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Global Plant Council

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Did you know that as a member of the Australian Society of Plant Scientists, you're also a member of the Global Plant Council?

What is the Global Plant Council?

The Global Plant Council (GPC) is a non-profit coalition of plant, crop, agricultural and environmental science societies from across the globe. It was founded in 2009 to provide a body that can speak with a single, strong voice in the policy and decision-making arena, at the global level. By connecting plant science organizations, we are bringing together all those involved in plant and crop research, education and training, to harness the wealth of knowledge and expertise found within our membership base to strengthen and facilitate the development of plant science for global challenges.

What does the GPC do?

The GPC currently has 29 Member Organizations – of which the Australian Society of Plant Scientists is one – representing over 55,000 plant and crop scientists across Europe, North and South America, Africa, Asia and Australasia. By bringing these groups together, we promote collaboration and cross-communication between scientists and societies, with a focus on key projects in priority areas. Some examples include:

- *Diversity Seek (DivSeek)*: The GPC is working with partner organizations to bring together germplasm curators, plant and crop researchers, breeders and computational experts to unlock the potential of crop diversity stored in genebanks around the world. For more information, see divseek.org.
- *Plantae.org*: Together with the American Society for Plant Biologists, the GPC is helping to develop Plantae.org, a forthcoming digital networking platform that will provide researchers, students, industry professionals and educators with access to plant science news, research, methods, teaching resources, funding opportunities and more from across the globe.
- *Stress Resilience*: Together with the Society for Experimental Biology, the GPC is hosting a Symposium on Plant Stress Resilience in Brazil in October 2015. This meeting will bring together experts in this field to showcase new approaches and technologies, share research knowledge and expertise, and facilitate cross-cultural networking and collaborations. Registration and abstract submission are open, so please consider joining us!
- *Education and training*: The GPC is working with volunteers and organizations to identify and share tools and resources to train and inspire the next generation of plant scientists, as well as translate these materials into many languages to expand their global reach.

As well as these activities, the GPC coordinates and manages a website, blog, and a monthly e-newsletter to help its members stay connected and up to date with global plant science research. You can also follow us on Twitter at @GlobalPlantGPC (or in Spanish at @GPC_EnEspanol), or on Facebook.

How can the GPC help me?

The GPC is directed by an Executive Board of leading figures from the world of plant and crop science research, and we also have a panel of elected representatives from each of our Member Organizations. We encourage you to communicate with the leaders of your local plant science organizations so that they can feed back to us the issues, needs and opportunities faced by plant scientists in your region.

As well as our Executive Board, which meets on a quarterly basis, the GPC has a small staff that manages the day-to-day running of the Council. Ruth Bastow is our Executive Director, and Lisa Martin is the Outreach & Communications Manager – if you have any upcoming events, funding opportunities, or exciting news to share we will be pleased to help promote these via our website, newsletter and other outreach channels. In addition, you might like to contribute an article to our blog to raise awareness of an issue, important research, an event or project in your area.

The new online plant science community platform mentioned above is still in development and will be a fantastic resource when it is finished – stay tuned! The GPC website is also a useful source of information – we have a comprehensive Events calendar to help you find meetings, conferences, workshops and symposia to attend, and our Resources area provides a range of useful documents, reports, awards, funding opportunities and other information for plant scientists. You could also sign up for our monthly e-Bulletin newsletter.

How can I help the GPC?

There are many ways you can help! Firstly, why not consider making a donation to the GPC? The GPC is not-for-profit and although our Member Organizations pay an annual membership fee, our costs are not entirely covered by this income. We therefore seek donations – however big or small – from individuals, philanthropists, funding bodies or other organizations to help us continue the important work we do.

As a global organization we know that not everyone around the world speaks or understands English, yet the majority of resources for the plant sciences are written in English. If you speak another language and would be willing to help us translate resources such as teaching tools, videos, protocols and other documents into your mother tongue, we would love to hear from you!

Another way you might like to get involved with the GPC is to help raise awareness of the work we do. If you have been invited to speak at a local, national or regional plant science event in the coming months, and would like to say a few words about the GPC, we have some PowerPoint slides and resources to help you spread the word.

We are also conducting a survey of research projects around the world that are associated with stress resilience in plants, and separately, we are also collecting information about maize research around the world. If you work in either of these areas, please tell us about your work!

For more information please contact Lisa Martin
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