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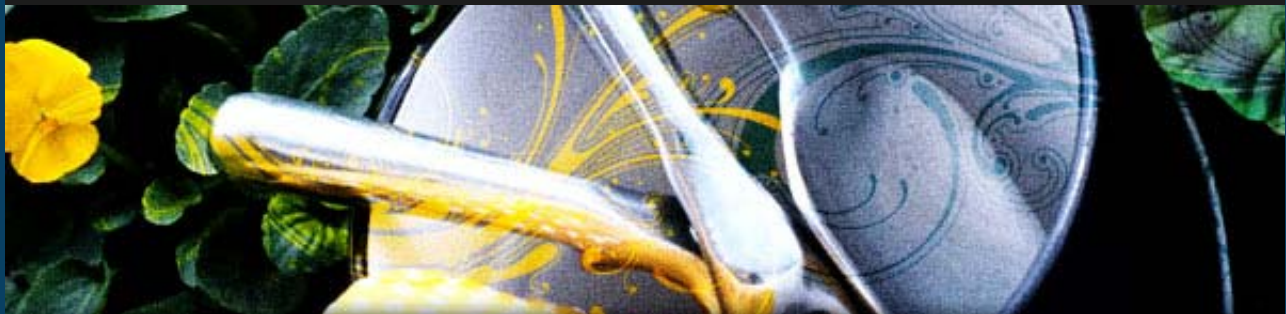


University of California, Berkeley | College of Natural Resources
A Newsletter for Faculty, Students, Staff and Friends of the Department

PLANT & MICROBIAL BIOLOGY

Issue No. 1

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ACADEMICS. RESEARCH. DISCOVERIES.

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New Appointment Means Research Freedom for Prestigious Plant Biologist

Decision makers at two of the largest biomedical funders in the world made a huge statement earlier this year when they gave millions of dollars and carte blanche research freedom to 15 innovative plant biologists, including Krishna K. Niyogi of Plant & Microbial Biology.

"Plants impact medicine, energy, food and the environment," said Vicki Chandler, Chief Program Officer for the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. "It's such an important area that has been historically underfunded. Plants are



Krishna K. Niyogi

critical to understanding huge societal issues over the next decade, and ironically agencies are cutting fundamental plant research."

[Read full article](#)

Peggy Lemaux Named President, American Society of Plant Biologists

Cooperative Extension Specialist Peggy Lemaux has been elected President of the 5,000-member American Society of Plant Biologists, a key position that is critical to plant funding and research. Lemaux, a leader in educational efforts in agriculture, food and farming methods, has been a member of the Society for 27 years and is the fifth UC Berkeley scientist to lead this professional group in its 87-year history as a plant biology-focused organization.

Lemaux will be on the forefront of providing input on important decisions related to plant research and funding - issues that affect the plant biology community in the U.S. and around the world. Owing to its membership, the society has extensive international influence. [Read full article](#)



Peggy Lemaux

New PMB Calendars Debut for Campus-Wide Events and Department Use



Two new calendars are now available for use at PMB. The first, <http://pmbcalendar.berkeley.edu> is part of the campus-wide calendar network and is integrated with the College of Natural Resources calendar and the main UC Berkeley calendar. This calendar automatically feeds into the home page of our new web site, and also offers our events (our very popular seminars, for example) to other campus calendars.

The second calendar on our new site is an embedded Google calendar, found under the "Services" section of the site, at pmb.berkeley.edu/services-calendar. This calendar is for intradepartmental use, including finishing talks, academic teas, social events and the like. Anyone can place an item on either calendar.

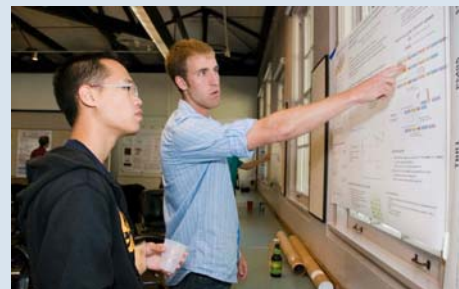
[Find out More About Calendars and How to Use Them](#)

Annual Department Retreat Set for September 16

The annual departmental retreat will be all day on Friday, Sept. 16 at the Clark Kerr campus at UC Berkeley.

The one-day Retreat features an outstanding program, including research presentations, a poster session, welcome coffee, lunch and dinner and the traditional introductions of our newly accepted graduate students for the 2011-12 academic year.

Interested in attending? Please talk to your PI or a faculty member. There is a charge for attendance.



Poster Session at 2010 Retreat

For more information contact pmbinfo@berkeley.edu

Seminar Series for Fall 2011 Announced



Seminar Series

Outstanding speakers from as far away as Dublin, Ireland, and as close as UC Davis make up the department's seminar Series for Fall, 2011, a powerhouse of presentations by scientific researchers.

