

BRANCHING OUT

THE US FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS

June 2013

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

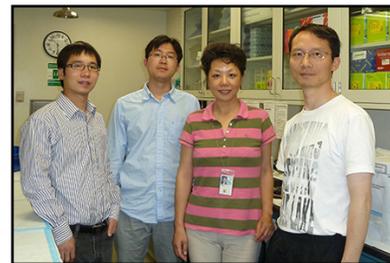
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The US Forest Service International Visitor Program (IVP) facilitates participation in a wide variety of professional and educational exchanges, which encourage scientific collaboration and discovery, increase intercultural understanding, and promote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

SPOTLIGHT:

HOST DR. JUDY CHEN AND 3 EXCHANGE VISITORS: HUOQING ZHENG, SHAOKANG HUANG AND ZHIGUO LI



Honey bees play an important role in our everyday lives as they are responsible for one-third of the food we eat. The fertilization of plants by these pollinating insects is essential for maintaining our food supply. In recent years new invasive pests and diseases have threatened this honey bee community, which is why the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) maintains a strong honey bee research program. While the US plays a leadership role in the global beekeeping industry and honey bee research, China has the largest number of managed honey bee colonies. The two countries maintain honey bee colonies for different reasons. In China, honey bees are kept mainly for producing bee products, while in contrast, in the US, the bees are kept for providing pollination services to agricultural crops. Like other industries in China, the beekeeping industry is undergoing renovation to meet the new requirements of modern agriculture and is upgrading the industry itself. The US beekeeping industry is a great example for Chinese exchange visitors to learn from and share their own knowledge on the subject matter. (continued on page 2)

IMMIGRATION NOTES:

New Form I-94 at the US Border

The US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency is rolling out a new, electronic system of tracking the arrivals and departures of non-US citizens visiting the United States. Under the old system, foreign visitors fill out a paper form upon entry, which was stamped and then placed in the passport and surrendered upon departure. In the new system, visitors entering the country by air or sea will no longer have to fill out a paper Form I-94. CBP will gather travelers' arrival and departure information automatically from their electronic travel records provided by the airlines. This automation will streamline the entry process for travelers, facilitate security and reduce federal costs.

What does this change mean for IVP visitors?

Visitors who enter the US and do not receive a paper I-94 card will be able to print one online at www.cbp.gov/i94 by entering basic biodata and a passport number. The International Visitor Program Specialist working with each visitor's case will still request a copy of this document in order to validate each traveler's arrival.

Since this system is new, there have been occasional reports of errors with the online system or delays in posting the I-94 information. Please report any issues you encounter to internationalvisitorprogram@fs.fed.us or to the International Visitor Program Specialist who has been dealing with your case.

HOST: DR. JUDY CHEN,
USDA Agricultural Research
Service (ARS) Bee Research
Laboratory, Beltsville, MD

Tell us a bit about your background.

I studied entomology as an undergraduate at Hunan Agricultural University, in China. I came to the US in 1987 to pursue further education and obtained my masters degree from Brigham Young University and Ph.D. degree, from Texas A&M University, both also in Entomology. Prior to joining the USDA-ARS in 2002, I worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Maryland Medical School and National Institutes of Health, where I studied human diseases caused by viruses. As a resident virologist of USDA Bee Research Laboratory, I am currently responsible for identifying and characterizing viruses and other pathogens that cause serious diseases in honey bees, and searching for solutions to the problems caused by these diseases.

What motivated you to host international visitors?

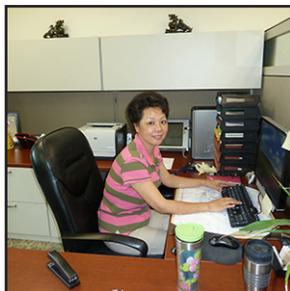
I feel honored to host visiting scientists who are all so talented and have a strong motivation for scientific work. I am inspired by their enthusiasm for science and wish to help them develop their skills and expertise in the field, in order to foster international collaborative relationships and increase awareness and knowledge of issues related to bee health around the world.

What has been the most rewarding part of hosting visitors?

