

BRANCHING OUT

THE US FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS

June 2012

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For more information on the International Visitor Program, please contact Brenda Dean:

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(tel) +1-202-273-4695



The US Forest Service International Visitor Program (IVP) facilitates participation in a wide variety of professional and educational exchanges, which encourage scientific collaboration and discovery, increase intercultural understanding, and promote cooperation among people of many cultures and countries.

SUMMER TRAVEL REMINDER FOR “J” VISA HOLDERS

Many visitors take advantage of the summer months to travel home or to explore new parts of the world. Please remember that all holders of J-1 and J-2 visas must have DS-2019 forms validated for travel outside the US if they wish to return on the same J-visa program. Please follow these simple steps to avoid any travel problems:



1. Check the expiration date on your visa. Make sure it is still valid for another entry at the time of your return to the United States.
2. Obtain a travel validation signature on your DS-2019 form that is valid for the duration of your trip outside the US and upon your return to the US. The travel validation must have been signed within the past 12 months, or within the past 6 months for Short-Term Scholars. If you are planning a trip outside the US that will exceed 30 days, please contact International Programs so the appropriate steps can be taken to keep your J-1 program active.
3. All J-2 dependents must also have their DS-2019 forms signed for travel outside the United States.
4. Remember to return your I-94 card at the airline counter once you depart the United States.
5. When you return, keep your new I-94 card in a safe place (stapled in your passport) and send a scanned copy of the new I-94 card to your International Visitor Team contact.
6. Remember to hand carry your DS-2019 when you return to the United States. Do not pack it in your luggage. You will need to show it to the Customs and Border Patrol Officer when you reenter.
7. If you must renew your J-1 visa during your trip outside of the United States, please contact **Misty Sidhu** at 202-273-3324 or msidhu@fs.fed.us or **Rima Eid** at 202-208-3785 or rimaeid@fs.fed.us to discuss the process.

If you are traveling and your DS-2019 has not already been signed for summer travel, please mail the original form to the following address:

USDA Forest Service
ATTN: International Programs, Misty Sidhu or Rima Eid
1099 14th Street NW, Suite 5500W
Washington, DC 20005
Telephone #: 202-273-3324

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns!

SPOTLIGHT:

USDA CACAO RESEARCH: GLOBAL CONCERN FOR THE SOURCE OF CHOCOLATE

Dr. Meinhardt's Story

Dr. Lyndel Meinhardt, Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Sustainable Perennial Crops Lab, Beltsville, MD

How did you become involved in your research and what brought you to ARS?

I grew up on a family farm in Missouri and spent several years after high school working on the farm. This farming experience was a key reason why I went into agronomy and plant pathology at the University of Missouri. After a post doctorate fellowship at the University of Florida, I



had the opportunity to travel to Brazil as a visiting scientist. My 12-month appointment turned into 10 years. During my stay in Brazil I worked with a number of plant pathogens including the fungal pathogen that causes witches' broom disease of cacao, the source of chocolate. That experience led to my current position with ARS.

How did you become involved in hosting international students?

As a visiting scientist in Brazil, I experienced many of the cultural differences and language barriers that are sometimes associated with these exchanges. I try to make sure we minimize the impact of these differences so that our visiting scientists have a positive experience. I started hosting international students and visiting scientists shortly after joining ARS. It was a great way to continue and build on many of the existing collaborations that I had in Brazil. With the help of the US Forest Service International Programs, we have expanded our collaborations to many more countries.

What is your favorite part of hosting?

For me, my favorite part of hosting is watching how the visiting person adapts and grows from these new experiences. Some people have some very strong views about the US before they come and generally leave with a whole new perspective. In our lab, many of the scientists and staff have some international experience, which really helps break the ice for many of our visiting students and scientists. I am very pleased with the program because many of the visiting scientists become great long-term collaborators.

What type of research are you working on with Kun Ji?

Kun came to our lab to study genetic diversity in the perennial crop, *Theobroma cacao*, the source of chocolate. Currently, she is expanding her skills with new molecular expression studies that look at what happens during particular disease interactions in the same crop. We want her to have a very broad-based skill set so when she returns to China she can use these techniques in many different areas. She has been a great asset to the lab and we look forward to working with her for many more years.

