

BACK TO THE FUTURE A Garden Symposium

KATHRYN HOMA

**Out with the Old,
In with the New**



Out with the old, in with the new: New Advances in Plant Disease Management

Many of the old, outdated plant disease management strategies and techniques have now been replaced by new/advanced management strategies. Some of these improved methods include updated disease forecasting systems, methods to improve plant defense and provide resistance against pathogens such as marker-assisted molecular breeding and modern biotechnological approaches such as CRISPR-Cas, RNAi, etc. Ecofriendly alternatives such as biological control agents and others have also been introduced.

Kathryn Homa is the new Program Associate, Horticulturist as well as Master Gardener advisor for the Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Mercer County. However, she is not new to the horticulture scene or New Jersey. Growing up on a grain farm in Burlington County, she gained a love for agriculture and horticulture. She is a graduate of Delaware Valley College, with a degree in Ornamental Horticulture-Floriculture. While working toward her degree, Kathryn held internships at the Rutgers University EcoComplex and Burlington County Research and Demonstration Greenhouse and as a research assistant with Terracycle Fertilizer in Trenton, NJ. She also spent some time with Ocean of Know, a nonprofit educational initiative teaching inner-city children about math, science, and agriculture. Kathryn joined the Rutgers University Plant Biology graduate program, where her master's degree work focused on evaluating fungicide efficacy and her PhD on breeding strategies for resistance to fusarium wilt of basil. A Study Director for Good Laboratory Practice pesticide studies on specialty crops Rutgers University's IR-4 Project, Kathryn later served as lead plant pathologist for the national program, and aided extension personnel and growers across the US achieve solutions for emerging plant pathogens. Kathryn enjoys working in her water garden and garden beds around her home, spending time with her border collie Roxanne and taking trips to the Jersey Shore year-round.