Phytogen April 2020

April Phytogen and call for nominations for ASPS Teaching Awards

19 April 2020

Dear ASPS members past and present,

I hope this email finds you safe and well,

The April edition of Phytogen is out now and can be accessed HERE.

We are currently seeking nominations (self-nominations encouraged) for the ASPS teaching award. The ASPS Teaching Award recognises excellence, innovation and/or other contributions with successful learning outcomes to teaching plant science at the University level. Many of us have experienced (and implement) recently, a significant change in the way we teach plant sciences. We encourage our members to consider sharing and promoting their experiences by nominating for this award.

Nominations can be sent to the secretary@asps.org.au by Friday the 29th of May, 2020.

Kind regards,

Dr Simon Williams

Honorary Secretary, ASPS

April 2020 Phytogen – Plant science during global isolation

17 April 2020

This is quite a bumper digital issue

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        - Next Month 18th May Fascination of Plants Day 2020
        - Plantae Webinars
        - Digital Courses
        - Plants in Action – Our Digital Resource 😳
        - World Earth Day is next week, Wednesday 22nd April 2020

- Science meets Parliament 2019 reports from Tracey Cuin and Ricky Milne
- Last months Phytogen

Fascination of Plants Day 18 May 2020

Next month will be Fascination of Plants Day May Monday 18th 2020. This year because of coronavirus, the event will not be coordinated by the European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO) out of Brussels and they are asking us to broaden our social media portfolio. Please respect your national regulation and restriction regarding the coronavirus and share your online/digital events on Twitter @PlantDay18May with the hashtags #FoPD and #plantday

For example, post photos of your house plants.....



or let us know by posting to @asps_ozplants . Please also let us know (post @asps_ozplants) if you are registering to watch webinars such as Plantae Presents

Plantae

Events from Apr 17th



Virtual event | 9th Annual Cornell Plant Breeding Symposium



Webinar | Dr. Peter Solomon: How the study of necrotrophic effectors advanced our understanding of the enigmatic PR-1 protein

Online



Virtual Gathering | Fantastic Fungi - Special Earth Day Event



Plantae Presents: Dominique Bergmann and Matthew Gilliham

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many seminar series and conferences have been canceled or postponed. In response to this, and to make sure plant scientists can continue to communicate their latest work to their peers, The American Society of Plant Biologists launched a virtual seminar series via our online community, Plantae. This is the first video in this new series, each of which features two speakers (read more). A list of upcoming seminars and recorded videos can be found here.

Recorded April 7, 2020

Dominique Bergmann: Adjusting to a changing world: stomata edition

Dominique Bergmann is a Professor at Stanford University. She was an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley, and received her PhD from the University of Colorado, Boulder, followed by a postdoc at the Carnegie Institute, Department of Plant Biology. Her work focuses on specialized structures called stomata and the role of asymmetric cell division and cell-cell communication in their formation. @stanfordstomata

Matthew Gilliham: GABA signalling in guard cells acts as a 'stress memory' to optimize plant water loss

Matthew Gilliham is Director of the Waite Research Institute at the University of Adelaide. Matthew gained a BSc in Ecology from Lancaster University and a PhD in Plant Physiology from the University of Cambridge, UK, followed by a postdoc at Cambridge before emigrating to Australia. His research focusses on crop plant nutrition and stress resilience with a focus on salinity and drought tolerance. @IonPlants

or digital courses such as.....

WORLD OF WINE: FROM GRAPE TO GLASS

During this time, many teachers and tutors are moving to online courses. Please make use of Plants in Action to prepare your teaching 🙄





[World Earth Day Wednesday 22nd April 2020](#) – goes digital!



SCIENCE MEETS PARLIAMENT 2019

At the end of November 2019, I represented the ASPS at Science meets Parliament. It was a full-on, intense but very enjoyable couple of days. There were excellent seminars, incredibly constructive workshops, useful and interesting networking opportunities and a chance to talk to people who did science things that I wasn't aware of or had a clue about.



The first day started with a breakfast meeting with other with "ecosystem science" societies – a chance to meet and chat to life science people outside my research area.

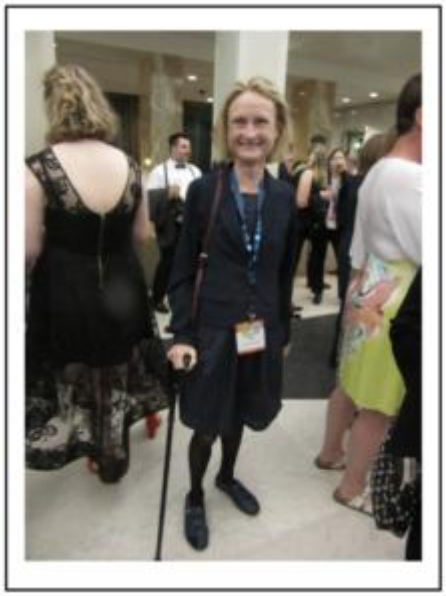
Afterwards and dressed nicely (clear instructions were provided with what to wear), we started the first day.

