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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

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See the bigger picture. Make a better world.

In This Issue ...

[A Win-Win for Farmers and the Environment](#)

[Wildermuth Research Combats Mildew Attacks](#)

[Sheila McCormick Writes for BioMed Central Blog](#)

[Olga Draper Leaves Komeili Lab](#)

[Micro Student Group Symposium](#)

[College of Natural Resources Newsletter](#)

[Postdoc Position in Norway](#)

[Postdoc Lunches Feature Great Presentations](#)

[Cal Day 2014](#)

[Jobs in Plant and Micro](#)

[Important Dates / Upcoming Events](#)

Quick Links

[Undergraduate Program](#)

[Graduate Program](#)

[Give to PMB](#)

[Our Faculty](#)

[College of Natural Resources](#)

[PMB on Facebook](#)

A Win-Win for Farmers and the Environment



By Armand Parajon

A mid-career grant for a UC Berkeley researcher will go toward finding ways to reduce the use of fertilizers in agriculture, while still maintaining high yields.

Plant & Microbial Biology Professor Sheng Luan has been awarded \$1.9 million from the National Science Foundation to figure out how plants can take up nutrients more efficiently while using less fertilizer.

Cooperative Extension Specialist Peggy Lemaux, also from PMB, is co-Principal Investigator for the project.

For the complete article, please visit: pmb.berkeley.edu/news/win-win-farmers-and-environment

Wildermuth Research Combats Mildew Attacks



Assoc. Prof. Mary Wildermuth
(photo by Peg Skorpinski)

By Wallace Rawen

It looks harmless enough - a light dusting like baby powder sprinkled on the leaves. But as rose lovers know, powdery mildew can attack new buds and shoots, stunt growth and distort plant development.

If not controlled, the fast spreading fungus can cause billions of dollars of crop damage in California. For example, powdery mildew is the most significant disease affecting grapes in California, with all productive acreage treated to help minimize loss. Borne by the wind, its spores race through fields and can easily damage a season's crop, resulting in losses of 30 percent or more.

For the complete article, please visit:
pmb.berkeley.edu/news/starving-out-enemy

Sheila McCormick Blogs About Science Career



Sheila McCormick, an editor for BioMed Central Plant Biology, and an adjunct professor in the department, recently wrote in a blog to mark International Women's Day. In the piece, she takes a look back over her career in plant genetics and publishing.

"When I started college at Illinois State University, I thought I might become a high school biology teacher. But as the semesters went on I started to consider going to graduate school. The professor who taught Genetics, Dr. Herman Brockman, was an inspiration - I basically fell in love with Genetics and decided to do a PhD.

I first started graduate school at Univ. Texas-Austin, intending to work on fruit fly genetics. As an undergraduate I had read a paper in the journal Genetics about the gene that controlled eye color in fruit flies, written by Dr. Burke Judd, a professor at UT-Austin."

Read the full Blog post here: <http://blogs.biomedcentral.com/bmcblog/2014/03/07/mccormick-iwd/>.

Olga Draper Leaves Komeili Lab for UCB Environmental Health & Safety



Olga Draper

Olga Draper has accepted a position as a research compliance analyst with the Office of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) at UC Berkeley, starting April 1st.

She will split her time between the biosafety program, focused on meeting the National Institutes of Health requirements, and the chemical safety program, which is part of the campus' laboratory safety culture change initiative. This initiative fosters an evolution of the culture of safety in laboratories and the EH&S programs that support laboratory safety.

PMB has been her home for sixteen years, and she has a tremendous amount of respect and affection for the life, research, and people of the department. Her

last eight years with the Komeili lab have been richly rewarding, and she looks forward to maintaining the working relationships she has built over the years.

Networks in Immunity Workshop at UC Davis

Nobel laureate Bruce Beutler will be the keynote speaker at the Networks in Immunity Workshop at UC-Davis on April 1-3, 2014.

