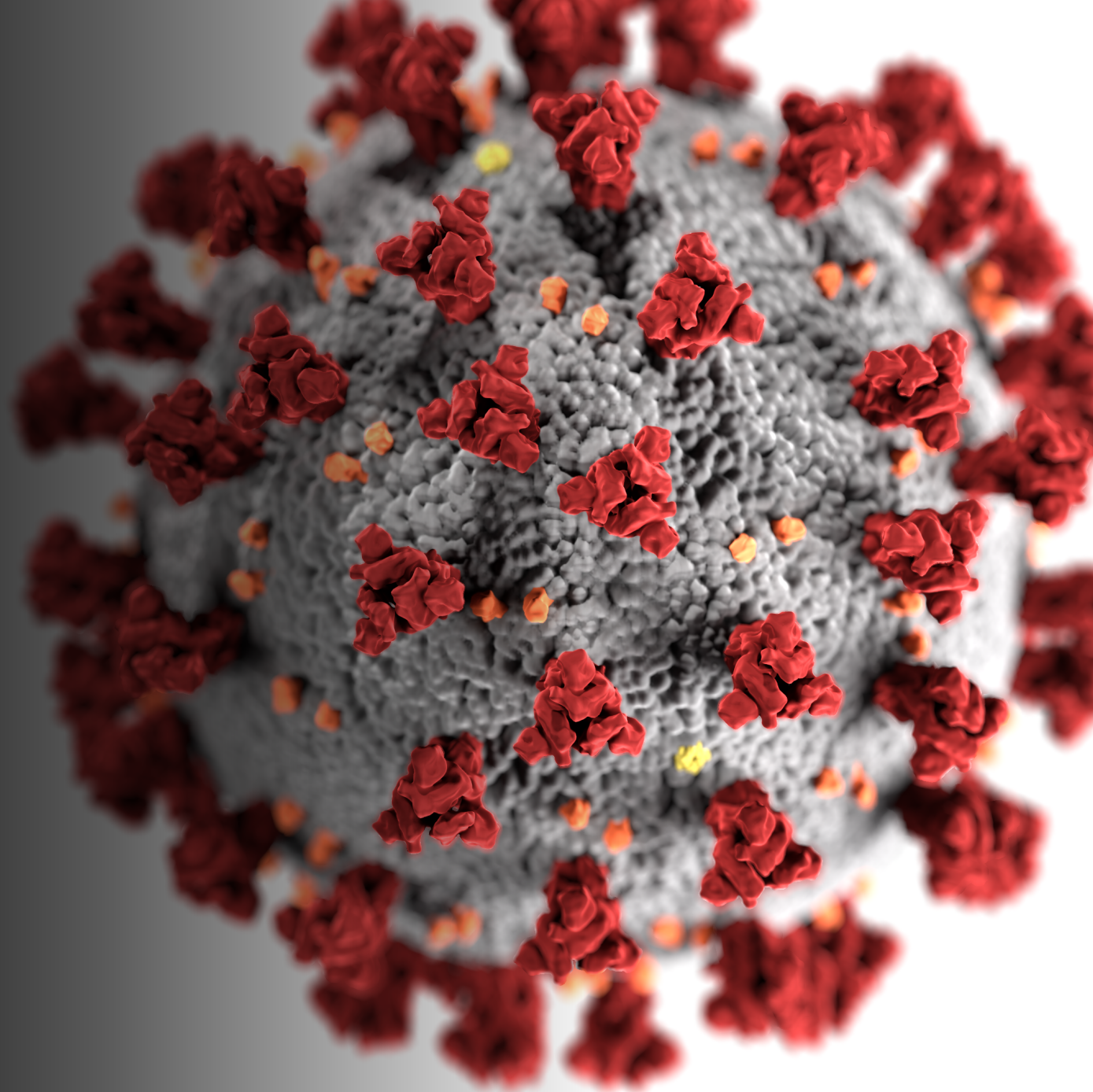


Adaptation of Rockland CCE Horticulture Lab in the Time of COVID-19

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Project

- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Horticulture Lab at Rockland Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- The purpose of this project is to redefine how we:
 - Satisfy our customer's needs going forward
 - Engage Master Gardener Volunteers and Interns

