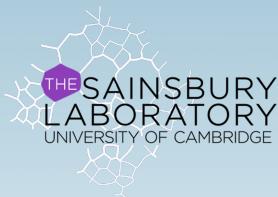


Welcome to NoCaSS 2023



Norwich-Cambridge Science Symposium
for Plant and Microbial Sciences
Sainsbury Laboratory
University of Cambridge

April 24-25, 2023



Earlham Institute



Made Possible by Our Sponsors



DEPARTMENT OF
Plant Sciences



NoCaSS 2023

NoCaSS 2023 is back with a broader scope, bigger audience, and more time for individuals to bond. We have initiated a collaboration amongst students and post-docs to host NoCaSS in 2023. The newly renamed Norwich-Cambridge Science Symposium will be hosted in Cambridge over two days to allow students and post-docs to present their research, form collaborations, and learn from each other. We are also introducing scientist-oriented workshops on careers, publishing, and transferable skills to help the participants be active members in plant and microbial research across the world

History of NoCaSS

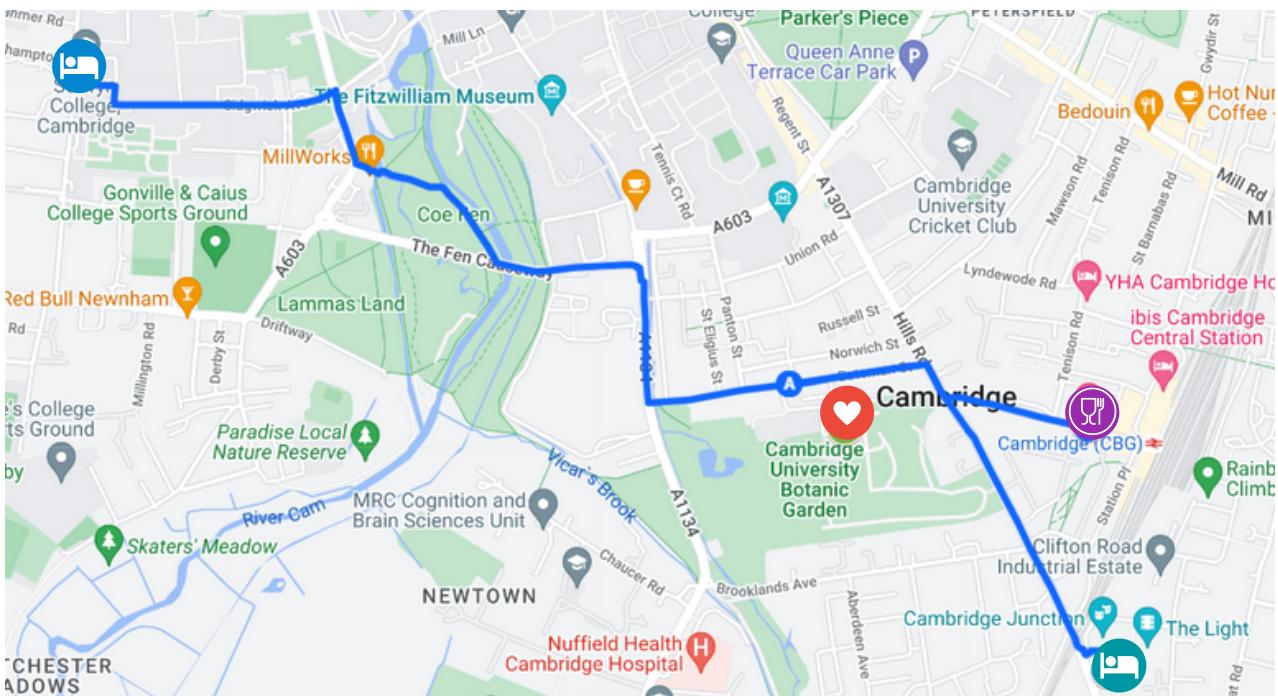
NoCaSS was founded in 2013 by Annis Richardson and Jo Harrison, who were alumni of University of Cambridge and PhD students at the John Innes Centre. The founders of the conference seized upon the opportunity to connect two physically close plant research centres in a day of exchange of ideas, new collaborations, and innovations for future projects that removed the intimidation of large, international conferences for students. It helped connect the two premiere plant research centres and provided opportunities for discussion and collaboration that was sparse for students, in a day-long symposium known as Norwich-Cambridge Student Symposium. Thus, NoCaSS was born and has been held on a regular basis as a student-led and student-oriented conference.