The workshop will explore genetic networks governing immune responses mediated by pattern recognition receptors. The purpose is to provide a forum for researchers to interact and share research ideas and results.

Registration information, agenda and further details can be found on the Workshop website at conferences.ucdavis.edu/immunity. Space will be limited so please register soon (registration deadline: March 24th).

Registration is \$125 per person, and poster presentation is encouraged. The conference will be at the UC Davis Student Community Center.

Microbiology Student Group Symposium Registration Open



Registration for the 15th annual Microbiology Student Symposium, taking place on Saturday, April 12th, 2014 at UC Berkeley, is now open.

The symposium is designed to bring together Bay Area microbiology students, and features a full day of short research presentations by graduate students, two keynote speakers, and a poster session featuring both graduate and undergraduate research. Registrations is free and includes lunch and a celebration at the end of the day with refreshments that have been microbially treated to semi-sterility.

Keynote speakers are Manuela Raffatelli from UC Irvine, and Christopher Marx from Harvard. In addition to the keynote addresses, there will be an opportunity for graduate students to talk about their research. All topics related to microbiology are welcome, so please do sign up to give a talk. Coupled with the poster session, the symposium is a great

**APRIL 12, 2014 251 LI KA SHING BUILDING
UC BERKELEY CAMPUS**

**CASH PRIZES FOR STUDENT POSTERS AND
PRESENTATIONS**

FREE REGISTRATION – LUNCH - RECEPTION

**SUBMIT ABSTRACTS AND REGISTER ONLINE
BY APRIL 1, 2014**

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BIOLOG.**

<http://nature.berkeley.edu/calmicro>

opportunity to interact with microbiology researchers from the entire Bay Area. Who knows, maybe you will even form a new collaboration.

Please register now on their website: <http://microstudentgroup.weebly.com/registration.html> and submit your abstract for a poster and/or oral presentation. You may win one of the cash prizes for best talk, and best poster.

For more information on MSG, please visit at <http://microstudentgroup.weebly.com/>.



Please join the College of Natural Resources for the following upcoming lectures:

4/2/14: The Science of Why We Don't Believe in Science by Chris Mooney. Chevron Auditorium-International House | 7-8 p.m.

4/24/14: Career Panel and Networking by Berkeley Wireless Research Center. 2108 Allston Way, in Berkeley | 5-8 p.m.

4/30/14: The Horace M. Albright Lecture in Conservation: The World Until Yesterday: What Can We Learn From Traditional Societies? by Jared Diamond. Chevron Auditorium- International House | 7-8:30 p.m.

For more details, and additional CNR news please visit the CNR newsletter at: http://my.berkeley.edu/site/MessageViewer?div_id=92541&em_id=89281.0

Postdoc Position in Norway -- All Expenses Paid

The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Technology at Norwegian University of Sciences has set up the Fellows Initiative Natural Sciences to support excellent junior scientists from outside Norway who plan to submit applications for independent research fellowships (such as Marie Skłodowska Curie Individual Fellowships, etc.) in order to pursue an academic research career.



Applications submitted to the Fellows Initiative Natural Sciences by interested junior scientists will be assessed by the different departments involved in FINS regarding previous academic achievements and potential for future research activities as well as compatibility with research activities of faculty members.

For more information about Fellows Initiative Natural Sciences, please visit: ntnu.edu

For more information about fellowship opportunities, please visit: pmb.berkeley.edu/fellowships

For job opportunities, please visit: pmb.berkeley.edu/jobs

Postdoc Lunches Foster Camaraderie, Professional Presentations

Postdoctoral Scholars in the department are now meeting regularly for lunch, conversation and presentations by professional associates on a variety of subjects.



The next postdoc lunch will be Friday, April 11 at noon in 338 Koshland Hall, and will feature a presentation by Ravi Alla, the Director of the Computational Genomics Resource Facility.

On Friday, May 9, there will be a presentation about academic job interviews featuring Lilah Rahn-Lee. She will specifically talk about her experience from the recent faculty search in PMB.