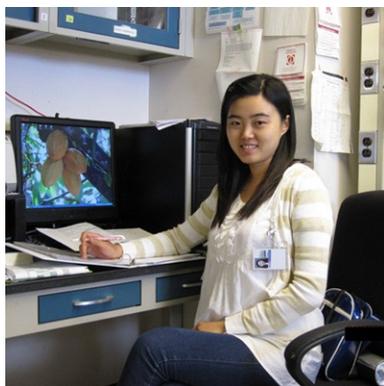
Kun's Story

Kun Ji, PhD Candidate, College of Horticulture and Landscapes at Southwest University, China

What influenced your decision to come to the United States as a visiting research scholar with ARS?

When I was a little girl in the 1990s, learning English was not as popular as today in China. In the fifth grade, my parents sent me to a Sunday class to learn English with funny cartoons and TV shows from the US about American children. I fell in love with this new language and with those interesting lives that I never imagined, but saw on the TV shows. I dreamed that I could come to the US, maybe just for a short trip, to explore the world through my own eyes and experience such wonderful adventures in person.

In 2007, I was a postgraduate student working on my Master's degree in Horticultural Science in the College of Horticulture and Landscapes at Southwest University in China. I applied for a PhD fellowship in Plant Genetics through the China Scholarship Council (CSC), a Chinese Ministry of Education program that supports research in advanced laboratories and graduate studies abroad. Since my thesis research was on genetics of tree fruits and other perennial crops, I was interested in expanding my knowledge of molecular tools for genetically



improving tree fruit. Through my advisor in China, I was connected to the to Sustainable Perennial Crops Lab (SPCL) of USDA-ARS and Dr. Lyndel Meihardt, SPCL Research leader.

The research goal of SPCL is to deliver scientifically based

methods that will increase production [of tropical tree crops such as cacao and coffee], while guarding the safety and quality of the products. These crops have significant impacts on national and global economies and the environment. The research will benefit the US through market stability and increased demand for US-grown agricultural commodities such as milk, sugar, peanuts and other crops that are integral to processing and use of these commodities.

Last, but not least, I have a lot of passion for chocolate cacao and cacao research. Everyone loves chocolate – who wouldn't? Actually, that's also a motivation that keeps me moving forward.

What are you researching and how will this experience help you in the future?

I'm doing research on cacao population genetics and pathology. I have done a lot of molecular diversity analysis on thousands of cacao DNA samples, which are collected from all around the world, in order to find out the origin and the relationship between the cacao from places such as the Amazon, Africa and south Asia. My work on cacao pathology was just started last year. We are using RNA expression approaches to find fungi-resistant cacao clones that can contribute to the world-wide prevention of cacao diseases that are causing a serious reduction of cacao farmers' income, as well as on economic development of chocolate.

The research I'm doing now will greatly help my future research. There are many economic crops in China that need to be analyzed for diversity with new and reliable molecular markers. The methods used for breeding fungi-resistant properties can also be used with most crops that are endangered with fungi disease.

It's a great honor to participate in research with USDA-ARS. I'll be expecting myself as an individual to develop more intelligence, creativity, and energy. I am intrigued by 21st century challenges and eager to solve them.

What has this experience meant to you personally and professionally?

My whole life has changed. I love to explore new tastes, new places, new friends, and new research, and all of these are in my new life. Everyone I have met here has been really nice to me, [both] Americans and people from other countries. Some have become good friends and we are keeping in contact to share our life adventures even after they leave the US. My colleagues helped me a lot to understand traditions in America, which was so beneficial for me. Personally, I really enjoy the life here.

The most important part of my life in the US is my lab research, and that's the main reason why I'm here. Lab conditions in SPCL are cutting edge. I have chances to use a lot of new equipment and analysis methods on my research. The working environment is entirely in English, which is a big challenge for me. But it has helped me to communicate more naturally with the world and to explain what I am doing more fluently. I feel that it has been like the process of building a bridge to connect me with the rest of the world in my professional field. Now I have one paper accepted and I am waiting for it to be published, which will be a new exciting start of my science career. I have also been able to connect and work with other visiting scientists from Brazil, Indonesia and Turkey which has fostered future collaborations.