Meeting and working with people from different cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds. Each individual has brought new and unique ideas and experiences to our group, and the different ways in which each individual approaches problems has resulted in a wide range of creative, innovative research projects.

What advice would you give to future hosts who want to host international visitors?

Encourage foreign scientists to experience and explore different aspects of US culture instead of focusing only



on work. Take this as an opportunity not only for scientific expansion but also personal growth.

**VISITOR:
DR. HUOQING ZHENG**

Tell us a bit about your background.

I grew up in the countryside where a large amount of people don't have a good educational background and live on farming and animal husbandry. The techniques they use are traditional but out of date. The lack of advanced techniques and the limit of their knowledge makes their living rely more on 'luck' and not techniques. When I went to college, I decided to major in Animal Science, which was not a popular choice then, thinking that I could learn more than the people from my hometown and one day come back to help them, or people like them.

In my last year of college, I had the chance to work in a honey bee research lab. After I went into the honey bee world, I was immediately fascinated by their amazing features. Little bee, big brain and huge impact--that is the honey bee!

What made you want to come to the United States as an exchange visitor?

After I completed a two-year postdoctoral position in 2012, I got a permanent position at the Zhejiang University as a teacher and researcher on honey bee science. To be a good teacher and scientist, I know that I still need to be more equipped. Gathering more international background and building more international networks would be of great help to broaden and deepen my knowledge and my research. It has been my privilege to come to the US to look into the US beekeeping industry and work in the Bee Research Lab, USDA-ARS, which is a leading lab in honey bee disease research.

What has been the most gratifying part of being a visitor?

The whole trip has been so wonderful and fruitful. Under the supervision of Dr. Judy Chen, I have learned and practiced techniques for honey bee disease study and am currently conducting some fascinating research.



Dr. Shaokang Huang and I have been invited to give talks at several local beekeeping clubs and associations. At the talks, we learn more about American beekeeping and also introduce them to beekeeping in China. I would say that this is the most gratifying part of our visit because we are literally participating in a cultural 'exchange.'

What advice would you give to future visitors?

It is very difficult for Asian visitors to adapt to American life due to the big cultural differences. However, it is possible for them to overcome the culture shock if they pay essential attention to learning and experiencing. The more you experience, the more you learn.

What have been some of the cultural activities you have participated in outside of the lab while in the US?

Life outside of the lab has also been enjoyable. It is an unforgettable memory having Thanksgiving Day lunch and dinner together with friends. This experience also reminds me to always keep thanksgiving in my heart, which I would say is an important lesson I have learned in the US.

VISITOR: SHAKANG HUANG

Tell us a bit about your background.

I am a Professor at the Bee Science College, at the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University, Fujian province, residing in the southeast coast of China. I have studied honey bees in the Department of Bee Science ever since I attended the College of Fujian Agriculture. I got my Master's degree in 1993 and then became a teacher in the same college, specifically focusing on honey bee pathology.



What made you want to come to the United States as an exchange visitor?

After over nearly two decades of teaching at the university, I feel there are so many things I still need to learn. The United States is considered by many to be

the leader in many aspects including science. The Bee Research Lab of the USDA in Beltsville, Maryland was on the top of my list of choices when I got a chance to go abroad.

What has been the most gratifying part of being a visitor?

As a visiting scientist at the Bee Research Lab, I not only do research on honey bee pathology under the guidance of experts in this field, but I also meet and exchange ideas with many other scientists and researchers. It is very exciting to meet other visitors from many other countries.

What advice would you give to future visitors?

English is the main tool for communication here, so my suggestion to future visitors is to do their best to learn American English before and after you are here. Learn as much as you can about the versatile cultures in the US.

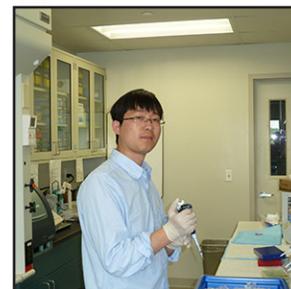
What have been some of the cultural activities you have participated in outside of the lab while in the US?

