

Alex Harper, an entomologist at the Agriculture Research Centre in Lethbridge, Alberta, from 1947 to 1986, died 24 July 2012 in Lethbridge at the age of 86.

Alex obtained his BSc and MSc from the University of Alberta and his PhD from Washington State (Pullman). He was a charter member of the Entomological Society of Alberta and over the years held every executive position in that society. He also served several terms on the Heritage Committee of the Entomological Society of Canada.

During his career, Alex studied a wide variety of insect pests, especially those of sugar beet and forage crops, with a particular interest in aphids, culminating in the publication of a bibliography of the pea aphid (1). In collaboration with plant pathologists he found that insects played a role in the transmission of verticillium wilt, a serious disease of alfalfa. He also documented that the 5-spotted ladybird beetle, an important predator of the pea aphid, overwintered in southern Alberta as aggregations in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains (2). His children fondly remember excursions to locate and monitor the aggregations. Unfortunately, this species is now uncommon. Alex also had an interest in plant galls and was a coauthor of a pictorial guide to the insect and mite galls of the Canadian Prairies (3). His penchant for bibliographic investigation led to the publication of a bibliography of Alberta entomology (4). In total he published 48 scientific publications and more than 155 technical and popular articles.

In addition to his entomological studies Alex played a key role in the planning and development of the phytotron (controlled environment facility) that was an important component of the new research laboratory completed at Lethbridge in 1977. He subsequently advised scientists and engineers in other countries which were planning similar facilities, including visits and presentations of seminars in Japan, Hong Kong and the Peoples Republic of China.

Alex was active in community organizations and served a term as Senator and on the Board of Governors for the University of Lethbridge. He was a longtime member of Kiwanis and over the years served as a Director of the YMCA, the Canadian Club, the Japanese Garden Society and the Lethbridge Association for Bright Children.

He is survived by Georgean, his wife of 56 years, a son, three daughters and nine grandchildren. A younger brother, Frank, who was a plant pathologist and colleague at AAFC Lethbridge, passed away in 1991. To his colleagues, Alex was always a considerate and helpful friend.



**Alexander (Alex) Maitland
Harper
(1926 – 2012)**

1. Harper, A.M., J.P. Miska, G.R. Manglitz, B.J. Irwin, and E.J. Armbrust. 1978. The Literature of Arthropods Associated with Alfalfa. III. A bibliography of the pea aphid *Acyrtosiphon pisum* (Harris) (Homoptera: Aphidae), Ill. Agr. Exp. Sta., Spec. Bull. **50**, 89 pp.

2. Harper, A.M. and C.E. Lilly. 1982. Aggregations and winter survival in southern Alberta of *Hippodamia quinquesignata* (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae), a predator of the pea aphid (Homoptera: Aphidae). Can. Ent. **114**: 303-309.

3. Wong, H.R., J.C.E. Melvin, and A.M. Harper. 1977. Common insect and mite galls of the Canadian Prairies. Northern Forest Research Centre, Edmonton , Alberta, Information Report NOR-X-196, 81pp.

4. Harper, A.M., 1979. A bibliography of Alberta entomology: 1883-1977, Alberta Agriculture, Plant Industry Division, 101 pp.

J. Robert Byers, Lethbridge



M. Larrivee

Elateridae