

Gary Wade Gibson



Gary Wade Gibson was born Jan. 21, 1951, in Morgantown. He grew up in Preston County, where he was active in Boy Scouts and 4-H. He graduated Valley High School in Masontown in 1968 and earned a B.S. in Biology at Fairmont State College in 1972.

He began his 38-year career with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) in 1972 when he was hired to supervise its Nursery Inspection Program. He oversaw the annual registration of West Virginia plant nurseries and dealers, as well as inspection of stock at those nurseries. He developed a directory of registered nurseries and a monthly newsletter that kept the nursery and Christmas tree industries informed about plant pests of concern. He also authored articles for the WVDA's Market Bulletin and was a speaker for numerous garden clubs, schools and other organizations.

Throughout his career, Gibson helped advance bills through the West Virginia Legislature, including amendments to the West Virginia Plant Pest Act and the Noxious Weed Act of 1974, and the passage of legislation that would regulate certain genetically modified organisms intended for distribution in the state.

He attended the charter meeting of the Eastern Chapter of the Horticultural Inspections Society (HIS) and served as the group's President in 1983 and 1990, as well as its Secretary from 1993-96. The group presented him with its Distinguished Service Award in 1986.

In 1994, Gibson became Assistant Director of Plant Industries Division and took over the Agricultural Pest Survey Program Unit, a combination of five separate programs, one of which was the apiary program. With tracheal mites becoming a major problem for honey bees, Gibson secured funding to purchase mite-resistant queens to distribute to all registered beekeepers to help build resistant colonies throughout the state.

In 2005, Gibson was promoted to Director of Plant Industries Division, where he supervised the work of a staff of 30. As part of this role, he represented West Virginia on the Eastern and National Plant Boards. He served on numerous committees in those organizations, and in 2009 was elected President of the Eastern Plant Board. He conducted the semi-annual meetings of the West Virginia Gypsy Moth Working Group and the West Virginia Invasive Species Working Group. Gibson retired from WVDA in 2011.

WVDA presented him with a Distinguished Performance Award in 1990 and 1992. He received an appreciation award from the West Virginia Nursery and Landscape Association in 1993 and the Carl E. Carlson Distinguished Achievement Award in Regulatory Plant Protection from the National Plant Board in 1998.

Gibson serves as a Community Emergency Response Volunteer for St. Albans, he is a member of the St. Albans Parks and Recreation Committee, and he enjoys gardening and the natural sciences.