Every country has its own unique history and culture. The United States is a melting pot of many cultures and is fascinating to me. I have visited several museums and historical sites in Washington, DC. It was very exciting to witness the Inauguration Ceremony of President Obama to his second term and the cherry blossom festival and parade in DC was also very interesting. I even had the chance to visit one of the most prestigious universities in the US, Harvard University, located in Boston.

VISITOR: ZHIGUO LI

Tell us a bit about your background.

My name is Zhiguo Li and I am a PhD candidate at the Zhejiang University, China. My research focuses on the effects of honey bee viruses and other common pathogens on honey bee health.



What made you want to come to the United States as an exchange visitor?

The Bee Research Lab, USDA-ARS is considered to be a worldwide leader focusing on research on honey bee pathogens that are responsible for honey bee health. Since my dissertation research is on this same topic, I thought that studying at the Bee Research Lab for a period of time would broaden my horizons and be helpful in my future career.

What has been the most gratifying part of being a visitor?

Being able to discuss academic questions with Dr. Judy Chen directly and getting to meet many other experts in the field of honey bee research.

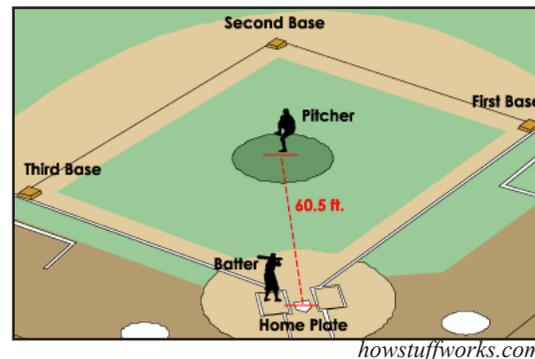
What advice would you give to future visitors?

Learn to speak English well and drive a car proficiently before coming to the United States so you can fully enjoy your life in the United States. Speaking English provides good communication and interaction with your peers and driving provides some independence and allows you to be able to travel and experience different things.

**CULTURE CORNER
BASEBALL: BEHIND THE AMERICAN TRADITION**

Baseball is an American tradition that goes hand-in-hand with the coming of summer and rising temperatures across the country. It is considered the national pastime of the United States because of the tradition that runs deep in the culture, psyche, historical narrative, and even the language of the country. It developed as a sport with formalized rules through the 1800s, as the United States developed as a nation. Professional teams and leagues emerged to make up Major League Baseball today, each with their own histories, heroes and fierce regional allegiances.

Baseball has a complicated set of rules, strategies, and statistics. Trying to explain the game of baseball is difficult. As Major League player, Leo Durocher, summed it up, "Baseball is like church. Many attend, few understand." In general, a baseball game is played by two



teams who alternate between offense and defense, switching once per 'inning.' There are nine innings in each baseball game. Each team gets three 'outs' per half-inning. The team on defense plays nine players on the field: eight fielders and one pitcher, who throws the ball from where he stands on the 'pitcher's mound' to the batter, where he stands at 'home plate' or 'home base'. The team on offense rotates who is up to bat. The goal is to score more runs than the opposing team, which is achieved when a batter hits the ball into play and runs around all three bases that are placed on the diamond back to home base without getting called out. The most common ways that the defense can get an offensive player out are "strikeouts" (the hitter misses three pitches, or accumulates three strikes) and "force outs" (when, after the ball is hit, the defensive player with the ball reaches a base before the runner).

The phrase "hitting a home run" is used often by Americans to indicate success. It's even better if you hear that someone "hit it out of the park," which in baseball terms refers to when a batter hits the ball so hard that it lands outside of the stadium walls, beyond the reach of the defensive team. To "strike out" means the opposite, indicating that an individual was unsuccessful or unlucky in a particular endeavor.