What has been the most gratifying part of this experience so far?

So far, I've spent 2 years in the US working on the same project. I have learned a lot about chocolate, including the origin of cacao, the chocolate industry and how our research results contribute to the livelihood of cacao producers and the consumers. I feel proud that our research results and technology are helping the developing world as well as the US economy.

DISCOVER NATURE WITH YOUR FAMILY

We encourage International visitors who are here with their families to enjoy the warm summer days by getting outdoors to explore nature. Check your local newspaper for weekend events or locate the nearest local nature center to connect your children with the great outdoors. You can also browse the US Forest Service “Discover the Forest” campaign website for ideas on how you can get your kids outdoors and curious about nature:

- <http://www.discovertheforest.org/>

The Forest Service and the Ad Council have also introduced a new multi-media public service campaign titled, “El Proyecto de Escapa al Bosque”. Its goal is to encourage Hispanic families to get outdoors and explore all the exciting opportunities nature has to offer. The campaign’s message highlights how easy it is for nature to provide an escape from the stress of our daily lives. For more information on the television, radio and outdoor public service announcements please visit the following website:

- <http://www.multivu.com/mnr/56336-us-forest-service-ad-council-encourage-hispanic-families-discover-nature>

Dr. Seuss’ *The Lorax* Brings Message of Conservation to Families and Youth

Dr. Seuss’ *The Lorax*, an animated feature film based on the famous children’s book about sustainable use and conservation of natural resources, was released in movie theaters on March 2, 2012. Dr. Seuss, a famed American author known for educational books with clever rhyming schemes, reminds us that Earth’s future is in our hands.

US Forest Service Chief, Thomas Tidwell, joined actress Betty White, who plays the role of the grandmother, in promoting the film and its message at the New York City premiere.



The release of the movie provided much publicity for the US Forest Service to highlight the hopeful message of the film and the importance of encouraging future generations to appreciate the benefits of forests and become lifelong stewards of the environment. Partnering with Universal Studios (the film studio that produced *The Lorax*) and the Ad Council, the US Forest Service Conservation Education Program launched its Discover the Forest campaign, which encourages families to get out to the forests and experience their benefits firsthand. The campaign web site provides interactive maps to help you find forests near you, provides curricula and activities you can download for children, and connects you to links for other resources designed to get kids excited about nature.

• Check out the following websites for information about **Dr. Seuss’ *The Lorax*** and much more:

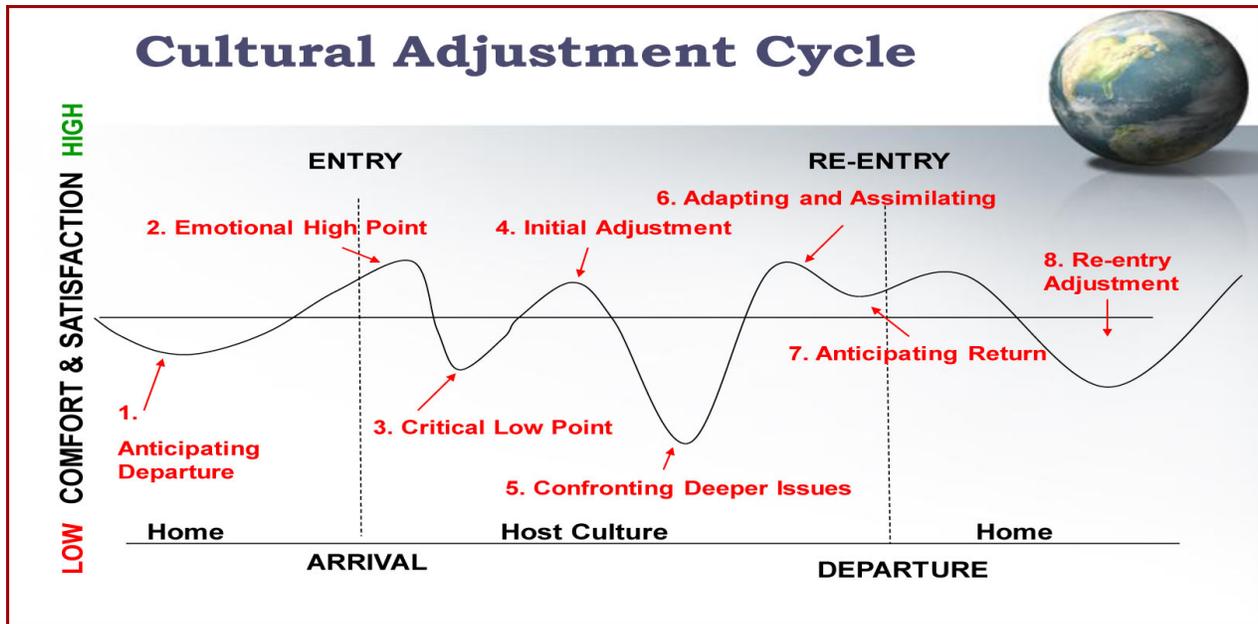
- <http://www.discovertheforest.org/>
- <http://www.theloraxmovie.com>

