

CUTT

Spring 2001 • Volume 12 • Number 1

Michael G. Villani Remembered

Noted turfgrass scientist Michael G. Villani, 48, died on Tuesday, May 15, 2001 at home following a lengthy illness with pancreatic cancer. He was a professor of entomology at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva and a longtime contributor to CUTT.

"We have lost not only a remarkable scientist but one of the finest human beings I've ever had the pleasure of knowing," said Dr. Wendell Roelofs, chair of the Station's department of entomology. "He was the epitome of what a person thinks of when they say a wonderful human being. He was revered by his coworkers, admired by fellow scientists throughout the world, adored by his many undergraduate and graduate students whom he taught, and loved and respected by all. He lived much too short a time, but while with us, he made contributions to science and society that will last forever," continued Roelofs.

Villani rarely thought of himself. He was the consummate teacher, advisor and mentor to all. He unselfishly devoted his time in questioning, cajoling, and inspiring others to think creatively and to develop their potential. He always shared the success of his highly acclaimed program on turf insects with his staff and with other scientists around the country. "He gave far more than he got in return," commented Rick Brandenburg, professor of entomology at North Carolina State University, who recently presented Mike with the Outstanding Service Award of the Turfgrass Council of North Carolina.

Even more important than what he accomplished during his career with turf insects, was the relationship he had with his wife, Connie, and two daughters, Sara and Kate. Just as he knew the right questions to ask in his scientific endeavors and was able to instill a tremendous sense of pride in his coworkers, he was also a loving and devoted husband and father who always gently challenged his family to do their very best in whatever they are involved.

continued on page 4

This Times

1. **Michael Villani Remembered**
2. **Short Cutts**
 - How much are we worth?
 - Field Day expands
3. **Scanning the Journals**
 - Mixed turf reduces insect injury
 - Primo and Supina bluegrass
6. **Microbes**
8. **The Lawn Reader**
11. **Tune Your Boom Sprayer**
13. **Workforce Changes**
16. **Cation Exchange Capacity**

CUTT, "CORNELL UNIVERSITY TURFGRASS TIMES" is published four times per year by the Turfgrass Science Program at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14853. Address correspondence to: CORNELL UNIVERSITY TURFGRASS TIMES, 20 Plant Science Building, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; phone: (607) 255-1629; email: fsr3@cornell.edu.

Editor: Frank Rossi

Design & Production: Ghostwriters, inc., Ithaca, NY

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