

Unnati Sonawala

CONTACT
INFORMATION

us275@cam.ac.uk

EDUCATION

Virginia Tech, Virginia, USA

PhD, Plant Pathology and Physiology 2014-2019

University of Warwick, Coventry, England

M.Sc.(dual degree with B. Tech) Food Security (Distinction) 2012-2013

SRM University, Chennai, India

B.Tech Biotechnology (Distinction) 2009-2013

RESEARCH
AND
TEACHING
EXPERIENCE

University of Cambridge

Postdoctoral Researcher

2019-

Project: The juxtaposition of variability and stability in the HYP effectors of potato cyst nematodes.

Supervisor: Dr. Sebastian Eves-van den Akker

Undergraduate Supervisor

Spring 2022

Supervised two small-group sessions for the Plant and Microbial Sciences course.

Virginia Tech

Research Assistant

2015-2019

Project: Understanding the role of host amino acid transporters in nutrient acquisition by oomycete pathogens

Supervisors: Dr. John M. McDowell and Dr. Guillaume Pilot

Teaching Assistant

Fall 2017

Assisted in organizing a plant science project for high school students

Teaching Assistant

Fall 2016

Assisted in teaching plant pathology lab

Undergraduate mentor

2016-17, 2018

Supervised two undergraduate researchers

University of Warwick

Graduate Researcher

2013

Project: Innate immunity in *Arabidopsis thaliana* for future control of black rot resistance in vegetable brassicas

Supervisor: Dr. Eric Holub

HONORS
AND
AWARDS

Arthur J. Weber graduate student of the year award (2018), Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology and Weed Science, Virginia Tech

Bruce W. Perry tuition scholarship (2015), Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology and Weed Science, Virginia Tech

LEADERSHIP
AND
MEMBERSHIPS

Postdoctoral Affiliate, Trinity College, Cambridge, UK

Co-organizer of Young Nematologists' Network (May 2022 -)

- Established in May 2022 with other early career researchers and PhD students in Nematology across Europe to connect and enable early career researchers in the field around the world. The network has been organizing a monthly seminar and workshop series since August 2022.

Member of Virtual Nematology Conference organization committee (May 2021), European Society of Nematology

- Helped organize a three day virtual symposium for PhD students and post-doctoral researchers in Nematology.

Student recruitment chair of graduate student organization (2017-18), Translational Plant Science, Virginia Tech

- Helped organize recruitment weekend for incoming graduate students

President of graduate student organization (2017), Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology and Weed Science, Virginia Tech

- Organized departmental mini-symposium
- Arranged student activities and gatherings

Vice-president of graduate student organization (2016), Department of Plant Pathology, Physiology and Weed Science, Virginia Tech

GRANTS
AND
COMPETITIONS

Travel Award, International Congress of Nematology, Antibes, France (2022)
Best Elevator Talk, Translational Plant Science Symposium, Virginia Tech (2018)
Travel Award, North American Mass Spectrometry Summer School, University of Wisconsin, Madison (2018)
Best Basic Science Poster Award, Plant Pathology, Physiology and Weed Science mini-symposium (2017)
Research Grant, Translational Plant Science Grant Competition, Virginia Tech (2017)
Research Grant, Translational Plant Science Grant Competition, Virginia Tech (2016)
Travel Grant, Translational Plant Science Grant Competition, Virginia Tech (2015)
Life Science Scholarship for MSc taught courses, School of Life Sciences, University of Warwick (2012)

PUBLICATIONS

Garcia, K.; Cloghessy, K.; Cooney, D. R.; Shelley, B.; Chakraborty, S.; Kifle, A.; Busidan, A.; **Sonawala, U.**; Collier, R.; Jayaraman, D.; Ané, J.-M.; Pilot, G. The Putative Transporter MtUMAMIT14 Participates in Nodule Formation in *Medicago Truncatula*. *Scientific Reports* (2023), 13 (1), 804.

Siddique, S.; Radakovic, Z. S.; Hiltl, C.; Pellegrin, C.; Baum, T. J.; Beasley, H.; Bent, A. F.; Chitambo, O.; Chopra, D.; Danchin, E. G. J.; Grenier, E.; Habash, S. S.; Hasan, M. S.; Helder, J.; Hewezi, T.; Holbein, J.; Holterman, M.; Janakowski, S.; Koutsovoulos, G. D.; Kranse, O. P.; Lozano-Torres, J. L.; Maier, T. R.; Masonbrink, R. E.; Mendy, B.; Riemer, E.; Sobczak, M.; **Sonawala, U.**; Sterken, M. G.; Thorpe, P.; van Steenbrugge, J. J. M.; Zahid, N.; Grundler, F.; Eves-van den Akker, S. The genome and lifestage-specific transcriptomes of a plant-parasitic nematode and its host reveal susceptibility genes involved in trans-kingdom synthesis of vitamin B5. *Nature Communications* (2022), 13 (1), 6190.

Kranse, O. P.; Ko, I.; Healey, R.; **Sonawala, U.**; Wei, S.; Senatori, B.; De Batté, F.; Zhou, J.; Eves-van den Akker, S. A Low-Cost and Open-Source Solution to Automate Imaging and Analysis of Cyst Nematode Infection Assays for *Arabidopsis Thaliana*. *Plant Methods* (2022), 18 (1), 134.

Besnard, J., **Sonawala, U.**, Maharjan, B., Collakova, E., Finlayson, S. A., Pilot, G., & Okumoto, S. Increased expression of UMAMIT amino acid transporters results in activation of salicylic acid dependent stress response. *Frontiers in Plant*

Science (2021), 11.

Sonawala, U.; Dinkeloo, K.; Danna, C. H.; McDowell, J. M.; Pilot, G. Functional linkages between amino acid transporters and plant responses to pathogens. *Plant Science* (2018), 277, 7988.

Besnard, J.; Pratelli, R.; Zhao, C.; **Sonawala, U.**; Collakova, E.; Pilot, G.; Okumoto, S. UMAMIT14 is an amino acid exporter involved in phloem unloading in *Arabidopsis* roots. *Journal of Experimental Botany* (2016), 67 (22), 6385-6397.