CULTURE CORNER:

RIDING THE WAVES OF CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Adjusting to life in a new country and culture can be a bit like a roller coaster ride. The ups and downs are exhilarating, unsettling, and even frightening. Even if we think we know what to expect, unexpected twists and turns can make us uneasy.

The cultural adjustment cycle is a series of stages of adaptation to a new culture. In each stage, we experience varying levels of comfort and satisfaction in our new environment. The degree to which we are affected by the waves of cultural adjustment cycle often depends on how often we have traveled or immersed ourselves in other cultures before, to what degree



the new culture is different or similar to our own, and the period of time we anticipate traveling, living or working in a different culture.

The stages of cultural adaptation are represented on the chart below. The vertical axis shows levels of comfort and satisfaction. The horizontal axis represents the passage of time and the stages of a sojourn. Everyone’s individual experiences are different. Thus, the length of phases, the severity of the highs and lows and the range of emotions felt within each stage vary widely.

1. Anticipating Departure

Before going abroad, we are often excited about the trip and at the same time worried about the upcoming challenges.

2. Initial Enthusiasm - Emotional High Point – Honeymoon Stage

Upon arriving, we may find everything new, different, exciting and fascinating. We may also find many similarities. These initial feelings, sometimes referred to as the ‘honeymoon’ stage, may last from a couple of weeks to a few months. In the honeymoon stage, there is a certain element of denial, whereby defense mechanisms minimize fears, anxieties and the gravity of challenges.

3. Critical Low Point – Culture Shock

The novelty of the new culture eventually wears off and we confront difficulties stemming from the loss of familiar cues. We are now clearly aware that there is still much we don’t know. Seemingly simple tasks or activities become challenges and problems: housing, food, transportation, telephones, language, communication, and new friends. The most basic things consume a great deal of energy and time. The question, “Why did I come here?” isn’t uncommon. We may be irritated and even hostile as we focus on troubling differences as opposed to similarities. The resulting frustrations and annoyances that recur during low periods in our adjustment are commonly referred to as “culture shock.” Common responses to this culture shock include defensive behaviors (confrontation) or efforts to minimize the impacts (isolation, withdrawal).

4. Initial Adjustment – Learning to Navigate

Things tend to get better as we develop language skills and learn to navigate in the host culture. Everyday activities such as shopping and going to work are no longer problems as we become more familiar with things, and our communication skills improve. While attempts to minimize feelings of discomfort still occur, many of the uncomfortable reactions to culture shock go away as our behaviors show greater adaptation to and acceptance of our new environment. We may begin to see a balance between the positive and negative aspects of the culture(s).

5. Confronting Deeper Issues – Further Culture Shock

In this stage, we may again feel our frustration increasing as we confront larger cultural and personal difficulties. Deeper personal issues begin to surface. By this stage, we have been gone and away from our families for a long time and we may feel lonely. Sometimes we are frustrated that we can't express ourselves very well in a second language and we lose self-confidence and self-esteem. The result may be feelings of isolation, boredom and a lack of motivation. Additionally, at this stage, we may have adopted behaviors of our host culture that are not in alignment with our deeper core values (cognitive dissonance).

