



2001 Student Scholarship and Student Paper Award Winner: Selim Dedej

The American Association of Professional Apiculturists awarded both the Student Scholarship Award and the Student paper award to Selim Dedej, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.

Currently, Selim Dedejis is pursuing his PhD in entomology under the supervision of Dr. Keith Delaplane. Selim comes to the States following many years of accomplished service in politics and academia in his native Albania. He was formerly Associate Professor of Animal Husbandry at the Agricultural University of Tirana, then from 1997-1999 he served as Deputy Minister of Agriculture for his Government. In this capacity he was directly involved with foreign aid distribution during the 1999 Kosovo crisis. In 2000 he served on the Albanian delegation to the World Trade Summit in Seattle and was televised answering some of the angry protesters at that event. His first taste of Georgia was during a six month tenure as a visiting Fulbright Scholar at the University of Georgia where he became interested in blueberry pollination research. He returned to UGA with his family in August 2000 to work full-time on his doctorate.

His research is addressing the pollination efficacy of honey bees and other bee species in rabbiteye blueberry, paying special attention to the effects of nectar thievery by carpenter bees. Although honey bees were thought to be marginal pollinators, nectar thieving by carpenter bees may contribute to pollination problems by cutting slits in the sides of blossoms. Honey bees learn to use these slits, thus both carpenter bees and honey bees do not provide pollination of the blueberry flower.

In 2000 and 2001 Selim studied the effects of different population densities of honey bees in rabbiteye blueberry, measuring fruit-set, berry size, number of seeds and sugar content. During the 2001 season nine cages were used to study the effects of honey bees and nectar-thieving carpenter bees. Rabbiteye blueberry bushes were tented with known numbers of honey bees alone, carpenter bees alone and both honey bees and carpenter bees.

Fruit-set was decreased in the cages with only carpenter bees. Honey bees alone were efficient pollinators. The combination of honey bees and carpenter bees did decrease fruit-set but honey bees evidently mitigated the negative effects of carpenter bees. The experiments planned for the 2002 season will include 13 additional cages. The experiments of 2000 and 2001 will be repeated.