Presentations, seminars and workshops was the order of the day. The importance of communicating with MPs, the responsibility of all scientist to share their expertise and that we needed to work together with politician was emphasised. Winthrop Professor Fiona Wood gave an inspiring presentation. And the workshops and seminars of how to communicate and pitch your science were enlightening and a bit of an education.

The Gala Dinner was the social highlight of the event. Good food, excellent seminars and wonderful table companions. I sat next to a guy who is improving maths education in Indigenous communities, and it was fascinating to hear about his work.

I also met Brian Mitchell, Federal Member of Lyons, Tasmania, to whom I was assigned. He happened to be born 20 km from where I was in the UK, so that was a good start. I invited him to come and visit the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture, which he did in January this year. An excellent birthday evening for me!

More seminars and workshops on the second day, plus a chance to more formally meet Mr Brian Mitchell. I didn't get much chance to talk to him – he was called away for a "division". But I did get him to agree to put himself forward for the STEM Ambassador Programme, which he did. I am now an Ambassador, representing the ASPS, with him as my partner MP.



The absolute best bit of the whole event though was Question Time. It was the time of the Angus Taylor affair, so it was particularly entertaining – and loud! Much more boisterous than the UK equivalent.

So, a brilliant couple of days and I would advise anyone who gets the chance, go to this event.

Ricky Milne – CSIRO Agriculture and Food, Black Mountain, Canberra

I was fortunate to be one of this year's ASPS representatives at Science meets Parliament, held in November 2019. Science meets Parliament is a two-day meeting held annually in Canberra, where STEM professionals learn how science fits in to the workings of parliament and the policy making process, network with others from broad scientific backgrounds and have the opportunity to meet with a parliamentarian to give them a snapshot of their science. Given I don't closely follow politics, this meeting was extremely useful and informative.

The bar was set high on the first morning, with the opening address given by renowned burns specialist, Winthrop Professor Fiona Wood. She shared her experiences of science and innovation in her career, and the importance of communicating our research findings. We also heard from Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel and NZ's Chief Science Advisor Prof. Gary Evans, who discussed prospects for the future and how to talk science to government. A major focus of this meeting was on developing skills and practicing how to pitch our research in a brief, accessible format, working towards putting this training into practice whilst meeting with a parliamentarian on the second day. Part of this was learning how to capture the audience's interest in shorter and shorter time periods, until we could do so convincingly in twenty seconds. I was fortunate to practice my pitch with Prof. Fiona Wood, who was extremely down-to-earth and unsurprisingly gave me some great tips. After a packed schedule of networking, skill building and panel discussions, the day concluded at the gala dinner held in the Great Hall at Parliament House.



On day two, we ventured to Parliament House and saw what that goes on during a sitting day – constant bells ringing, parliamentarians scurrying around to vote in time, last minute schedule

changes and Prime Minister getting grilled during question time about his phone call to the NSW police chief. After learning how to pitch our science on day one, we were ready to put that into practice when meeting with a parliamentarian on day two. Meetings weren't scheduled until late and changed up until the last minute. After attending question time, our group was due to meet with Dr John McVeigh, member for Groom, but were rescheduled to meet with Meryl Swanson, member for Paterson, who had other matters to attend but we had a good discussion with her chief of staff. This exemplified the nature of how things unfold at Parliament House.



Science meets Parliament isn't the typical meeting and I did not know what to expect but was pleasantly surprised. I would highly recommend it to anyone considering attending. However, after two days of wearing a suit and uncomfortable shoes, I learned that I definitely prefer casual clothes and a lab coat!

This year ComBio 2020 in Melbourne has been delayed until 2022.



In coming months, stay tuned and watch this space for ASPS society 2020 award webinars.

Last months Phytogen

Last months Phytogen had an article about the Canadian company Medicago researching to develop a coronavirus vaccine. Australians are also researching to develop a vaccine from Australian Native Plants



Native Australian Plant Paves Way for Vaccine Development Against COVID-19

April 8, 2020

Dr. Peter Waterhouse led the team of scientists who successfully sequenced the tobacco beetle's genome. The genome sequence is now being used to develop a vaccine against COVID-19. Photo: Source: Queensland University of Technology

Plantae Webinar and Conference Funding Opportunity

06 April 2020

Dear ASPS members,

ASPS member Matt Gilliham is giving a talk through the Plantae webinar series this Wednesday April 8th at 11am EST. Plantae have managed increase the number of participants for each webinar to 3000 so everyone should be able to view. Plantae are on the lookout for other willing speakers from around the world.

Register free through this link

https://plantae.org/plantae-presents-a-new-global-plant-science-talk-series/?fbclid=IwAR3kE7nS72fMgV9TKFqnQ8bqzrmpidok6XM6BbbKXLL8gFnogy3VOiljzU8

The Australian Academy of Science have asked us to advertise the call for applications for the Boden Conference award. The Academy established this award to fund small specialist conferences in the biological sciences with the generous support of the late Dr Alex Boden AO FAA. These conferences, which usually run for about 2 days, are designed to bring together researchers working in rapidly advancing fields to discuss current advances and problems. A sum of up to $10,000 is provided, and organisers are encouraged to seek additional funding from other sources. One conference is funded annually.

Applications close on June 1 2020.

Further information can be obtained from: https://www.science.org.au/supporting-science/awards-and-opportunities/boden-research-conferences

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