6. Adapting, Acculturating and Assimilating – Further Adjustment

At this stage, we have resolved some of our feelings of isolation and we may feel more comfortable in our new home. We begin gaining a better understanding of the major differences and deeper aspects of the culture. We have established routines and accepted the habits, customs, food, workplace cultures, characteristics of relationships and the language. While some might truly begin developing strong relationships with members of the host culture at this stage, others won't as they still view themselves as just long-term visitors or tourists. In this phase, we might even begin to integrate aspects of the new culture into our own identity, so that the host culture has become part of us.

7. Anticipating Return

A few weeks before returning home, we start thinking about what returning home will be like. We are excited to see friends and family and to return to the comforts of a familiar place. However, our anxiety increases as we think about leaving what has become our home, how much we have changed, and how the changes in us will be viewed by friends and family back home.

8. Re-entry Adjustment – Re-entry Shock

In some cases, re-entry shock is more difficult than the initial culture shock. Upon returning, we must adjust again, but this time to a culture that was once familiar. Many of the phases of the cultural adjustment cycle will repeat themselves, with varying degrees of intensity, as we adjust to being home. We return to view our own culture and environment from a new perspective. Family and friends at home might be unable to relate to our experience and seem to have limited interest in hearing our stories, viewing photos or listening to us share what we thought was great or "better" from a different place. Similarly, when we share

negative things, our friends and family may have little tolerance for hearing complaints or criticism from one who was so privileged to travel abroad.

Suggestions for further reading about Cultural Adjustment:

The Art of crossing cultures

Craig Storti

ISBN: 0585434891 DDC: 303.482 LCC: GN517

Edition: (electronic bk.) ISBN: 0933662858 LCC: GN517

American cultural patterns

Edward C. Stewart, Milton J. Bennett

ISBN: 1877864013 DDC: 973 LCC: E169.1

Americans at Work: A guide to the Can-Do People

Craig Storti

ISBN: 1931930058 DDC: 650.13086910973

Edition: Paperback; 2004-07 ISBN: 1417526785

DDC: 650.13086910973 LCC: HD8081

Edition: (electronic bk.)

Find more books about cultural adjustment and intercultural communication at:

- <http://nicholasbrealey.com/boston/subjects/interculturalpress.html>

WHAT'S NEW

US FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS' MONARCH JOINT VENTURE ENGAGES URBAN COMMUNITIES IN CONSERVATION EDUCATION

The Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), easily recognizable by its bright orange and black coloring, is in serious decline. Few people know that it takes three to four generations of Monarchs to complete one full migration across North America from Michoacan, Mexico, to Canada, a journey of about 3,000 miles. Its migration route stretches from Canada through the US, where several paths, or "flyways" merge to create a single swath through central





Texas. The butterflies finally reach northern Mexico, where they overwinter in the region of Michoacán. Unfortunately, there is a very real risk that Monarch populations could decline. The loss of habitat in winter-

ing grounds due to the impact of deforestation and human settlement is a continuing concern. Land use and farming practices in its breeding area threaten milkweed, the host plant for the butterfly.

To protect the Monarch, it is essential to protect habitat and food sources along the flyways, where the Monarch feeds, reproduces, and congregates. The US Forest Service plays a large role in Monarch habitat conservation and research through the Monarch Joint Venture, a partnership of federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and academic programs that work together to support and coordinate efforts to protect the monarch migration across the its flyway. The US Forest Service, is a leading partner in supporting monarch habitat conservation, maintenance and enhancement, education and outreach, and research and monitoring. As part of its Wings Across the Americas program, the US Forest Service has focused on underserved communities and helping children, teachers, and families in urban areas develop closer relationships to nature and the environment while working to conserve a migratory species. The US Forest Service works with partners in Canada, the US and Mexico to increase educational outreach efforts for inner city youth and to support the work of wildlife biologists and land managers.

