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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. 27

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Research. Academics. Discoveries.

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Mary Wildermuth Meets with Venture Capitalists

Sixteen faculty members from UC Berkeley's Bakar Fellows Program, including PMB Associate Professor Mary Wildermuth, took their research ideas to Sand Hill Road - the heart of Silicon Valley's venture capital community - for a coveted meeting with representatives from prominent VC firms, industry partners and entrepreneurs.

Joined by Vice Chancellor for Research Graham Fleming, the fellows presented their research to a packed room of alumni and friends who have resources and connections that could bring these Berkeley discoveries to market.

Wildermuth described how her lab's fundamental discoveries of

mechanisms powdery mildew fungi use to infect plants, can provide opportunities for commercialization.

Read more at pmb.berkeley.edu



*Associate Professor Mary Wildermuth
(Photo: Peg Skorpinski)*

Mark your Calendars now for Micro Retreat 2014

Come on out to this year's annual Microbiology Retreat and explore the breadth of exciting research with your fellow microbiologists from throughout the UC Berkeley campus. The Retreat is sponsored by the Department of Plant & Microbial Biology and microbiologists in any department on campus -- faculty, postdocs, students and staff -- are invited to attend.

Location: Tilden Regional Park - The Brazilian Room
Time: Thursday, November 20, 2014 9 am to about 7 pm

\$75 for faculty; \$50 for postdocs, students, lab staff. Registration is required, and will soon open up at: ipmb.berkeley.edu/events/microbiology-retreat



GRADUATE GROUP
in
MICROBIOLOGY

Job Openings at Dow

Dow Chemical is seeking to fill two job positions:

- 1) Customer Application Specialist
- 2) Research and Development Scientist



To be considered, current Ph.D. students must graduate no later than August, 2015. Interested Ph.D. students, as well as postdoctoral scholars, should submit a resume and cover letter via email on or before Friday October 5, 2014 to Emmanuel Appiah-Amponsah, Ph.D. eappiahamponsah@dow.com. Please write the job title in the subject line (all caps).

Jim Tepperman to Retire

Jim Tepperman, a specialist who has worked in the Quail lab since 1989, will retire effective Sept. 30th, 2014.

Before joining the Quail Lab at the Plant Gene Expression Center, Jim worked for three years in the Briggs lab at the Carnegie Institution for Science at Stanford, where he was introduced to the wonders of phytochrome.

He then worked for five years at one of the first plant biotech companies, Advanced Genetics Sciences (later called DNA Plant Technology), in



Jim Tepperman

Oakland. In recent years Jim has focused on analyzing the transcriptional networks in phytochrome signaling.

Read about his retirement plans here:
pgec.berkeley.edu/quail-lab-specialist-retire

PMB at Mycology Conference in Thailand

Nearly 1,000 mycologists from 55 nations attended the first international meeting to be held in Bangkok's Queen Sirikit National Convention Center since the May coup led by General Prayuth Chan-ocha, presently head of the National Council for Peace and Order.

PMB Professors John Taylor, Tom Bruns, N. Louise Glass, and grad students Sydney Glassman and Iman Sylvain attended.

Read more:
pmb.berkeley.edu/news/taylor-lab-international-mycologists-meeting-thailand



John Taylor, right, at Mycology Conference

PMB Professor Awarded Patent

Professor Anastasios Melis and former PMB postdoctoral scholar Pia Lindberg were awarded US and World patent rights to their invention entitled "Isoprene hydrocarbons production using genetically engineered cyanobacteria."

The US Patent and Trademark Office cited the novelty of the invention in offering methods and compositions for the direct photosynthetic production of isoprene hydrocarbons from sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water in cyanobacteria. This patent (US # 8,802,407) is an application and reduction to practice of the "Photosynthetic Biofuels" concept, envisioned and pioneered by the Melis lab in the PMB department.



Anastasios Melis

The concept entails the direct application of photosynthesis for the generation of fuels and related chemicals, in a process where a single organism acts both as photocatalyst and processor, synthesizing and secreting ready to use commodity products

Funding for Food-Related Projects

Students are invited to apply to Big Ideas@Berkeley, an annual contest aimed at providing funding, support and encouragement to interdisciplinary teams of students who have "big ideas."

This year, a new category in Food Systems Innovations will provide funding for projects that:

- Develop innovative solutions or approaches that address challenges in food systems
- Will result in progress or changes to support food security, sustainability and/or justice and health in food systems
- Will provide equitable access to nutritious food.



Applications due November 13.

Learn More: bigideas.berkeley.edu/contest/food/

2015 BFI Faculty Seed Grants for Faculty

The Berkeley Food Institute (BFI) is offering funding for faculty and cooperative extension specialists at UC Berkeley for innovative, collaborative, interdisciplinary research projects that are aligned with the mission, vision, and themes of the Institute.