Contact

For all questions or queries please contact us at info@nocass.org

Maps & Locations



Conference venue:

The Sainsbury Laboratory, Bateman Street, Cambridge CB2 1LR

Enter through 47 Bateman St. - see next page!



Reception venue:

The Clayton Hotel, 27-29 Station Rd, Cambridge CB1 2FB

10 minute walk from conference venue



Accommodation venue 1:

Selwyn College, Grange Road, Cambridge CB3 9DQ

25-30 minute walk to conference venue



Accommodation venue 2:

Travelodge Central Cambridge, Cambridge Leisure Park, Clifton Way, Cambridge CB1 7DY

15 minute walk to conference venue

Getting to the Sainsbury Laboratory

Finding the Sainsbury Lab can be a bit tricky, so here is a handy guide.

When you first arrive, you will need to enter through the black gate at 47 Bateman Street. If you buzz for reception, they can open the gate for you, but there'll also be volunteers letting people in at the door.

The entrance from Bateman Street looks like this:



Follow the arrow and after walking in, you'll see the gate - it looks like this:



If you arrive early and want a taste of Cambridge, we recommend heading to **King's Parade** (Cambridge CB2 1ST) - there will be plenty of coffee and sweet shops in the area (local favourites are the market, Fitzbillies, Dulcis, and Aromi). For convenience, the area between the train station and the Sainsbury Laboratory is full of coffee and pastry shops (**Norfolk St. Bakery, the beautiful Gail's by the station, or Maison Clement**). Finally, for those at Selwyn, **Harvey's Coffee Shop** (Harvey Court, West Rd, Cambridge CB3 9DS) is in Stephen Hawking's former college, and it's a great place to start exploring some more student coffee shops.

We can't wait to welcome you to Cambridge, and to NoCaSS 2023!

NoCaSS Committee

Farahnoz Khojayori

PhD Student

Farahnoz is a third year PhD student in Prof. Beverley Glover's group at the University of Cambridge. Her research interests revolve around the evolution and development of novel characters in flowering plants and their association with unique pollinator behaviours.



Thomas Navarro

PhD Student

Thomas is a second year PhD student working in David Seung's lab at the John Innes Centre. His research combines fundamental and applied science to develop potatoes with improved post-harvest quality traits and nutritional value, where he is using novel gene engineering technologies and breeding platforms to achieve his project's goals.



Gabriel Ferreras Garrucho

PhD Student

Gabriel is a second year PhD student working with Prof. Uta Paszkowski at the Crop Science Centre, University of Cambridge. His work focuses on pre-symbiotic signalling in arbuscular mycorrhizal symbiosis in rice, with a particular interest in the spatio-temporal dynamics of the interaction. He uses transcriptomics, spatially restricted mutant complementation, single-cell sequencing datasets and fluorescent biosensors to elucidate where, when, and how the plant deploys its symbiotic arsenal to establish a beneficial interaction versus starting a defence response against a pathogen.



Ruoxi Lin

PhD Student

Ruoxi is a second year PhD student working with Prof. Cathie Martin in John Innes Centre. Her project focuses on mining the diterpenoid diversity in Lamiaceae plant *Coleus comosus*. She uses a diverse array of research approaches including microscopy, bioinformatics and biochemistry to investigate the driving force behind the emergence of new chemical scaffolds.



Lucía Arce Cubas

PhD Student

Lucía is a fourth year PhD student working with Dr. Johannes Kromdijk at the University of Cambridge. She uses physiological and molecular approaches to do a comparative analysis of C3 and C4 photosynthesis under dynamic light conditions, as well as the photoprotective responses of each pathway.