Watch a game on TV with an American colleague who can explain the rules and describe how the long stretches of inaction on the field are actually full of tension and strategy. Better yet, go to a ballpark and experience a slice of American culture. In addition to the game on the field, baseball is full of fun cultural quirks, from the food to the pageantry. Here are some fun baseball traditions to experience:

Costume Races: The Milwaukee Brewers have the Sausage Race, sponsored by a local sausage company, in which people dressed up in different sausage variety costumes (bratwurst, Polish sausage, Italian sausage, hot dog, and chorizo) race around the stadium before the bottom (end) of the sixth inning. Other teams around the country have used the sausage race as a model to come up with their own unique mascot race. In Washington, DC, at the Nationals Park stadium, the past US



salon.com

presidents depicted on Mount Rushmore (George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt), race for the win.

Minor League Teams: All of the professional Major League Baseball teams have development teams where players train to become better and eventually rise to the ranks of becoming a Major League player. These “Minor League” teams are often located in smaller towns around the U.S., and take on cheeky, locally themed mascots and souvenir clothing. International visitors in Ogden, Utah should check out the Ogden Raptors. Our Missoula, MT visitors can go see a Missoula Raptors game. And our Peoria, IL visitors can cheer on the Peoria Chiefs.

The Seventh Inning Stretch: Between the top and the bottom of the 7th inning of a baseball game, it is a tradition to sing “Take me out to the Ballgame.” The whole crowd stands up--hence the name “seventh-inning stretch”-- and joins in the singing.

Look back to our very first issue of Branching Out from March 2012 to learn how the Forest Service’s Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) in Madison, WI helps make baseball bats safer for players and fans: http://www.fs.fed.us/global/wsnew/ivp/2012/february2012_ivpnews.pdf

EXPLORE!
IN THIS ISSUE: OUTDOOR RECREATION AREAS NEAR WASHINGTON, DC, NORTHERN VIRGINIA, AND MARYLAND

George Washington & Jefferson National Forests:

The George Washington & Jefferson National Forests have multiple recreation areas popular for camping, picnicking, fishing, cycling, swimming, hiking and horseback riding. More than 325 miles of the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) traverse portions of these National Forests. The A.T. is America’s first National Scenic Trail and is a protected “greenway” of public lands which protects many examples of our nation’s important cultural and natural resources. It extends more than 2,175 miles through the Appalachian Mountains across fourteen states. More than 2 million people hike some portion of the A.T. each year. Trailheads and public road crossings can be found about every five miles.

Location: The George Washington and Jefferson National Forests are located in the Appalachian Mountain range west of the Shenandoah Mountains across the



<http://www.fs.usda.gov/gwj>



summitpost.org

Shenandoah Valley. They span the western border of Virginia and cross into parts of West Virginia and Kentucky. From Washington, DC to the North River Ranger District outside Harrisonburg is approximately 140 miles from Washington, DC (2.5 hours – I-66 to I-81) and the Warm Springs Ranger District Visitor Center near Hot Springs, VA, it is approximately 200 miles (3.5- hour drive, I-66 to I-81 then west on I-64 at Lexington).

Resources

- Main Website: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/gwj/home>
- North River Ranger District Map: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recrea/gwj/recrea/?recid=77723>
- Warm Springs Ranger District Recreation Map: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/recrea/gwj/recrea/?recid=77724>
- Appalachian Trail Maps & Information: <http://www.appalachiantrail.org>

Nearby:

Shenandoah National Park & Skyline Drive

– Shenandoah National Park is a perfect destination for a day trip with short hikes, picnics and wildlife viewing. It is also a

favorite destination of campers, outdoor enthusiasts, and experienced hikers and rock climbers. Old Rag, a 3268-foot mountain, offers one of the park’s most difficult, but most beautiful hikes. The Park is 105 miles long and stretches from Front Royal, Virginia down to the Charlottesville, VA area. Skyline Drive is a scenic roadway through the park located in the beautiful Shenandoah Range of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The northern entrance near Front Royal, VA is approximately 75 miles west of Washington, DC exiting off of I-66 (1.5-hour drive). There are four entrances to Shenandoah National Park (north to south: Front Royal, Thornton Gap, Swift Run Gap, Rockfish Gap) and three main visitor education centers (Dickey Ridge, Byrd and Loft Mountain). Park day entrance fee: \$15 per vehicle, discount passes are available.



