

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elizabeth Daly

703-838-5235

edaly@safnow.org

Dr. Paul R. Fisher, Ph.D., Receives the Alex Laurie Award at SAF Miami 2024

Alexandria, VA. — Aug. 12, 2024 — Dr. Paul R. Fisher, Ph.D., an internationally renowned expert on floriculture and horticulture sciences, and greenhouse and nursery production, is the 2024 recipient of the Society of American Florists' Alex Laurie Award. This award, which celebrates individuals who have made broad-scope, long-lasting contributions to floriculture research and education, was presented during the Stars of the Industry Awards Experience at SAF Miami 2024, SAF's annual convention.



About Dr. Paul R. Fisher, Ph.D.

Dr. Fisher was born and raised in New Zealand, where he received his bachelor's and master's degrees. He moved to the U.S. to continue his studies and received his Ph.D. in horticulture from Michigan State University in 1995. Following his graduation, he taught at the University of New Hampshire. In 2006, he joined the faculty at the University of Florida where he currently serves as a Professor in the Environmental Horticulture Department, teaching both undergraduate and graduate students.

Dr. Fisher also serves as the extension lead for Greenhouse Training Online, which includes 11 professional development certificate courses – available in both English and Spanish – offered through the university's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension. The program has more than 600 graduates per year, with 25% of students based outside the U.S.

In addition to teaching, Dr. Fisher has dedicated his career to floriculture research. For more than 30 years, he has worked with academics and professionals to solve issues affecting the floriculture industry. He makes regular visits to domestic farms to discuss growers' concerns, share research findings, and provide hands-on training.

“Paul understands the importance of reaching out to greenhouse growers to identify the problems that limit their production and then conduct applied research to overcome the technical, financial, or social limitations,” says Rosa Emilia Raudales, Ph.D., associate professor and greenhouse specialist at the University of Connecticut. “Paul is uniquely talented, not only at finding practical solutions to growers' problems, but also at packaging the information in a way that is accessible and understandable to the industry.”

Dr. Fisher has helped establish various organizations and projects for floriculture research. The Floriculture Research Alliance, a leading industry research group, is a university-industry partnership that works to solve

immediate industry problems. The Water Education Alliance for Horticulture is working on Clean Water³ — a research initiative to help growers reduce, remediate, and recycle irrigation water. Resilient Plants Project’s research objective is to create new and resilient floriculture crops for a changing climate.

Dr. Fisher has authored and co-authored more than 100 refereed journal and proceedings articles and approximately 240 industry and extension publications. His work has been cited by more than 1,700 publications. He is also an internationally heralded consulting advisor and speaker. He learned Spanish as an adult to better communicate with essential farm workers. During greenhouse visits, Dr. Fisher has provided training sessions for workers in both English and Spanish.

“Paul has done all of the publications and presentations at the high level of productivity to be expected of the best academics, but his special gift has been his ability to communicate complicated scientific knowledge to all levels of audience, from business owners to growers to the people holding the hoses,” says James E. Faust, Ph.D., professor at Clemson University in South Carolina.

Dr. Fisher has been recognized for his research. Among his laurels, he was awarded the OFA’s (the Association of Horticulture Professionals) Alex Laurie Award twice for outstanding research publication. He also is a three-time recipient of the Kenneth Post Award for excellent floriculture journal publications co-authored by graduate students and their advisors, as presented by the American Society for Horticultural Science.

Dr. Fisher’s work extends beyond traditional academia. He helped develop Back Pocket Grower, a website with instructional materials, videos, and tools for nursery and greenhouse growers. He also manages extension websites on water quality, crop management, and floriculture production, as well as Greenhouse Training Online’s YouTube channel, which has almost 1,500 subscribers.

“The global impact Paul Fisher has had on this industry is intrinsically linked to the success our industry experiences today,” says Kate Santos, Ph.D., director of research and conservation at Longwood Gardens in Pennsylvania. “His work has made growers more successful, more profitable, and more educated about how to grow their crops and manage the external factors that influence them.”

Event photos will be available here: [SAF Photo albums | Flickr](#)

About The Society of American Florists

The Society of American Florists is the association that connects and cultivates a thriving floral community through training, education, marketing resources and advocacy. Our vision: The power of flowers in every life. For more information, visit SAFNow.org.