



Name: Maryse L. Leblanc

Occupation: Weed scientist for the Research and Development Institute for the Agri-Environment (IRDA), Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville, QC

Previous work and volunteer experience in Weed Science:

I had a somewhat atypical professional career in weed science. With a bachelor's degree in biological sciences from the University of Montreal and several courses in agronomy taken at Laval and McGill University, I started my career in 1985 working as a weed science research technician with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in L'Assomption, QC. I got hooked in weed science and after 2 years, I returned to Macdonald Campus of McGill University where I obtained a master's degree in weed science in 1990. In the same year, I became an agronomist. In 1992, I was hired by the Quebec Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) as a weed scientist. In 1998, I was seconded from the MAPAQ to head the weed research program at the Research and Development Institute for the Agri-Environment (IRDA). I was working at IRDA while simultaneously pursuing my doctoral studies in weed science at McGill University. I received my PhD degree in 2002.

How did you become involved with CWSS and when?

I first began attending the Expert Committee on Weeds meeting in 1995 in Montreal and was involved for the first time in the Local Arrangements Committee. In 1997, I received the Expert Committee on Weeds Travel Award (Dow Elanco), which allowed me to attend the meeting and present the results of my doctoral research.

What has the extent of your involvement been? (i.e. have you served on committees/executive?)

I got involved in some Local Arrangements Committees for the meetings in Montreal (1995), Tremblant (2007) and Montreal (2014). I was chair of the Physical Weed Control Symposium in 2007 CWSS meeting. I also participated in the drafting of Quebec's provincial reports.

Favorite memory/experience in your weed science career to date?

My most memorable experience in weed science was when I attended workshops of the European Weed Research Society working group: Physical and Cultural Weed Control. This opportunity to interact and learn from these experts was a highlight of my career. I discovered brand new ways of weeding without herbicides and state-of-the-art weeding equipment.

What is your favorite weed and why?

I am interested in all weeds but hairy galinsoga is the one that intrigues me the most. With little or no dormancy, their seeds can survive in the soil for many years and cause many headaches for growers who want to get rid of it.

What are your career goals/future plans in weed science (if you are comfortable sharing)?

I will be retiring in the very near future after 30 years in weed science. I was first hired to find non-chemical weed control strategies. I hope that my R&D work carried out on cultural and physical weed control methods, including mechanical, thermal and robotic weeding, will continue and will be useful to producers who are looking for alternatives to herbicides in a perspective of sustainable agriculture.

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