Marina Millán Blánquez

PhD Student

Marina Millán Blánquez is a fourth year Ph.D. student at the John Innes Centre where she studies the post-anthesis development of the unpollinated wheat carpel in collaboration with KWS and Syngenta. Marina is applying a combination of approaches, including field trials, microscopy work, machine learning, and transcriptomics to better understand the genetic processes regulating different aspects of female fertility in bread wheat.



Emily Oren

PhD Student

Emily is a first year PhD student in Sarah Robinson's group at the Sainsbury Laboratory, University of Cambridge. Her research focuses on the relationship between cell division and mechanical properties in the context of *Arabidopsis thaliana* growth. She uses a variety of imaging and biomechanical analysis methods, including confocal microscopy, atomic force microscopy (AFM), and extensometer techniques.



Rose McNelly

PhD Student

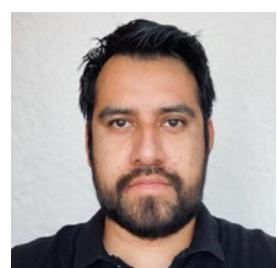
Rose is a third year PhD student working in David Seung's lab at the John Innes Centre where she is trying to discover novel factors involved in endosperm starch formation in wheat. To achieve this she is conducting a genome wide association study and generating a biparental mapping population in the wheat ancestor *Aegilops tauschii*.



Humberto Herrera-Ubaldo

Post-doc

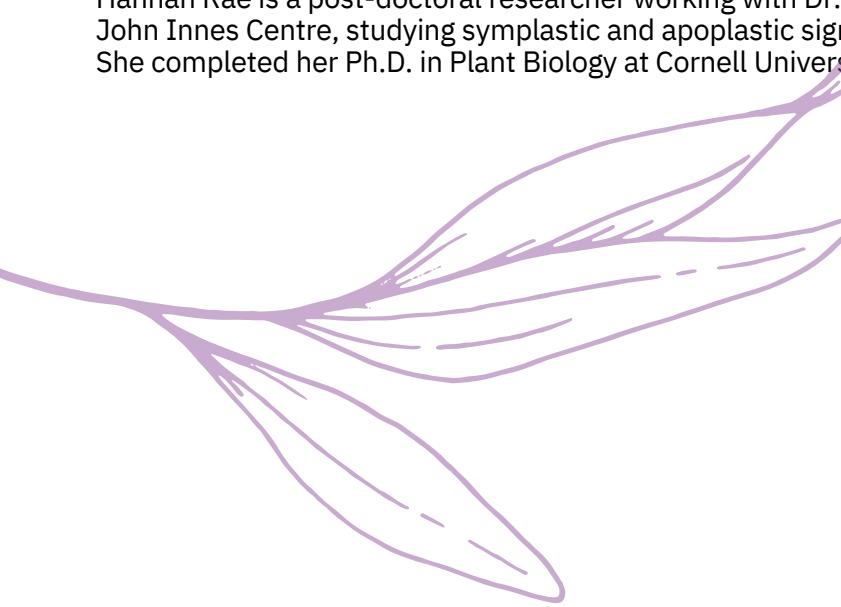
Humberto is a postdoc working with Dr. Beverley J. Glover at the Department of Plant Sciences, University of Cambridge. He is interested in understanding the formation of iridescent colours produced by the periodic ordering of nanoscale structures in the petals. He completed a Ph.D. in Plant Biotechnology (Cinvestav, México), studying carpel and fruit development in *Arabidopsis*.



Hannah Rae Thomas

Post-doc

Hannah Rae is a post-doctoral researcher working with Dr. Christine Faulkner at the John Innes Centre, studying symplastic and apoplastic signaling in plant immunity. She completed her Ph.D. in Plant Biology at Cornell University in New York, USA.



