

# *FloriBytes* - Digital newsletter for the floriculture industry

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## **Year I. Issue 5 November 2006**

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## **GREENHOUSE MANAGEMENT**

From Dr. Beth Fausey ([fausey11@ag.ohio-state.edu](mailto:fausey11@ag.ohio-state.edu)) Agricultural Business Enhancement Center, Bowling Green

### **Fascination on Poinsettias**

Fascination® (Valent USA Corp) is a plant growth regulator comprised of equal parts 6-benzyladenine (6-BA), a cytokinin, and Gibberellins A4+A7. These compounds are naturally occurring plant hormones. Fascination was first labeled for use on Easter, LA hybrid, and oriental lilies to prevent lower leaf yellowing and delay flower senescence. The label has recently been expanded to include applications to poinsettia for increased stem elongation and bract size as well as for increased growth of bedding plant and perennial crops.

Fascination can be an effective tool for poinsettia growers to increase stem length and bract size, especially in counteracting early or excessive growth regulator applications that may result in overly compact plants with small bracts.

**Increasing Stem Length.** Fascination can be used to increase stem elongation in poinsettias, particularly if used during the vegetative phase prior to flower initiation. A single application of 3 ppm should be applied early in the crop cycle to help achieve the desired final plant height. Following this initial application, growers should wait 7 to 10 days and retreat if the desired increase in height has not been achieved.

**Increasing Bract Size.** A 3 to 5 ppm application of Fascination is recommended 20 days after bract color, or approximately one week prior to ship date to increase bract size and smooth crinkled bract surfaces. While this late-season application has little effect on plant height, it does enhance and lighten bracts of yellow or white cultivars. Fascination can also be used on pink and red cultivars although growers should treat plants approximately two weeks before ship date. These cultivars may lighten in color as the bracts expand but will darken over time as bracts develop more pigment.

**General Recommendations.** Fascination is not translocated within the plant, so uniform spray coverage is essential for optimum results. An adjuvant should be used in combination with Fascination to ensure complete leaf wetting. Poinsettia cultivars may differ in their response to treatments depending upon plant vigor, environmental conditions, rate and timing of application. As with all growth regulators, growers are encouraged to trial Fascination on a small number of plants prior to treating the entire crop.

From Tim Malinich ([malinich.1@ag.osu.edu](mailto:malinich.1@ag.osu.edu)). Extension Educator, Lorain Co.

### Plastic Film Recycling

Growers in Lorain county, Ohio, are participating in a program to divert greenhouse film from the waste stream. 2006 was the pilot year for this greenhouse plastic recycling program. So far, two collections were made and over 60,000 pounds of greenhouse plastic were put into recycled products. The most recent collection from fall recovering yielded over 11,500 pounds of polymer film.



The program accepts white overwintering film, clear plastic film, and film with applied shade. Staples do not seem to be a problem but lath, glass, and metal strips cannot be included. Also, bundled plastic had to be kept off the ground to avoid inclusion of rocks and soils.

The pickups were designed to be simple for the grower and recycler. Plastic is bundled and stored off the ground on concrete or pallets in an area accessible to a compactor

truck. When sufficient plastic is available in the county, a pickup is scheduled. Growers save on disposal costs - dumpster, landfill and tipping fees - and the plastic never makes it to the landfill. This program was initiated in cooperation with the OSU Extension office, along with OSU's Ohio Sea Grant Extension Program and their Ohio Clean Marinas Program. For more information on greenhouse film recycling in Lorain county contact Tim Malinich at [malinich.1@osu.edu](mailto:malinich.1@osu.edu) .

## INSECT MANAGEMENT

From Dr. Luis Cañas ([canas.4@osu.edu](mailto:canas.4@osu.edu)). Department of Entomology

**Recently we have found a light green caterpillar attacking ferns, what can we do to control it?**

The most common caterpillar found attacking ferns in greenhouses is the Florida Fern Caterpillar, *Callopistria floridensis* (Guenee). The larvae can have various colors from light green (Figure 1) to black with a white line on each side. The adults have a dark reddish brown triangle on the outer margin of the forewings. The caterpillars can grow to about 32-38 mm long. This caterpillar occurs naturally in Florida, but it is also an occasional pest in greenhouses where ferns are shipped.

When populations are high and go undetected they can cause severe damage to the ferns. The caterpillars tend to feed on the younger tissue and usually concentrate their feeding on growing points. However, larger caterpillars can feed on older tissue. Usually, the larvae tend to feed at night and without inspection can go undetected until damage is apparent. This pest can take up to 4 weeks to go from egg to adult.



Fig 1. Florida fern caterpillar  
(Picture from Dr. Claudio Pasian)

The good news is that they are only an occasional pest and their control is relatively easy. It is very important to monitor incoming fern shipments to detect presence of larvae. When the larvae are small products such as Dipel can be used. With larger caterpillars products such as Duragard TR, Adept, Talstar and Conserve can be used.

If you have noticed the appearance of these caterpillars with every fern shipment, then you could use a Dipel on those shipments to prevent future problems with this pest.

Additional information can be found at:

<http://ipm.ncsu.edu/AG136/cater9.html>

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/ipmnet/06May05G.pdf>

**From Dr. Raymond Cloyd ([rcloyd@ksu.edu](mailto:rcloyd@ksu.edu))** Department of Entomology  
Kansas State University

Please, see attached PDF file (SanitationStudy.pdf) with information regarding sanitation and insect problems.