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<http://www.apsnet.org/meetings/abstracts.asp>

Hansen, E. 2008. *Phytophthora* – A day late and a dollar short. *Phytopathology* 98:S187.

Our knowledge of *Phytophthora*, and our tools to manage it have advanced dramatically in the last 100 years. Today we have a much better understanding of the phylogeny, ecology, and pathogenesis of *Phytophthora* than we did then. Today we have selective media and selective fungicides; we have an elaborate regulatory apparatus. But if today's knowledge had been available 100 years ago would it have been used to slow the spread of *P. cinnamomi* in the SE U.S.? If a time machine had allowed Australians in 1950 to see the damage *P. cinnamomi* threatens to native forests and the incredibly diverse heathlands of Western Australia, would they have acted more quickly or with more resolve? How would today's tools have been deployed in 1920 when *Phytophthora* root rot began to kill ornamental Port Orford cedars on the west coast of the United States? Would it have been a different story in 1950 when the pathogen reached the native forests in SW Oregon? The record of the last decade certainly doesn't support any claim that our modern knowledge has changed our behavior significantly when it comes to slowing, let alone preventing, invasive *Phytophthoras*. The problem today is not so much lack of knowledge, but failure of will in a changing world. The pressures of population and globalization, the power of money, and accelerating environmental change keep us off balance and behind the curve.