24TH APRIL

13:00 - 13:30	Registration Atrium
13:30 - 14:00	Conference Opening Auditorium
14:00 - 15:15	Talks Session 1&2 Virulence (Auditorium) & Metabolites and Morphogens (Board Room)
15:20 - 16:00	Poster Session 1 (Odd Numbers) Atrium
16:15 - 17:45	Providing evidence for the skills that stay with you - hfp consulting Auditorium
18:00 - 19:00	Travel to reception site
19:00 - 22:00	Reception and drinks Clayton Hotel Buffet Dinner

25TH APRIL

08:30 - 09:00	Arrival and Coffee Atrium
09:00 - 10:15	Talks Session 3 Development and Evolution (Auditorium)
10:20 - 11:10	Panel: Careers Auditorium
11:10 - 11:30	Coffee Break Atrium
11:30 - 12:30	Keynote: Dr. Megan McDonald Giant transposons driving fungal horizontal gene transfer; the ToxA story (Auditorium)
12:30 - 13:30	Lunch Atrium
13:30 - 14:20	Panel: Writing and Publishing Auditorium
14:20 - 15:35	Talks Session 4&5 Roots, Fungi and Resistance (Auditorium) & Genetic Engineering (Board Room)
15:35 - 16:15	Poster Session 2 (Even Numbers) Atrium
16:30 - 17:20	Tour of Cambridge Botanic Gardens Foyer



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: *Dr. Megan McDonald*

April 25th, 11:30-12:30, Auditorium



“

**Giant transposons
driving fungal horizontal
gene transfer; the ToxA
story**

”

Megan uses a combination of -omics tools to understand how fungi cause disease on crop plants. She is originally from a small town in central Arizona, and studied Microbiology at the University of Arizona in Tucson. She obtained her PhD from the ETH Zürich in Switzerland. There, she used phylogenetics and population genetics to study the movement of fungal diseases around the world. She moved to Australia to start a post-doc with a competitive fellowship from the Swiss National Science Foundation in 2012. Since then, Megan has taught herself to code and used various -omics technologies to identify virulence genes in the fungi that infect wheat (you may know her as a “bioinformatician”). In November 2020, she started as a Birmingham Fellow within the School of Biosciences. There, Megan plans to continue her work using long-read sequencing to examine chromosomal plasticity and horizontal transposon transfer among plant pathogenic fungal species.

Providing evidence for the skills that stay with you

Interactive session to work on your skills

April 24th, 16:15-17:45, Auditorium



Dr. Jörg Stange

CPO and consultant

Jörg holds a PhD in Immunobiology and Parasitology from the Humboldt Universität Berlin. He spent 6 years working as a postdoc at the Babraham Institute in Cambridge, working as a immunobiologist. He joined the hfp consulting team in 2013, and has been a member of the management team since 2018.



Dr. Franck Fourniol

Consultant

Franck did his PhD on the molecular basis of brain development at Birkbeck, University of London, and Institut Curie. He worked as a postdoc at the Francis Crick Institute, and was previously an Intern, Policy Adviser and Senior Policy Adviser at the Royal Society. He is currently working as a Senior Data and Technology Insight Adviser at the Competition and Markets Authority. He is trained as a coach (Mastering the Coach Approach, ITS, UK), and is a Mental Health First Aider (MHFA England).



Our mission: Shaping the culture of science by training scientists to be effective, inclusive, and authentic leaders. hfp consulting provides professional development workshops exclusively for the scientific community. We help researchers grow and succeed by working with them to develop leadership and management skills, by fostering personal development, as well as by strengthening interpersonal competencies and communication skills.

Most of our experienced facilitators have a science background. They are active as postdoc, group leader, professor, or have moved into diverse other career paths. The style of our courses is process-oriented and interactive. Brief theoretical inputs are followed by exercises, partner work, role-plays, case studies and group-work. We have developed and established professional development workshops for scientists at leading organizations in Europe, the Middle East, USA, Africa and Japan. We have pioneered this new development in science and are honoured to continuously be working with clients like NBI, EMBL, MDC, BRIC, NNF centres, CRG, PRBB, Harvard Medical School, MIT, JHU, Cornell, Princeton, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Weizmann Institute of Science, to name only a few. [Learn more about us and get in touch!](#)

An interactive workshop

Researchers preparing for their next career step inside or outside of academia are often unsure about transferable skills (employability skills) and how to provide evidence for these competencies from their own career track. We will use this interactive workshop to raise awareness of the individual skill sets of the participants and will provide a frame how to structure these. Additionally, participants will learn and apply a universal tool how to provide evidence for diverse transferable skills and assertively communicate this.