Team and Approvers

- Owner
 - Mike Wilson- Horticulture Lab Technician
- Lab Experienced Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs)
 - Mootsy Elliot
 - Jeff Schwartz
- Management Review and Approval
 - Kristen Ossmann- Horticulture Educator
 - Suzanne Barclay- Executive Director

Needs Assessment

- Current Situation
 - Mike Wilson is managing calls and emails to the Horticulture Lab remotely with no assistance.
 - Due to high volume of emails, Mike needs assistance from experienced MGVs.
 - Samples from clients cannot be received and there is no access to the lab, microscopes etc.
- Plan Needed
 - Need to get experienced MGVs involved remotely to address emails.
 - Develop plan for involving other MGVs or interns
 - Need plans for return to the Horticulture Lab without direct customer contact to start and with direct customer contact in the future
 - Develop contingency plan in the event the COVID-19 returns

Design Objectives

- Develop ways to satisfy Rockland CCE customer needs for the Horticulture Lab during the different phases of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Find ways to allow MGVs and interns to get experience and hours during the various stages of the COVID-19 shutdown in a safe and productive manner.

Phase 1- Working Remotely

- Mike Wilson only for first 2 months
- Now experienced Lab MGVs (Mootsy, Jeff and Robin) providing assistance
- Is it feasible or practical to involve:
 - Other MGVs with lab experience?
 - Interns who need hours and training?

Phase 1- Working Remotely

- Experienced MGVs have begun working remotely
- Key Issues Addressed
 - Access to fact sheets, files, pesticides guidelines and log in sheets
 - Access to MGV gmail account for emails
 - Work schedule defined
 - Process flow defined for emails and contact sheets
- Outstanding Issues
 - Can't support Mike with phone calls, because of the need to use personal phone

Phase 1- Working Remotely

- Role of Additional MGVs
 - Mike and Kristen will determine if other MGVs want to work remotely.
 - Possible Support Activities
 - Research responses for Mike
 - Update fact sheets
 - Develop new fact sheets
 - Define best time for involving additional MGVs/interns

Phase 2a- Return to Lab with no Direct Customer Contact

- Only Mike Wilson in lab
 - Mootsy, Jeff and Robin will continue to support remotely
 - Mask will be worn when not on phone.
 - Gloves will be worn when handling samples.
 - Surfaces will be decontaminated at least daily or as needed.
- Define process for customers dropping off samples outside of the CCE building
 - How will samples be retrieved safely?
 - How will customers pay?
 - Samples will be limited to plant related issues and non-health related insects except for ticks and bed bugs.

Phase 2b- Return to Lab with no Direct Customer Contact

- Experienced MGVs return to lab
 - One MGV per day
 - Mask worn
 - Either barrier installed near phone or mask worn when on phone
 - Gloves worn when handling samples
 - Phone, computer and keys will be wiped down at the end of each day.
 - Six feet of distance from Mike and staff will be kept at all times.
- Other MGVs and Interns
 - If email volume is sufficient, get other experienced MGVs involved remotely.
 - Identify factsheets that can be updated or initiated.

Phase 3- Lab Open with Direct Customer Contact

- Determine if it is safe to have more than one MGV in the lab daily
 - If okay, identify schedule to provide MGV/interns access/experience.
 - Limit to 2 MGVs/interns in the lab at one time.
- Develop safety plan for lab and customers
 - Install barrier protection at horticulture lab counter.
 - Have hand sanitizer present
 - Have 6 ft. spacing marks near counter in case more than one customer is present.
 - Limit access of customers to just the lab counter.
 - Have Mike and MGVs use gloves when handling samples and money.
 - Have a daily cleaning procedure for computers, counters, pens, etc.
 - Consider having MGVs log in the sample to the computer rather than the log book

Contingency Plan for Working Remotely in the event of a second wave of COVID-19

- Obtain lab cell phone or other mechanism for answering phone calls without using personal phones.
 - Pay for data charges for personal phones if needed.
 - Identify ways MGVs can help answering calls.
 - Explore live chat option.
- Develop plan to involve more MGVs in answering emails/calls remotely.
 - Assure that all lab MGVs have access to Gmail account and fact sheets/lab resources.
- Determine if there is a way to accept samples for analysis remotely or with limited access to lab.

Next Steps

- Refine plan with team
- Review with Rockland CCE management
- Determine MGV interest in working remotely and define activities
- Get a vaccine for COVID-19 to prevent need for contingency plan!