Virginia.gov

- Shenandoah National Park: <http://www.nps.gov/shen/index.htm>
- Park Map: http://www.nps.gov/shen/planyourvisit/upload/whole_park.pdf

Luray Caverns in Luray, VA, is only 10 minutes from the central Thornton Gap entrance to Skyline Drive and 15 minutes from I-81 at New Market, Virginia. Visitors can see this U.S. National Landmark of



Sciencedirect.com

enormous cavern chambers and rock formations under the Shenandoah Valley and hear the “Great Stalacpipe Organ” on well-lit, one-hour tours. Entrance Fees: \$24 adult, \$12 child, free for children under 5.

- Luray Caverns: <http://luraycaverns.com/>

Lodging: State Parks, National Parks, and National Forests offer lodging at campgrounds, cabins, and some have lodges or hotels. Reservations can be made via the Park or Forest websites. Throughout the region, bed & breakfasts, motels and cabin rentals are plentiful just outside the park and forest boundaries.

Other useful resources:

- Virginia Tourism Authority: <http://www.virginia.org/>
- Shenandoah Valley Wine Trail: <http://shenandoahvalleywinetrail.com/>



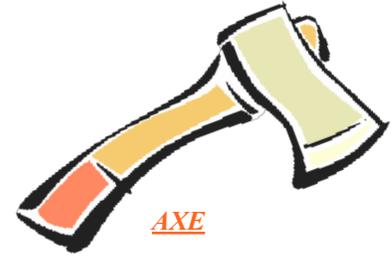
www.fs.usda.gov/attmain/gwj/specialplaces

QUIZ: HOMOPHONES

Test your vocabulary and knowledge of English words that sound alike, but have different spellings and meanings.

See if you can fill in the word in the blank with something that SOUNDS like the item pictured beside it. The answers are at the bottom of the page.

Example: The end of that play was so exciting! I'm relieved, because the plot was a little slow throughout the first two ACTS.



1. This book is very expensive. It was signed by the author, and it's a first _____.



6. I cheered so much at the concert this weekend, that my voice is still a little _____ today.



2. I found a car I would like to buy in the classified ads, so I am going to contact the _____.



7. Please call me for help if there is anything you _____.



3. The lilac is my favorite flower because of its purple color and its wonderful _____.



8. I have a full-time day job, so I have to go to _____ school to get my Master's degree.



4. A _____ is a large type of rabbit.



9. If you want to sell your house, you should contact a _____ estate agent to help you put it on the market.



5. When you call the Help Desk, have the model number and the _____ number of your computer available.



10. You should be careful in the city not to park illegally, because there is always a risk that your car will be _____.



Answers: 1. Edition (picture: addition); 2. Seller (picture: cellar); 3. Scent (picture: cent); 4. Hare (photo: hair); 5. Serial (picture: cereal); 6. hoarse (picture: horse); 7. Need (picture: knead); 8. Night (picture: knight); 9. Real (picture: reel); 10. Towed (picture: toad)

BRANCHING OUT | US FOREST SERVICE INTERNATIONAL VISITOR PROGRAM

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 Emily Betz at eebetzclose@fs.fed.us.

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ON THE HORIZON

Upcoming US Holidays and Special Occasions

June 14	Flag Day
June 16	Father's Day
June 21	First Day of Summer -- June Solstice
July 4	Independence Day (Federal Government closed)
July 28	Parent's Day

If you are a visitor to the US, ask your American hosts, friends and colleagues how they celebrate these holidays.

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

The 4th of July: Celebrations of Independence in the United States

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. 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. One of the largest celebrations is held in Washington, DC, on the National Mall. Visitors come from all over the country to see the fireworks over the Capitol, the Lincoln Memorial, and the other famous monuments.

Learn more about the national Independence Day events at <http://www.nps.gov/foju/index.htm>, or tune into your local Public Broadcasting System (PBS) channel at 8:00pm Eastern on July 4th to watch the display. You can also join in the festivities virtually through the PBS website: <http://www.pbs.org/capitolfourth/>