

MERCON 2023

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Some thoughts about my basic engineering research and commercial impact experience

Palm trees are economically significant in many countries worldwide due to agricultural production. Red Palm Weevil (RPW), designated a global threat by the UN FAO, and the fact that palm trees rarely grow to their full potential are major challenges for farmers of this important species. Beginning with the goal of supporting farmers in eradicating RPW, Professor Nanayakkara has rapidly iterated a series of technologies that deliver sensing and monitoring of tree health to growers through his company, Permia Sensing. Thrishantha and his team have developed a portable sensor and an AI solution for early detection of RPW infestation and precise information on tree health to growers, enabling better performing farms. In this talk, he will explain the process of developing outcomes of basic research to commercial impact and the typical journey of an engineering start-up.



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ONWARDS

Prof Thrishantha Nanayakkara

Professor Thrishantha Nanayakkara is the director of Morphlab, Dyson School of Design Engineering, Imperial College London. He is also the founding director of Permia Sensing (pvt) Ltd, a spin-out from Imperial College London. Permia Sensing provides a technology-enabled approach to precision agriculture and, ultimately, precision harvesting.