA we have positive growth and interest as gauged by our e-newsletter list contacts (551) and social media followers. Effective communication and marketing at the regional level are strengthening our efforts and outlook.
 - *Goal: hire and fairly compensate a Director of Digital Communications (DOD) to lead digital outreach via website development, monthly newsletters, create social media strategy through Facebook and other media platforms; strategize and lead in retention and recruitment of new members.* ☒ [new DOD hired at June 2025 EC meeting]
 - *Goal: IPPS brand refresh from “Plant Propagation” to “Plant Production”* ☒ [IPPS-SRNA initiated the brand refresh process at the 2019 business meeting, this was achieved in 2025 after the June EC meeting, with SRNA leading international efforts]
 - *Goal: Increase paid members by 5% annually.*
 - *Goal: Increase e-newsletter subscribers and social media followers by 10% annually.*
 - *Goal: Increase paid members in underrepresented states like Arkansas and Oklahoma with targeted communication and marketing.*
 - *Goal: Increase participation by state nursery and landscape association leaders with at least 2/3 of the states in our region represented by an attendee at the annual conference. Request reciprocal communication with their members about the benefits of IPPS.*
 - *Goal: Increase company support of employee attendance by encouraging them to support professional development financially and helping them step away practically from the day-to-day operations to attend.*
 - *Goal: Increase student memberships by 2.5% annually.*
 - *Goal: Partner with educators to bring more students and develop a plan to pair members with student attendees and first-time attendees. Focus on student poster presenters.*

- *Goal: Conference participation by members from other regions = 15%. Recruiting speakers from other regions.*
- *Goal: Collaborate with IPPS to purchase advertisements in industry periodicals reaching all regions. One in each region in 2026, increasing annually by one for each region until five or more are delivered in each region, annually. Highlight scholarship winners.*
- *Goal: Continue to collaborate with IPPS to improve website, e-newsletter communication, video, and social media presence. Encourage cross-posting of content across regions.*

4. Setting sustainable goals for or limits for sponsorship

- Sponsorship is a win-win experience for our organization and for sponsors to have access to leading industry managers/leaders/professionals. We receive funds to defray costs and sustain our financial reserves and higher level (not all) sponsors receive exhibit space, recognition and the opportunity to engage with attendees at the conference. However, IPPS-SRNA for many years was hesitant to pursue sponsorships and members have sought to limit the number of sponsors in order to maintain the integrity of seeking and sharing without selling. On average, the annual sponsorship dollar value income has been in the range of \$50,000.
 - *Goal: Increase annual sponsorships by 10% year over year.*
 - *Goal: Review the sponsorship tiers on an annual basis to determine if increases or additional services for sponsorship are warranted.*

5. Setting sustainable goals for the scholarship endowment

- As of June 23, 2005, the IPPS-SRNA Horticulture Research Institute (HRI) Education Endowment balance is \$156,724. Reaching the \$150,000 threshold allowed us to move into a restricted, interest-bearing account.
 - *Goal: Fully fund the Endowment to \$350,000 to be able to cover the scholarship programs with average interest of 6% per year from the principal.*
 - The IPPS-SRNA Scholarship Program includes: the Charles Student Research Competition, Vivian Munday Work Scholarship, Coach Vince Dooley Scholarship, Early Career International Exchange, and Margie Jenkins Industry Scholarship.
 - *Goal: Grow an investment “nest egg” **Sustainability Fund** to the appropriate level to cover staff contracts and other potential obligations in perpetuity. Engage the Financial Committee or create an Investment Committee.*
 - *Goal: Grow an investment “nest egg” **Sustainability Fund** to offer future programs like mid-career awards to support attending the International Tour, other educational events or certifications for member professional development, research grants, or major marketing projects.*

Limitations

- Potential disagreement on strategic direction, goals, or tactics
- Collaboration/coordination with the International Board to achieve shared objectives for a healthy 7-region organization.

Oversight and Accountability

- Past-President reviews and reports annually at the June EC meeting

Risk Management

To ensure the long-term sustainability and resilience of IPPS-SRNA, it is essential to identify potential risks and develop mitigation strategies. The following table outlines key risks and corresponding mitigation actions:

Risk	Description	Mitigation Strategy
Membership Decline	Decrease in new or renewing members due to cost, awareness, or relevance.	Implement targeted outreach, tiered dues, and enhanced digital engagement.
Sponsorship Volatility	Economic downturns or shifting priorities may reduce sponsor support.	Diversify sponsor base, review tiers annually, and build financial reserves.
Leadership Turnover	Loss of institutional knowledge or momentum due to volunteer transitions.	Develop onboarding resources, mentorship for new leaders, and succession planning.
Event Disruption	Natural disasters, pandemics, or travel restrictions affecting conferences.	Expand virtual programming and hybrid event capabilities.
Technology Gaps	Inability to keep pace with digital expectations of members.	Invest in website, video content, and social media strategy.
Recruiting Local Site Chair	Serving as the Local Site Chair entails a large time commitment and responsibility	Find ways to facilitate the job of Chair and Local Site Committee; rewards/recognition?
Reputation Risk	Misalignment with member values or public perception issues.	Maintain transparency, uphold core values, and engage in regular feedback loops.