Reflections
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2017 ASHS Annual Conference

Hawaii—the name alone brings to mind images of graceful palm trees, translucent blue-green ocean waters, and warm sunny breezes. Yes, you can actually experience all this—as well as discussions on the latest research, extension, and teaching—by attending the ASHS annual conference in Waikoloa, on the Big Island of Hawaii. Fun, sun, and science, what could be better?

This year’s ASHS Annual Conference will be held in Waikoloa, Hawaii, from September 19 to 22. We will be at the same location—the Hilton Waikoloa Village—that we were in 2011, which was very well-received. This ocean-front destination is a short drive north of the Kona International Airport, which is serviced by all of the major airlines, as well as local airlines. There are direct flights to Kona from all of the major west coast cities, as well as Phoenix and several Canadian cities. The Hilton Waikoloa is a full-service resort with plenty of activities for family and ASHS members (outside of the conference events, of course), and near the Kings’ Shops and Queens’ Marketplace for many other shopping and dining choices.

In its perennial effort to keep costs down for its members, ASHS struck a sweet deal with the Hilton hotel corporation to keep room rates low—$169/night. I know this may not seem “cheap” for some of us, but trust me, this is a good price. Add all of the amenities of a Hawaiian ocean-front resort to the low room rate, and you will definitely get a good deal for your money!

The 2011 conference in Waikoloa was popular and successful and we expect it to be that way again. We had the highest number of oral presentations submitted in the past 10 years at the Waikoloa meeting, and attendance was strong, especially among students.

What’s New?

You may not have realized it, but the ASHS conference has been changing over the past few years. We have heard, and listened to, the comments and concerns of our members. We have retired a couple of events, such as colloquia, and added several new ones. The invited lectures have become a hit. In particular, I heard many positive comments about the lecture by Doug Tallamy in Atlanta last summer, who challenged us to rethink our landscapes with wildlife in mind. The new Scholars Ignite has become quite popular, and is a must-see event—fast, fun and informative. The new ASHS Early Career competition provides folks further along in their career—postdocs, assistant professors, and recently established industry/governmental scientists—with a chance to compete and show off their program. The prize—no publishing fees on the article of their choice—is significant. And finally, Cindy Slone has been working hard to improve career and advanced education planning resources. Over the last few years, our career services have grown in scope at the conference and it will be continued at the conference this year, with presentations and resume advice sessions with the pros.

With the theme of “The Changing Climate of Horticulture” we will have several speakers this year. We will hear from Jonathan Deenik, University of Hawaii, Manoa, who will weave together a fascinating story of horticulture and soil science with human health and culture on the Pacific Islands. Riley Dunlap, Oklahoma State University, will challenge us to think about and address the concept of science denial, in particular as it relates to climate change.

Thank you!

I want to thank all of the folks who make these conferences happen. Let’s start with the folks who work hard to put all
of the pieces together—the Technical Program committee ably led by Dennis Ray and Carl Sams in cooperation with our
dedicated conference staff. The committee puts much effort into scheduling the presentations and arranging the many
other pieces that have to come together for a conference of this magnitude to happen. The committee is composed of Wm.
Vance Baird, T. Casey Barickman, Eugene Blythe, Jeanine M. Davis, William B. Evans, Bill Miller, Pablo Morales-
Payan, and Justine Vanden Heuvel. Our conference couldn’t happen without the participation of our members, who
present their latest research, teaching and extension activities, and serve as the many moderators, working group chairs,
and the judges of our competitions. Of course, none of this could happen without all of the hard work of the ASHS staff.
Organizing and hosting meetings are large complex projects, which the ASHS staff does very well.

**Getting Ready.**

Register Now ([ashs.org > Conferences > Register Now](https://ashs.org)). Abstracts are due March 15 [https://ashs.site-
ym.com/?page=AbstractGuidelines)]? So, join us in Waikoloa for a great meeting, and, of course, take some time to enjoy
the ocean breezes.