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Cornell graduate student receives 2008 Paul Chapman Fellowship

By Joe Ogrodnick

John Diaz-Montano, a doctoral student researching pest resistance in onions with entomologist Anthony Shelton at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva, recently received the 2008 Paul J. Chapman Fellowship.

The entomology department awards the \$39,000 fellowship—equal to a year's tuition and fees—annually to a graduate student who demonstrates quality research work, excellent publications and presentations, and participation in professional activities. The award is voted on by the full professors of the department.

"John has been working on a very serious problem for onion growers not only in New York but around the world," said his adviser Shelton. "His two summers of field work have provided useful information on varietal resistance to thrips that will need to be explored more fully in detailed behavioral studies in the lab and greenhouse. John's work is the type that Dr. Chapman would have appreciated."

After fleeing Colombia, Diaz-Montano enrolled in a graduate entomology program at Kansas State University. There, Diaz-Montano worked on identifying aphid-resistant soybean germplasm and did very detailed studies on their probing and feeding behavior. At the 2006 Entomological Society of America national meeting, he was awarded the best student poster for his research on host plant resistance to aphids in soybeans. He enrolled at Cornell in 2006 after completing his M.S. at Kansas State.

The Chapman Fellowship is named for Dr. Paul J. Chapman in recognition of his tremendous contributions to entomology. By example and encouragement, he set the highest goals for the department's basic and applied research programs. He was an outstanding researcher in the field with his carefully planned experiments that provided essential knowledge about the basic biology of fruit pests and their interactions with their hosts. He joined Cornell as a professor of entomology at age 29 in 1929 and later chaired the department for 17 years. He retired in 1968 but continued to work on the flight periods of moths and the history of the station until his death in 1993. In 1992, he established the Chapman Fellowship to ensure that "his" departments would continue to inspire young entomologists to follow the principles and insights he instilled in his colleagues.

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John Diaz-Montano (center), a doctoral student researching pest resistance in onions with entomologist Anthony Shelton (left) at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station at Geneva, recently received the 2008 Paul J. Chapman Fellowship presented by Entomology Chair David Soderlund (right).

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