Introduction

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On 8 through 10 September 1999, about 50 interdisciplinary scientists, including horticulturists, foresters, and plant pathologists, convened at the Peavy Arboretum of Oregon State University, Corvallis, Ore., to discuss whether an increase in currant (*Ribes* L. sections *Ribes* and *Ribes*) and gooseberry (*Ribes* L. section *Grossularia*) cultivation could occur in North America without having an adverse affect on white pines (*Pinus* L. subgenus *Strobus*) and their forest ecosystems. While representatives of each of these disciplines have researched and discussed the *Ribes*-pines-white pine blister rust (*Cronartium ribicola* J.C. Fischer) situation seemingly separately for the past 50 years, this meeting provided an opportunity for all sides to join together and experience widely differing points-of-view.

North American foresters have traditionally viewed *Ribes* as the weak link in the rust cycle: if the currants and gooseberries could only be eradicated, rust wouldn't occur on or kill beautiful, high-timber-value, five-needled pine trees. In contrast, horticulturists are unhappy at the concept of eradication of *Ribes* and realize that a multimillion dollar berry-crop industry has been prevented in North America even though rust is well established on this continent. They wonder why newly developed genetically resistant or immune currants and gooseberries couldn't be cultivated without risk to pines.

The conference included a day and a half of extensive discussion of the white pine blister rust plus field trips to the *Ribes* collection at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service, National Clonal Germplasm Repository, in Corvallis, Ore., and to the USDA, Forest Service, Umpqua National Forest, Dorena Genetic Resource Center, in Cottage Grove, Ore. Although the conference generated more future research questions than immediate procedural answers, each of the participants left with a good exposure to differing points of view. The conference discussions featured the retired highly respected forest pathologist Eugene Van Arsdel along with active forestry researchers Dale Bergdahl, Brian Geils, Ellen Goheen, Bohun Kinloch, GERAL McDonald, Michael Ostry, Richard Sniezko, Detlev Vogler, and Paul Zambino. Canadian forestry researchers were represented by Richard Hunt and John Muir. Horticultural representatives included Dan Barney, Kim Hummer, Ed Mashburn, and Steve McKay and Canadian horticulturists, Adam Dale and Margie Luffman. Two foreign scientists, Z.M. Azbukina from Vladivostok, Russia, and Stan Pluta from Skierniewice, Poland, submitted reports but were unable to attend the meeting at the last moment.

During the last discussion period, the suggestion was made to form a seven-member liaison subcommittee with a chair plus Canadian and American representatives of horticulture, forestry, and plant pathology. This subcommittee will coordinate upcoming collaborative research projects, inform members of their respective societies of significant findings in other disciplines, and determine the time for subsequent meetings of a larger interdisciplinary group.

The following written reports highlight the oral presentations of the meeting. This workshop was just the beginning of a united effort between horticulturists and foresters to examine the North American presence of white pine blister rust. A multidisciplinary approach will determine the best course of human actions concerning this Asian disease as it continues to naturalize within North America.

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