



South African Association of Botanists (SAAB)
38th Annual Conference
15 – 18 January 2012
University of Pretoria

FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT

The Department of Plant Science of the University of Pretoria would like to invite you to the 2012 SAAB conference that will be held in Pretoria. We will do our best to host a well-organised conference with an exciting scientific programme. The main theme of the conference will be “**Plants and Society**”.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMME:

The main theme is quite broad and covers all aspects of Plant Science. The following sub-themes have already been identified, but you are welcome to suggest additional ones:

- Plant diversity and taxonomy
- Plant physiology and biotechnology
- Plant genomics
- Plant invasions
- Ecosystem services
- Grassland ecology and conservation
- Conservation, cultivation and sustainable use
- Ethnobotany
- Phytochemistry and biological activity
- Biopesticides

Oral presentations will be 20 minutes (questions included) and poster sessions will be scheduled.

PLENARY SPEAKERS:

The following eminent scientists will present plenary talks:

Richard Cowling is a professor in the Botany Department at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in the Eastern Cape. He has published extensively on the ecology and conservation of the fynbos, succulent Karoo and subtropical thicket biomes, and is widely acclaimed for his contribution to the theory and application of conservation science. He has published over 250 peer-reviewed items. Several awards have been conferred on him, including the National Research Foundation's President's Award (1987) and A-rating (1998 & 2003), Pew Fellows Program Award (1994), and the Society for Conservation Biology's Distinguished Service Award (2004).

Petr Pysek is the Deputy Director of the Institute of Botany of Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic and the Head of the Department of Invasion Ecology. He has published extensively on the flora of Europe and the ecology of invasive plants, and he is a leading expert in invasion biology. He has received several awards, including the creativity award from the Charles University in 2010.

William Bond is a Professor in Botany at the University of Cape Town and holder of UCT's Harry Bolus Chair of Botany. He is an international expert on landcover change in Southern Africa and the ecology of sub-tropical grasslands, savannas and winter rainfall shrublands. His current research involves processes most strongly influencing vegetation change in the past and present, including fire, vertebrate herbivory, climate extremes, atmospheric CO₂ concentration and habitat fragmentation. He currently serves on the Editorial Boards of many scientific journals, including Global Change Biology, and Global Ecology and Biogeography.

Robert Verpoorte is the Head of Pharmacognosy, section Metabolomics, at Leiden University in the Netherlands. He is author/co-author of 650+ scientific papers, 4 books and 4 patent applications and is Editor-in-chief of Journal of Ethnopharmacology and Phytochemical Reviews, Executive Editor of Biotechnology Letters and he serves on the editorial boards of 22 journals. His current research interests are mainly plant cell biotechnology, in particular the production of fine chemicals (including drugs) by means of plant cell cultures. He also works on the biosynthesis of secondary metabolites in plants and NMR-based metabolomics. He received an Honorary Doctorate from University of Amiens, France (2004) and the Phytochemical Society of Europe Medal in 2007.

Joseph Hirschberg is professor of the Department of Genetics at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. Prof. Hirschberg's group pioneered the molecular analysis of the carotenoid biosynthesis pathway in plants, being the first to clone genes for carotenoid biosynthetic enzymes in cyanobacteria, algae and plants. Further studies elucidated the regulation of carotenoid accumulation in fruits and flowers and were imperative for genetically engineering plants to have altered carotenoid synthesis, such as in Golden Rice. Currently his laboratory uses a range of approaches including "classical" and molecular genetics, genomics and metabolomics. His research provides a paradigm of how natural diversity can be used to decipher complex biochemical pathways in plants. His research has been published in the top journals, including PNAS, Plant Journal, Plant Physiology, Plant Cell etc. Prof Hirschberg is a lifetime honorary member of the American Society of Plant Biologists, and the most recent of his many awards was the The Trevor Goodwin Award for a Lifetime of Achievement in Research on Carotenoid Biochemistry and Biology from the International Carotenoid Society.

ACCOMMODATION AND TRANSPORT:

Accommodation will be available in a University residence near the conference venue but delegates are also welcome to stay in guest houses/lodges close to the University of Pretoria.

All accommodation and transport arrangements can be made through Ms Hestie Crous-Beckett.

EVENING FUNCTIONS:

15 January: Meet-and-Greet function

16 January: Student rumble @ Outspan and Rooftop Social for the rest of the delegates

17 January: Free evening

18 January: Gala dinner

REGISTRATION:

Registration will be open in July through the conference webpage. Details will follow in the next announcement.

ENQUIRIES:

Scientific programme: Ms René Swart at 012-420 3770 or rene.swart@up.ac.za

Accommodation and transport: Ms Hestie Crous-Beckett at 082-447 7718 or hestiecb@mweb.co.za

