

# Lee M. Hutchins Award

The Lee M. Hutchins Fund was established in 1979 by gifts from the estate of Dr. Lee M. Hutchins. The award, consisting of a certificate and income from the invested fund, is made for the best contribution to basic or applied research on diseases of perennial fruit plants (tree fruits, tree nuts, small fruits and grapes, including tropical fruits but excluding vegetables). The results of the research must have been published in an official journal of the Society.

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## Themis J. Michailides



Themis J. Michailides was born in Argos Orestikon, Greece. He received B.S. and M.S. (in agriculture development/irrigations) degrees from the Agricultural University in Athens and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in plant pathology from the University of California, Davis. From 1984 to 1988 he was a postdoctoral research associate, first at Oregon State University (Mid-Columbia Research and Extension Center, Hood River) and later at the University of California, Davis. He was appointed to a faculty position in the Department of Plant Pathology, University of California, Berkeley, in 1989 and was pro-

moted to associate plant pathologist in 1992. With the transfer of agriculture-related research and extension programs from Berkeley to Davis, Dr. Michailides was assigned to the Department of Plant Pathology in Davis. He is currently an associate plant pathologist at the Agricultural Experiment Station with research responsibilities in fruit and nut crop diseases.

Applying the knowledge gained and the techniques developed in his work on *Mucor piriformis*, Dr. Michailides has expanded his research to include other pathogens of fruit and nut crops. His goals are to understand the ecology and epidemiology of these pathogens and to develop and apply effective biological, chemical, and cultural disease control approaches.

In a series of *Phytopathology* and *Plant Disease* papers published recently, Michailides and his colleagues made significant research con-

tributions on fig endosepsis. Michailides, in earlier work, was the first to report that three species of *Fusarium* cause endosepsis. Michailides' group demonstrated that fungal isolates from wild figs were more virulent than those from cultivated figs and that the industry's practice of collecting wild caprifigs (male fruit used for pollination) could result in the introduction of more virulent isolates into cultivated areas, (*Phytopathology* 83:527-533) a practice Michailides' findings should help to reduce.

After developing a successful, quick, and inexpensive technique for efficiently determining the incidence of fig endosepsis in caprifigs and Calimyrna fruit (*Plant Disease* 77:44-50), Michailides completed a study on the effects of overpollination of Calimyrna figs in relation to the population dynamics of fig wasp pollinators (*Phytopathology* 84:1254-1263). Along with providing a basic understanding of these relationships, a practical outcome of this study was that for the first time his laboratory presented scientific evidence of the detrimental effects of overpollination on disease levels. These results should convince fig producers to strive for optimum pollination to reduce the number of fig wasps entering the fruit cavity, thus reducing the chance of contamination of the cavity by the endosepsis pathogen. Michailides also was the first to use a biocontrol agent, *Paecilomyces lilacinus*, found naturally in figs, to reduce endosepsis. A unique approach in this study is the use of the fig wasp pollinator, *Blastophaga psenes*, as a vehicle for carrying the biocontrol agent in the cavity of the fig syconium.

Dr. Michailides has been very active in APS. He has been a member of the Postharvest Pathology and Mycotoxicology Committee and is serving as a member of the Epidemiology Committee. He has served as an associate editor and is currently a senior editor of *Plant Disease*. He also served as secretary and chair of the Deciduous Tree Fruit Workgroup of APS.