Goals

Participating researchers will:

- Increase the awareness of their own skill set
- Learn how to provide evidence for transferable skills in a structured way
- Strengthen their network within the NoCaSS

Careers: academia & industry

Panel discussion with Q&A.
April 25th, 10:20-11:10, Auditorium



Dr. Natasha Yelina

Group Leader, Crop Breeding Technologies Group

Natasha received her BA, MSc and PhD from the Department of Virology at Moscow State University in Russia where she worked on RNA silencing in plant-virus interactions. Over the following years, she received **Royal Society/NATO, EMBO and Broodbank Postdoctoral Fellowships** to pursue her interests in RNA silencing, epigenetics and plant meiosis. More recently, she contributed to research in Julian Hibberd's lab at the Department of Plant Sciences in Cambridge where she used *Marchantia polymorpha* to identify ancestral and non-ancestral pathways regulating chloroplast biogenesis and greening. She is now **head of Crop Breeding Technologies Group at the Crop Science Centre** where her overarching aim is to discover novel approaches to control meiotic recombination and, building on this fundamental knowledge, develop step-changing technologies to accelerate crop breeding.



Dr. Rita Borba

Senior Scientist at Illumina

Rita completed her BSc in Biology in 2009 and a MSc in Molecular Genetics and Biomedicine in 2011 at the University of Lisbon. She obtained her **PhD in Molecular Biology** (specializing in Plant Sciences) in 2019 from the ITQB NOVA Institute. Rita did a 2-year postdoc in the Hibberd Lab at the University of Cambridge, where she worked in the international **C4 Rice Project** funded by **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**. In 2021 she joined the agritech startup **Tropic Biosciences** (Norwich) as a Research Scientist to develop high-performing rice varieties using Tropic's proprietary GEiGS® technology that combines genome editing and RNA silencing. Since 2022 Rita has been working as a **Senior Scientist for Illumina** (Cambridge), on R&D of technology innovation of library preps for Illumina sequencers.



Dr. Tina Schreier

Incoming BBSRC Discovery Fellow

Tina is a biochemist who started working on plants and their metabolism during her **PhD at ETH Zurich**. She discovered non-canonical roles of two chloroplast proteins that were originally thought to act as enzymes in *Arabidopsis*, demonstrating the important role of moonlighting proteins in plant metabolism and development. After her PhD, she had a short appointment at the **John Innes Centre** to study carbohydrate metabolism in wheat grains, before taking up **SNF and EMBO postdoctoral fellowships** at the University of Cambridge. Tina became intrigued by how metabolism can be facilitated by a specialised leaf anatomy in C4 plants, and she is studying the importance of cell-to-cell connectivity in facilitating efficient photosynthesis in these plants. She will be moving to the Department of Biology at the University of Oxford for a **BBSRC Discovery Fellowship**.



Dr. Chiara Airoldi

Antibody Development Group at Abcam

Chiara graduated in 2002 from the University of Milan, where she also completed a PhD in Plant Developmental Biology. Chiara did two postdocs with Brendan Davies at the University of Leeds (a **Marie Curie and an European Network Fellowship**), working on floral organ development and flowering time. During her time in Leeds she also got married and had two children. She moved to Cambridge during her second maternity leave in 2013 and joined Beverly Glover's lab from 2014 till 2022. After 20 years of research in Plant Sciences, Chiara changed field and **moved to industry**. In January 2022 she joined **Abcam's R&D team** where she works in the **Antibody Development Group**.

Writing & publishing

Panel discussion with Q&A.
April 25th, 13:30-14:20, Auditorium



Dr. Mary Williams

Features Editor, *Plant Physiology* and *The Plant Cell*

Mary was a **Professor of Biology** from 1995 to 2009. In 2009, she joined the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB), as the **Features Editor of *The Plant Cell* and *Plant Physiology***. She is the author of **Teaching Tools in Plant Biology**, and more recently she has been part of the development team for *Plantae.org*, an online community for plant scientists. She coordinates the Plantae Fellows, the ASPB Conviron Scholars and the Plant Physiology Assistant Features Editors, all mentored science communication programs.