All postdocs in PMB are invited to attend.

For more information please visit ipmb.berkeley.edu/postdocs or contact Alizee Malnoe of the Niyogi Lab at alizee.malnoe@berkeley.edu. Additional organizers of the postdoc group include Amrita Hazra, Ana Raquel Figueiredo, Lilah Rahn-Lee and Sara Branco -- all postdocs in our department.

Watch iPMB for enhanced features for postdocs soon.

UC Davis Plant Breeding Symposium - Free Admission

Attendance will be free of charge -- as long as you register -- at the 2014 Plant Breeding Symposium focusing on Global Food Security on April 11, 2014 at UC Davis.

Attend in person or by webinar. The event starts at 9.30 am and includes lunch and an evening cocktail mixer for anyone who would like to network with people in industry or academia.

For details and registration, please visit <http://plantbreeding2014.ucdavis.edu/> and click on registration.

Speakers include Peggy Lemaux, who will make a presentation "Modifying Thioredoxin in Cereals Leads to Unexpected Grain Improvements - But Where Are They?" And Jorge Dubcovsky, UC Davis: Developing Reverse Genetic Tools for Wheat and Their Use to Dissect Complex Pathways.

In addition there are many other speakers lined up. Please visit the site at the above link for more information.

Call Day 2014 Features Amazing PMB Attractions

A microgarden exhibit, microbial thumbprints, magic shows and much, much more will be just a small part of the exciting events the Department of Plant & Microbial Biology will be offering at Cal Day 2014 on Saturday, April 12.

PMB will be joining forces with the College of Natural Resources and Energy Biosciences Institute to bring about one of the best Cal Days ever.

Here are just a few samples of our exhibits:

- Ice Nucleation Magic Show - featuring Professor Steve Lindow. See a video at this link: [Video](#)
- Professor Pat Zambryski and Associate Professor Michi Taga at the Information Marketplace, along with graduate and undergraduate students, postdocs and researchers at the PMB Info Table on the Genetics and Plant Biology Lawn
- Food, Fun and Fungus - Learn about majors and research opportunities while interacting with scientists, professors and students from PMB.
- Explore Cal's Microgarden, home to a diverse collection of algae and fungi. Learn all about the algae that take over our aquariums as well as the fungi that terrorizes the food we eat and turns flies into fuzz balls!
- Join Plant Biology graduate students for fun plant-themed activities. Get a free plant, do some algae painting and make your own microbial thumbprint!

All of the action will take place between 11 am and 2 pm at the Genetics and Plant Biology Lawn next to Pat Brown's Grill on April 12th, 2014 this year.

For more information on the festivities planned for that day, please visit: <http://calday.berkeley.edu/>.

If you work in PMB and are faculty, student, postdoc or staff, and would like to volunteer at Cal Day on April 12 from 11 am to 2 pm please contact Karyn Houston at karyn@berkeley.edu, 510.643.7614.

Job Opening - Biology Instructor

The Chabot-Las Positas College Community College District is seeking an Instructor, Biology - with an emphasis in Plant Biology for Las Positas College in Livermore. The position is full-time, tenure-track, and starts Fall 2014.

For more details on the job posting please,

visit: https://clpccd.peopleadmin.com/applicants/jsp/shared/position/JobDetails_css.jsp?postingId=137969

Important Dates | Upcoming Events

Spring 2014

3/24 - 3/28/14 - Spring Break

3/28/14 - Cesar Chavez Holiday

4/12/14 - Cal Day

4/22/14 - Faculty Meeting

5/2/14 - PMB Spring Social, Alumni House

5/2/14 - Classes End

5/5 to 5/9/14 - Review Week

5/12 to 5/16/14 - Finals Week

5/26/14 - Memorial Day Holiday

5/29/14 - Faculty Meeting

9/05 - 9/7/14 - PMB Retreat, Asilomar



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The PMB newsletter is produced by the Department of Plant & Microbial Biology, UC Berkeley.
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