BFI works to catalyze and support transformative change in food systems, to promote diversity, justice, resilience, and health, from the local to the global. BFI envisions a world in which nutritious, affordable food is available for all and is produced sustainably and fairly - ensuring healthy people and a healthy planet.

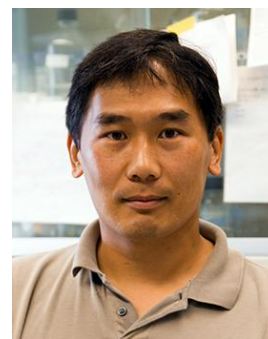
Find out more at: food.berkeley.edu/rfp/

George Chuck Awarded Plant Genome Grant

George Chuck has been awarded a National Science Foundation grant of \$870,000 for four years to support a project to identify the genetic pathways that control the formation of tillers (side branches) in wild and domesticated panicoid crop plants (e.g. corn and sorghum).

Manipulation of tillering will potentially increase biomass in biofuel crop plants or increase seed yield in food crops. Chuck is a researcher in the Hake Lab at the Plant Gene Expression Center.

Learn more about the PGEC: pgec.berkeley.edu



George Chuck

Markus Pauly Awarded Grant to Improve Plant Feedstocks

Three Energy Biosciences Institute (EBI) principal investigators are among a dozen scientists who will receive funding from the federal government aimed at improving plant feedstocks for biofuels and other bio-based products.

One such EBI Principal Investigator is Berkeley plant biologist



Sorghum, a biofuels crop

Markus Pauly, who is working with Professor Patrick Brown of University of Illinois Crop Sciences - the head of the EBI project on perennial feedstock genomics.

To read the full article, visit:

pmb.berkeley.edu/news/markus-pauly-awarded-grant-improve-plant-feedstocks

PMB Seminars Series Fall 2014 - There's Much More to Come

The Fall Semester Series for the department is in full swing. Coming up soon are seminars by our own faculty, visiting researchers and international scholars.

9/24 - Jennifer Fletcher

Plant Stem Cells | University of California, Berkeley

"Regulation of Arabidopsis Stem Cell Maintenance and Organ Formation"

10/1 - Lynne Boddy

Taylor-White Seminar

Ecology | Cardiff University, Wales, United Kingdom

"Fungus Wars: Why and How Fungi Fight Each Other"

10/8 - Devin Coleman-Derr (rescheduled)

Plant Gene Expression Center

"From FASTA to function: leveraging genomic data to advance crop science"

10/15 - Sean Crosson

Biochemistry and Molecular Biology | University of Chicago

"Integrated Control of Cell Adhesion and Stress Physiology by a Protein Photosensor"

10/22 - Giles Oldroyd

Department of Cell & Developmental Biology | John Innes Centre

"Encoding and Decoding Calcium Oscillations During Symbiosis Signaling of Plants"

All seminars are in 101 Barker Hall from noon to 1 pm. To see the full seminar schedule, including Local Talent, Plant Gene Expression Center and more, please visit pmb.berkeley.edu/seminars

Former Staskawicz Postdoc Now at Danforth



Rebecca Bart

Rebecca Bart, a postdoc who worked in the Staskawicz lab, now leads a research team at the Danforth center, located in St. Louis, Missouri.

During her time in the Stask lab, she was driven to "further understand the molecular and genetic interaction between the important food crop, cassava, and its major bacterial pathogen."

Her research at Danforth seeks to "combine genetics with molecular and computational biology to learn about the mechanisms used by hosts and pathogens to recognize and respond to one another and the environment ."

Rebecca's page:

danforthcenter.org/scientists-research/principal-investigators/rebecca-bart/research-team

PMB Retreat at Asilomar a Big Success

More than 100 faculty, students and staff from the department attended the annual Scientific Retreat at Asilomar Conference Center in Monterey Sept. 5-7.

Attendees were treated to lab presentations, met the incoming graduate students and enjoyed an excellent keynote speech by Chris Somerville, director of the Energy Biosciences Institute.

In addition, there were free activities, great weather and plenty of camaraderie.

Read more at: pmb.berkeley.edu/news/pmb-retreat-2014-asilomar

Check out the pictures on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/berkeleypmb



Saturday hike at Point Lobos

Important Dates | Upcoming Events

Fall 2014

- 9/24 - Jennifer Fletcher Seminar
- 9/29 - Dave Savage - Local Talent Seminar
- 10/1 - Taylor-White Seminar featuring Lynne Boddy
- 10/8 - Devin Coleman-Derr Seminar (rescheduled)
- 11/11 - Veterans Day Holiday
- 11/20 - Microbiology Retreat
- 11/27-11/28 - Thanksgiving Break
- 12/1 - Graduate Admissions Application Deadline
- 12/12 - PMB Holiday Party



Spring 2015

- 1/22/15-1/25/15 - Graduate Recruitment Weekend (Faculty Interviews 1/23)
- 5/15/15 - PMB Spring Party

9/5/15 - PMB Retreat - Clark Kerr Campus, UC Berkeley

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