

HRI Accepting Donations to Combat Newly Identified Pest to the U.S. Ornamental Industry

WASHINGTON, DC - January 19, 2012 -The Horticultural Research Institute (HRI), announced the creation of the Emerging Issues and Technology Projects Box Blight Fund (EITPBBF), in response to a newly identified pest to the U.S. Ornamental Industry.

The "box blight" pathogen (*Cylindrocladium buxicola*), also known as box blight, boxwood leaf drop and blight disease of boxwood can impact the appearance, aesthetics and health of boxwood plants in the landscape and in nursery crop production. The disease results in the yellowing of foliage and stem damage that makes the plant unsalable and unattractive in the landscape.

The HRI Board of Trustees has adopted boxwood blight as a major topic for additional research. While the HRI 2012 endowment funded projects have been selected by HRI, HRI has alternative sources of revenue that it can pursue and leverage into more donations to advance research.

Executive Vice President, Robert Dolibois of the American Nursery & Landscape Association noted,

"Most importantly, this designation of boxwood blight as a primary research topic means that HRI will be organizing a team of willing partners-businesses and associations-to pool research funding to be directed collectively to researchers that collaborate with the team to do the research that the industry identifies. HRI has done this several times before to good effect. By pooling the funding and requiring industry-oversight, the research focus gets tightened and usually the response time from the research is accelerated. It has also resulted in the formation of teams of researchers from multiple universities, each taking on a piece of the research, rather than duplicating efforts five times over".

Monies directed through HRI's joint industry effort will positively influence the advancement of boxwood blight research by reducing overhead allocations to university and research institutions with direct contributions and by the leveraging of partnerships and research efforts such as the Floriculture Nursery Research Initiative at the USDA Agricultural Research Service and other USDA agencies.

Monies designated to the EITPBBF will go directly to research focused on boxwood blight and not into the HRI Endowment where traditionally, only the proceeds from investments fund research. The EITPBBF allows donations to be bundled and "passed-through" HRI to fund this focused research effort.

To make a charitable contribution in support of the EITPBBF, contact HRI at [\(202\) 695-2474](tel:2026952474). Make checks payable to HRI at 1200 G Street NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005 and include a memo line: Boxwood blight or EITPBBF. Credit card donations are accepted.

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Founded in 1962, HRI has directed more than \$5.8 million of industry funds to research projects covering the full range of production, environmental and business issues important to the green industry. HRI distributed \$282,500 in grants and scholarships for 2012. Donor designated funds are a primary component of funding for HRI's research endeavors. Nearly, \$11 million is committed in the endowment by 180 individuals, associations and corporations. The Endowment Fund's principal remains invested and untouched; only investment earnings fund HRI grants. Those wanting more information about HRI grant programs or making a gift to HRI should contact Teresa Jodon at [\(202\) 695-2474](tel:2026952474). Visit the HRI website at www.HRIResearch.org.