One specialized educational project focuses primarily on early childhood programs. The activities are designed not only for the classroom and schoolyard, but also to promote parent-child interactions with nature in the home. Teacher training focuses on engaging children at an early age in the sciences while tapping their enthusiasm for touching, exploring, and investigating. The theme of migratory Monarchs and birds also appears in after-school reading and math programs for middle school students, including real-world conservation challenges.

Other program content has been designed specifically for children and adults with special needs. The Monarch is used as a focal point for horticultural and sensory therapy, and conservation activities replicate physical therapy in the

development and fine-tuning of motor skills.

With the help of University of Minnesota's Monarch Lab, schools have created protected environments in which the Monarchs can lay their eggs. The eggs will hatch into caterpillars that later transform themselves into butterflies. The children can watch the butterflies emerge from their chrysalises several weeks later, then tag them to follow their migration.

Since the program's inception in 2009, more than 4,500 elementary school students, 300 middle-schoolers, and approximately 100 adults and children with disabilities have participated in these outreach programs. At present, Chicago is the primary location of most schools and community partners, partially due to the familial and cultural ties of many Chicago Latino residents to the Monarch's home in Michoacán, Mexico. International Programs is currently expanding outreach efforts to Washington, DC and Houston, TX, which are both large, urban areas located on the Monarch's migratory path.

As a result of the environmental education programs of the Monarch Joint Venture and Wings Across the Americas, Chicago parents have remarked that their children are starting to notice birds, insects, and urban wildlife on their way to and from school, an important indicator of the program's success. These integrated environmental education programs and public-private partnerships show great promise for strengthening the link between urban communities, nature, and conservation, between the U.S. and its neighbors to the north and south, and having a positive impact on the threatened Monarch butterfly population.

For more information, visit:

The Monarch Joint Venture -

- <http://monarchjointventure.org/>

US Forest Service: Wings Across the Americas -

- <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/wings/butterflies/welcome.htm>

US Forest Service - The Monarch Butterfly in North America -

- <http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/monarchbutterfly/migration/index.shtml>
- http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/Monarch_Butterfly.pdf

Please Share Your Stories!

We would like to invite everyone to share photos and stories about yourselves, your programs, and the exchange experiences you've had in the United States and abroad. Please submit your stories, pictures, ideas, and feedback to Brenda Dean at bdean@fs.fed.us.

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Disclaimer

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ON THE HORIZON

Upcoming US Holidays and Special Occasions

June 14	Flag Day
June 17	Father's Day
July 4	Independence Day
September 3	Labor Day

If you are a visitor to the US, ask your American hosts, friends and colleagues how they celebrate these holidays. You can also find more information on the internet. Here are some suggested sites to explore:

- <http://www.usafederalholidays.com/>
- <http://www.calendar-365.com/holidays/2012.html>
- <http://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/>

Hosts, we encourage you to use this opportunity to share an aspect of American culture with your visitor(s)!

Independence Day – July 4th

Independence Day is celebrated on July 4, the day when the Continental Congress adopted the final draft of the Declaration for Independence. It was read publicly many times throughout the months following its signing on July 8, 1776, and these readings were often accompanied by great celebrations. One particularly notable celebration took place in the city of Philadelphia in 1777, where bells rang, ships fired cannons, and people lit candles and firecrackers. The War of Independence dragged on until 1783, the year Independence Day was made an official holiday. Because of the ringing of the Liberty Bell at the great celebration in Philadelphia, the sight and sound of a bell represents freedom to most Americans.



July 4th is now an official national holiday when most businesses and government offices in the United States are closed. Communities often celebrate by having day-long picnics with favorite foods like hot dogs, hamburgers, potato salad, baked beans, and all the "fixings". The afternoon activities may include lively music, a friendly baseball game, team relay races or three-legged races, and pie or watermelon-eating contests. Some cities have parades with people dressed as the original founding fathers, marching to the music of local high school bands. At dusk, people in cities and towns all over the country gather to watch fireworks displays. Wherever Americans find each other, all around the globe, they usually get together for a traditional 4th of July celebration!