



NORTH CENTRAL INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT CENTER WORKING GROUPS



SPOTLIGHT ON

Cultivating a pest management network

North Central
IPM
Center

Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group

At its heart, the Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group (GLVWG) is a network of educators who specialize in all aspects of vegetable production. They collaborate and share lessons from the field and lab to continually sharpen their skills to serve vegetable growers of all scales and experience.

The GLVWG, funded by a grant from the North Central Integrated Pest Management Center (NCIPMC), began in 2004 as a network of vegetable production specialists from

Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ontario, Canada, united to address key pest management issues in vegetable production in the region, which is valued at over \$1 billion annually.

The primary objectives of the GLVWG are focused on improved flow of information among all components of IPM, with broader understanding and engagement of both scientific and Extension communities across disciplines, crops, and



Ben Phillips

Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group member, Sean Westerveld, of OMAFRA, gives the group a primer on ginseng production, an Ontario specialty.



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Members of the Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group visited Truly Green, a commercial tomato greenhouse featuring state-of-the-art robotic systems.

states while improving efficiencies of information exchange and knowledge sharing.

Members include extension specialists and researchers from departments of entomology, nematology, horticulture, plant pathology and weed science primarily at land grant universities. Other members represent commodity groups, grower associations and industry representatives involved in vegetable production in the Great Lakes regions.

The GLVWG holds an annual meeting which allows members to network face-to-face, and present past research or demonstrations through oral presentations and posters. The annual meeting encourages multi-state collaboration and is an opportunity for members to guide the direction of the group through leadership rotation and reviewing priorities that are important to the region. Our leadership structure is organized such that a lead chair and co-chair rotate between member states annually.

The working group built a website at (www.ncipmc.org/glvwg/). Past projects from 2005–2012 can be found there. This includes presentation recordings and materials regarding season extension pest management, natural enemies of vegetable crops, heirloom tomato varieties, and sweet corn pests. A membership list can be found at www.ncipmc.org/partners/wgroup/veg.php.

Like many other scientific groups, the GLVWG is taking advantage of social media with Twitter (@GLVeg). Working group organizers credit their social media presence with increasing IPM management and decision-making amongst stakeholders and networking.

A major project of the GLVWG was the development of a

smart phone application entitled “Good Bugs +” as a digital companion to the Ohio State University’s **Natural Enemy Field Guide**. Once



it is downloaded from iTunes or the Google Play stores, it works without access to the internet.

The Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group maintains a listserv with about 160 members. Listserv participants can share problems and solutions in a timely manner, which is key in vegetable production. Members note that this can result in savings to producers by improving yield and quality.

These networking methods combine to help fill the gap when shrinking budgets result in less personnel trying to do more with less.

Previously this working group has completed projects including:

- Creating Corn Earworm Resistance Monitoring Network
- Vegetable IPM adoption surveys for multiple crops and states
- Developing two cucurbit and sweet corn IPM workshops for growers
- Creating and publishing 3,200 copies of the Sweet Corn Pest Identification and Management pocket guide
- Conducting a five-part seasonal extension webinar series plus three high tunnel workshops
- Creating a 25-minute Natural Enemies of Vegetable Crop Pests video
- Developing and printed 7,975 copies of natural enemies bulletin
- Conducting six natural enemies workshops.

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