Featured speakers include Sarah Mathews of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard; Ken Keegstra of Michigan State, and Ian Singleton of Newcastle University in the U.K. Topics include comparative genomics, systems biology, regulation of flowering time, biosynthesis of plant cell wall polysaccharides, and more.

The Plant Gene Expression Center seminar series schedule also is available.

For information, dates, titles and locations of all seminars, please go to the seminars page of our website at pmb.berkeley.edu

Award Winners at PMB

A number of PMB faculty have been busy winning a variety of awards, grants and recognition this year.

Assistant Professor Britt Glaunsinger earned the Prytanean Faculty Award and is the recipient of the CNR Young Faculty / Cooperative Extension Specialist award.

Molecular geneticist Sarah Hake has been named "Distinguished Senior Research Scientist of 2010" by the Agricultural Research Service.



Sarah Hake

[Read full article](#)

New Web Site Launched at PMB



pmb.berkeley.edu

In June the department launched a new web site complete with a professional design, easier navigation and more information available at your fingertips.

The new web site is part of a coordinated communications effort that includes this newsletter and a new department calendar.

Please check out the new web site, and please give feedback of any kind. Your comments and suggestions are welcome! Send to Karyn Houston / PMB Communications / karyn@berkeley.edu / 643-7614.

Student News - Travel Grant, Awards and More

Karl Erhard, who is finishing his 5th year at PMB, has received the DeLill Nasser Award for

Professional Development from the Genetics Society of America. Erhard is using the \$1,000 travel grant associated with the award to attend the Mechanisms of Eukaryotic Transcription meeting at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

Erhard is a graduate student in Jay Hollick's lab and researches how epigenetic gene regulation affects the inheritance of phenotypes in maize. He will present his data which indicate that the plant-specific RNA Polymerase IV regulates the transcription of both genes and transposable elements. These findings will allow researchers to better characterize a potentially common and unappreciated mode of inheritance and gene regulation and may facilitate novel strategies for future plant improvement efforts.

[More Student News](#)



Professor Robert
Fischer

PMB Shuffle - New Chair for the Department

College of Natural Resources Dean J. Keith Gilless announced in June that Professor Robert Fischer is the chair of the Department of Plant and Microbial Biology, handling academic issues for the Plant Division. Professor Tom Bruns will continue as the department's Associate Chair, handling academic issues for the Microbial Biology Division.

Gilless also said that next summer, when Tom Bruns will have completed his three-year term as Associate Chair, the plan is for Professor Louise Glass to step into a departmental leadership role after she has completed her well-deserved appointment as a Miller Professor in Spring 2012. Gilless expressed thanks to Professor Brian Staskawicz for his outstanding service as chair for the past 7 years.

New online systems for Purchasing, Grad Application Review and More

The UC Berkeley campus is busy implementing a number of Operational Excellence and other initiatives designed to make it easier to do business on campus. Coming up in the near future are:

- [Bear Buy](#), a new campus purchasing system
- [Jazzee](#), a new Graduate Admissions application and review system



Click on the links to find out more. Bear Buy will be implemented in January 2012; Jazzee is set to launch September 1, 2011.

The campus is also reviewing new timekeeping and calendaring systems.

For more information about Operational Excellence or these new initiatives contact Karyn Houston, PMB communications (karyn@berkeley.edu or 643.7614).

Adjunct Professor Henrik Scheller on Biofuels: A Video

Adjunct Professor Henrik Vibe Scheller of the Joint Bioenergy Institute is featured in a "No Powerpoints Allowed" video where he talks extensively about biofuels.

The video is part of a conversational series called "Sit Down With Sabin". In the series, former San

Francisco Chronicle reporter Sabin Russell chats with researchers affiliated with the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.



Customizing plants for biofuels.

New Grad Students at PMB

Welcome to the department's new grad students for 2011:

- Christopher Brown, University of Florida
- Ping-Hung Hsieh, National Taiwan Univ.
- Prajit Limsirichai, Trinity University
- David Hershey, Iowa State University
- Anne Runkel, Middlebury College
- Michael Steinwand, UC Davis
- Jason Liu, Northwestern
- Patrick Browne, UC Berkeley
- Rose Kantor, Carleton College
- Kulika Chomvong, Univ. of Pennsylvania
- Greg Mathews, Trinity University
- Allison Schwartz, UCLA
- Matthew Shurtleff, Cal Poly, SLO
- Susan Hepp, U. of Maryland, College Park

111 Koshland Hall | Berkeley, California 94720 | 510.642.9999
pmb.berkeley.edu | pmbinfo@berkeley.edu

The PMB newsletter is produced by the Department of Plant & Microbial Biology, UC Berkeley.
Professor Robert Fischer, Department Chair
Donna Hendrix, Chief Administrative Officer
Karyn Houston, Communications

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