

# Haruo Tashiro

March 24, 1917 — *December 8, 2009*

Haruo Tashiro, Cornell University Professor Emeritus in the Department of Entomology at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, passed away peacefully in Golden, CO at the home he shared with his son Steve and Steve's wife, Patricia. He was 92 years of age. "Tash," as he was affectionately called by his many friends and colleagues, was a world leader in the biology and management of insects and mites on turfgrass and woody ornamentals.

Tashiro received his B.S. (1945) in botany and zoology from Wheaton College in Illinois and his M.S. (1946) and Ph. D. (1950) in entomology from Cornell University. He was a research entomologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in Geneva, NY, from 1950 to 1963, before becoming the investigations leader and research entomologist with USDA at Riverside, California. In 1967, he returned to Geneva to serve as professor of entomology until his retirement in 1983.

Throughout his active scientific career, Tashiro produced numerous publications on the biology, ecology and management of insects affecting horticultural crops and turfgrass. Perhaps best known is his 1987 publication, *Turfgrass Insects of the United States and Canada*. This book was the first comprehensive reference to bring together under one cover a discussion of practically all insects and other arthropods destructive to turfgrass in the United States and southern Canada. It soon became the standard reference for the subject. The book was revised in 1999 by Tashiro, his former graduate student, Pat Vittum, and Mike Villani, who succeeded Tashiro as the turfgrass and soil ecologist at Cornell.

Among his many accomplishments, Tashiro conducted seminal studies on the European chafer (*Rhizotrogus majalis*) during the 1950s and 1960s, elucidating the biology of the insect, identifying trapping techniques, and identifying management strategies. He also studied the grass webworm (*Herpetogramma licarsisalis*) and the fiery skipper (*Hylephila phyleus*) during sabbatical leaves in Hawaii.

Tashiro was not only an excellent scientist but an accomplished artist. His detailed drawings of insects, his skill in cartography and his photos grace the pages of his books on turfgrass insects. His artistic skills were recognized by many, including his colleagues Paul Chapman and Siegfried Lienk. Since they were not able to find an artist who could provide the morphological accuracy necessary to illustrate a book on insects affecting apples in New York, they asked Tashiro if he was willing to try. After a few trial paintings, they were pleased with the efforts and asked

him to collaborate. From 1963 to 1968, Tashiro prepared watercolor renditions of 56 species of tortricid moths whose larvae damage leaves and fruits of apples. The book, *Tortricid Fauna of Apple in New York*, was published by Cornell University in 1971 and remains a classic.

Tashiro was born in Selma, California, on March 24, 1917. During his youth, Tashiro was among the approximately 110,000 Japanese Americans interned in camps during World War II because of their ancestry- an act the federal government apologized for in 1988. In 1942 he married Hatsue Morimitsu whom he had met at their church in Sacramento. Rumor has it that he courted her by bringing gifts of vegetables from his family's farm in nearby Orosi. Tashiro and his wife moved east to Cornell so he could obtain his advanced degrees at Cornell University and together developed many long-lasting friends in the area. Tashiro always considered Geneva his home and he and Hatsue raised three children there. He was involved in many civic organizations including devoting many hours to leadership activities in the Presbyterian Church. Tashiro was an avid golfer, even into his late 70's, and was a renown horticulturalist who created an arboretum around his home.

He is survived by his daughter Elaine Gerbert and her husband, Pierre (Lawrence, KS), his son Steve and his wife Patricia (Golden, CO) and his daughter Wendy (Byron Bay, Australia). Tashiro was predeceased by Hatsue on April 7, 2006. She was buried in Dinuba, CA, where Tashiro was also laid to rest. Tashiro will be remembered as a gentleman, excellent scientist and an inspiration to his family and friends.

*Anthony M. Shelton, Pat Vittum (University of Massachusetts), James Hunter*