Dr. Facundo Romani

Research Associate,
University of Cambridge

Facundo studied Biotechnology at the Universidad Nacional de Quilmes. He became an **ASAPbio ambassador** in 2018, a **Plantae fellow** in 2019, and a **PreLight contributor** in 2020. Facundo completed his **PhD at the Universidad Nacional del Litoral** in 2020, and in 2021 he started as a Research Associate at the Department of Plant Sciences of the University of Cambridge. He is part of **eLife's Early-Career Advisory Group**.



Rose McNelly

PhD Student, John Innes Centre

Rose is a **PhD student** in the lab of David Seung at the John Innes Centre, trying to discover novel genes involved in endosperm starch formation in *Aegilops tauschii* and wheat. Rose completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Cambridge, specializing in plant sciences in her final year. Rose is a **2023 ASPB Plantae fellow** and is involved with **delivering content for the *Plantae* website** and writing summaries for the plant science research weekly series.



Dr. Jared B. Fudge

Senior Editor, *Nature Biotechnology*

Growing up in the countryside of his native New Zealand led Jared to study plant science at the University of Otago, wherein he worked on flowering time in *Medicago truncatula* for his MSc. He then moved to Switzerland for a **PhD at the University of Geneva** to work on biofortifying rice with enhanced levels of vitamins B1 and B6, in collaboration with ETH Zurich. Jared entered editorial initially with a commissioning **editor role at *Frontiers in Plant Science*** that was followed by two years on the selective, broad-scope journal ***Current Biology*** at Cell Press. Since January, he is **Senior Editor at *Nature Biotechnology***.



Dr. Stuart King

Research Culture Manager,
eLife

Stuart is a **Research Culture Manager at *eLife***, an open-access journal that reviews preprints in the life sciences and medicine. He was previously an **Associate Features Editor and Social Media Manager**. He is a current member of the Steering Committee for the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), an international initiative that seeks to drive reform in how research and researchers are assessed. Stuart holds a **PhD in plant-microbe interactions** from the John Innes Centre and The Sainsbury Laboratory.

TALK SESSION 1 – VIRULENCE

Monday 24th – Auditorium (14:00-15:15)

- Talk 1 **Investigating Plant Persistent Viruses in Pepper**
Satish B Viswanathan
- Talk 2 **Investigating the cell biology of plant infection by the rice blast fungus, *Magnaporthe oryzae***
Berlaine Quime
- Talk 3 **Mathematical modelling of non-persistently transmitted plant viruses: the importance of incorporating aphid vector feeding behaviours**
Elin Falla
- Talk 4 **Dissecting components of *Solanum americanum* non-host resistance to *Phytophthora infestans***
Robert Heal
- Talk 5 **Diversity, pathogenicity and stability of *Pseudomonas* population over distance, time and environment**
Ziyue Zeng

TALK SESSION 2 – METABOLITES AND MORPHOGENS

Monday 24th – Boardroom (14:00-15:15)

- Talk 6 **The genetic basis of the anti-inflammatory bioactivity of *Calendula officinalis* (pot marigold) floral extracts**
Daria Golubova
- Talk 7 **Making a Fresh Starch: Biochemical regulation of starch granule initiation**
Jiawen Chen
- Talk 8 **Dynamics of self-organised vascular development and shoot apical meristem maintenance**
Aram Gurzadyan
- Talk 9 **Structure and function of the plastid-encoded RNA polymerase (PEP)**
Angel Vergara-Cruces
- Talk 10 **Mining the diversity of diterpenes in *Coleus***
Ruoxi Lin

TALK SESSION 3 – DEVELOPMENT AND EVOLUTION

Tuesday 25th – Auditorium (9:00-10:15)

- Talk 11 **Quantitative assessment of single-cell circadian rhythms in cyanobacteria**
Aleksandra Eremina
- Talk 12 **A novel mutant allele of AtCNGC15 reveals a dual function of nuclear calcium release in the root meristem**
Emily Tipper



