

PLANT & MICROBIAL BIOLOGY

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See the bigger picture. Make a better world.

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GM to Order: Efficient Genetic Engineering and the Future of Food

By Levi Gadye

Berkeley Science Review

Agriculture might not strike you as humanity's first scientific endeavor. Familiar images of farmers tilling their fields or cowboys tending to their cattle evoke a nostalgia at odds with the test tubes and lab coats that have come to signify modern science. Yet agriculture represents one of the first successful applications of science to a problem that has dogged human civilization since its inception: how to feed many people without year-round hunting and gathering.

Just as the practice of agriculture has evolved over thousands of years, so has our understanding of its biological underpinnings. The emergence of modern genetics in the last century has given way to more efficient manipulation of crop traits during selective breeding, spurring the development of everything from the Honeycrisp



PMB Professor Brian Staskawicz (left) and graduate student researcher Michael Gomez.

Photo by David Galvez, PMB

apple to genetically modified (GM) insect-resistant corn. Largely thanks to the dominance of a handful of GM cash crops on American farms, the public has become increasingly wary of the role of biotechnology in agriculture, putting the long-symbiotic relationship between science and farming up in the air.

Check out the full article here: <http://sciencereview.berkeley.edu/article/gm-order/>.



Bay Area Symposium on Viruses

UC Berkeley is proud to host the fourth annual Bay Area Symposium on Viruses on Thursday, May 30th, 2014 from 9 am to 6 pm in the Li Ka Shing Center Auditorium.

The Annual Bay Area Symposium on Viruses aims to strengthen the network of scientists in the San Francisco Bay Area working on virology, host-pathogen interactions, and control of human and animal viral infections. The symposium also serves as the annual meeting for BayViro, the Bay Area Virus Network.

This year's speaker lineup includes:

- Ann Arvin | Stanford
- Jody Baron | UC San Francisco
- Laurent Coscoy | UC Berkeley
- Bryce Falk | UC Davis
- Romas Geleziunas | Gilead
- Peter Kim | Stanford
- Phillip Norris | Blood Systems Research Institute

Registration is free, but space is limited. For a complete schedule and registration information, please visit <http://bayviro.org/symposium/4/>.

Seeds of Time Movie Coming to the Bay Area

An important new documentary about seeds, maintaining a secure global food system and creating new diversity in agriculture is coming to the Bay Area:

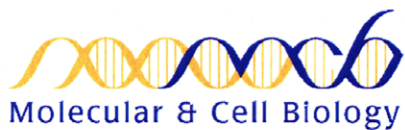
A perfect storm is brewing as agriculture pioneer Cary Fowler races against time to protect the future of our food. Gene banks of the world are crumbling, crop failures are producing starvation inspired rioting, and the accelerating effects of climate change are already affecting farmers globally. But Fowler's journey, and our own, is just beginning: From Rome to Russia and, finally, a remote island under the Arctic Circle, Fowler's passionate and personal journey may hold the key to saving the one resource we cannot live without: our seeds.

The movie will screen locally at:
SAN FRANCISCO GREEN FILM FESTIVAL
San Francisco, CA
June 2, 2014 @ 6:00p (PDT) - Roxie Theater
sfgreenfilmfest.org

For more information please visit <http://seedsoftimemovie.com>.

Molecular and Cell Biology Ph.D Thesis Symposium

The Molecular and Cell Biology (MCB) Ph.D Thesis Symposium will be held on Thursday, May 22, 2014 in 125 Li Ka Shing from 9AM-7PM.



Molecular & Cell Biology



Ph.D Thesis Symposium
Thursday, May 22, 2014
125 Li Ka Shing
9 am – 7 pm

There is a special format to accommodate the number of speakers. Two students will each give a 35 minute presentation in series, followed by a reception for the pair of speakers. Some talks may be less formal than the usual custom, since these are not thesis defenses per se and many students will be adjusting their talks so that their visiting families and friends can appreciate their work as well.

No registration is required to attend, and you may come and go throughout the day, however we ask that you please attend both talks of any pair in order to minimize the disruptions and delays between speakers.

BCourses Training in Koshland

Save the Date to learn all about bCourses from an expert with Educational Technology Services (ETS), the department that is rolling out the new service to campus.

PMB bCourses Workshop:

Wednesday, June 25, 2014

1-2:30pm

338 Koshland Hall

As of the end of Spring Semester, 30% of our course sites, more than 1200, were created on bCourses. Faculty and instructors are encouraged to follow their peers and make the transition to bCourses by setting up Fall course sites in the new system.

To find out more about the project, visit the project website: ets.berkeley.edu/bcourses

For more information on the training in Koshland Hall please contact Karyn Houston (karyn@berkeley.edu; 510-643-7614, 111 Koshland Hall.)

Cal Day 2014

Thank you to all of those who attended Cal Day 2014, and a very special thanks to the PMB faculty, students and staff who volunteered to make this one of the best Cal Days ever.

1) If you are looking for the image of the plate with your microbial thumbprint, please visit [CalDay 2014 Microbial Thumbprints](#).

2) If you are looking for the Microgarden Algae Paintings, please visit [CalDay 2014 Algae Paintings](#).

3) For a photo collage of Cal Day 2014, please visit [CalDay 2014 Pictures](#).



50th Anniversary of the Free Speech Movement Website Launch

The website for the 50th anniversary of the Free Speech Movement has launched: <http://fsm.berkeley.edu>.

Faculty, students and staff, if you are willing to share your expertise on free speech issues (past and present) by writing blog posts, doing interviews, and sharing articles, images, resources, etc. please get in touch at the email below:

Amy Hamaoui

Important Dates | Upcoming Events

Spring 2014

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

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

5/18/14 - CNR Commencement, 7-9 pm, Greek Theater

5/26/14 - Memorial Day Holiday

5/29/14 - Faculty Meeting (First Year Grad Review)

9/5/14 - 9/7/14 - PMB Retreat, Asilomar



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