Things I Have Learned Working with Junior & Senior High School Students in New York

- In my area, Junior High School science students are required to participate in a local science fair.
- Advanced Placement Biology Students have their exam in mid-May, and need projects to do until the end of school (in mid-June).
- Students may need an advisor for independent research projects. The topic may not always be of interest to you as an advisor. It is good to help anyway if you can.
- Food for students to snack on is appreciated: either as part of the research project (like the M&M experiments) or bringing snacks if you have students out working a research plots. For the M&M experiments, I let them eat only the M&M’s they will be touching; or give them extra packets to munch. Other M&M’s are not eaten and only used for the experiment.
- When doing a project/experiment; I spend a class period ahead of time, to explain the project and give them a protocol sheet. Pictures are good to help students identify bugs or anything else they need to visually identify.
- Students can be very helpful and make good contributions to research projects.
- In giving presentations, make it into a story, rather than a narration of steps, events, or ideas.
- Students may not have access to good abstracting journals (BIOSIS, CAB, Agricola). Abstracts available to them through their school may not provide the articles needed to do a good literature search on an agriculturally related experiment.
- A 45-minute class period is very short to do a project. Plan so that every minute is used and everyone is involved and doing something. Idle people chat and little gets accomplished.