- Talk 13 **Efforts to establish *Linaria* as a model genus for nectar spur development**
Ben Fisk
- Talk 14 **Investigating the roles of canonical and ETT-mediated auxin signalling to gynoecium development**
Heather McLaughlin
- Talk 15 **Sexual deception in *Gorteria diffusa* (Thunb) through novel spots on the petal epidermis**
Farahnoz Khojayori

TALK SESSION 4 – ROOTS, FUNGI, AND RESISTANCE

Tuesday 25th – Auditorium (14:20-15:35)

- Talk 16 **SUGR: the subventral gland “master” regulator of plant-parasitic cyst nematodes**
Anika Damm
- Talk 17 **Direct recognition of multiple pathogens by the barley Mla immune receptor**
Diana Gómez De La Cruz
- Talk 18 **Identification of common mechanisms to intracellularly accommodate beneficial or pathogenic fungi in rice**
Gizem Çataltepe
- Talk 19 **Horizontal gene transfer in potatoes: knock-ins and chimeras**
Yordan N. Dolaptchiev
- Talk 20 **Arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi induce lateral root development in angiosperms via a conserved set of MAMP receptors**
Chai Hao Chiu

TALK SESSION 5 – GENETIC ENGINEERING

Tuesday 25th – Boardroom (14:20-15:35)

- Talk 21 **Putting root rot on the spot: Characterising genetic sources of resistance against pea root rot**
Nicolas Trenk
- Talk 22 **Increasing the chloroplast occupancy of rice bundle sheath cells by manipulating the cell divisions**
Kumari Billakurthi
- Talk 23 **Evolution of LWY effector repertoire in *Phytophthora***
Yufei Li
- Talk 24 **Production of nanobodies in *Marchantia polymorpha* chloroplasts**
Anna Sze Wai Tse
- Talk 25 **Detecting sites of replication fork pauses in yeast**
Isabel Diez-Santos



POSTER SESSION 1

Monday 24th (15:20-16:00)

Poster 1	<i>Zhouqian Jiang</i>
Poster 3	<i>AmirAli Toghani</i>
Poster 5	<i>Bhavani Natarajan</i>
Poster 7	<i>Brenda Mionki</i>
Poster 9	<i>Eva Herrero Serrano</i>
Poster 11	<i>Fuyu Li</i>
Poster 13	<i>Gabriel Ferreras Garrucho</i>
Poster 15	<i>Honghao Su</i>
Poster 17	<i>Isabella Liao</i>
Poster 19	<i>Joshua Waites</i>
Poster 21	<i>Leah McPhillips</i>
Poster 23	<i>Martina Orvošová</i>
Poster 25	<i>Molly Bergum</i>
Poster 27	<i>P.L. van der Jagt</i>
Poster 29	<i>Richard Dekeya</i>
Poster 31	<i>Rituparna Goswami</i>
Poster 33	<i>Rose McNelly</i>
Poster 35	<i>Ruth Kristianingsih</i>
Poster 37	<i>Anam Siddiqui</i>

POSTER SESSION 2

Tuesday 25th (15:35-16:15)

Poster 2	<i>Alex Guyon</i>
Poster 4	<i>A. Vadillo Dieguez</i>
Poster 6	<i>Udhaya Ponraj</i>
Poster 8	<i>Emma Turley</i>
Poster 10	<i>Thomas Navarro</i>
Poster 12	<i>Gabriel Astorga</i>
Poster 14	<i>Humberto Herrera-Ubaldo</i>
Poster 16	<i>Iqra Jamil</i>
Poster 18	<i>Josh W Bennett</i>
Poster 20	<i>Lucía Arce Cubas</i>
Poster 22	<i>Theresa Staps</i>
Poster 24	<i>Sabine Brumm</i>
Poster 26	<i>Paola Asprilla</i>
Poster 28	<i>Rebecca M. Diss</i>
Poster 30	<i>Rispah N. Ng'ang'a</i>
Poster 32	<i>Robert S. Powell</i>
Poster 34	<i>Aileen Magilin</i>
Poster 36	<i>Max L. Jordan</i>



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