

The weekly newsletter from the Botany Department at Trinity College Dublin

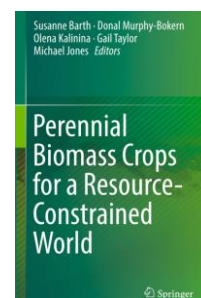
Publications

▪ **John Parnell** and his former student, **Amornrat Prajaksood**, have just published a paper with other workers on typification of *Eriocaulon* in *Edinburgh Journal of Botany*:

Souladeth, P., Prajaksood, A., Parnell, J.A.N. & Newman, M.F. (2016). Typification of names in *Eriocaulon* in the Flora of Thailand, and Flora of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. *Edinburgh Journal of Botany*, 74: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960428616000238>

▪ **Mike Jones** published the edited book *Perennial Biomass Crops for a Resource-Constrained World* containing chapter contributions from **Mike Jones** and **Jesko Zimmerman** on 'Long-Term Yields and Soil Carbon Sequestration from *Miscanthus*' and **Trevor Hodgkinson** on his *Miscanthus* collections from the Russian Far East.

<http://www.springer.com/gp/book/9783319445298#>



Conference

▪ The Botany Department was well represented at the **Ecology and Evolution Ireland 2016** conference last Friday and Saturday: **Marcin Penk** and **Connor Owens** presented posters, **Aoife Delaney** gave a talk, and former Botany postgraduate **Dara Stanley** gave a plenary talk.

Upcoming events

▪ The **Postgraduate Symposium** will be held in the Geology Museum Building on **March 2nd 2017**.

This one day event will feature talks by postgraduate students from the departments of Zoology and Botany, showcasing their current research. Key note speeches will be delivered by **Dr James LaCourse** of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and **Dr Zenobia Lewis** of the University of Liverpool. All are welcome to attend.



Grants

▪ **Alwynne McGeever** has just received a grant from the **Irish Quaternary Association** to fund two radiocarbon dates for ongoing research on the history of Scots pine. The current project is being conducted in west Tipperary in association with **Rachel McCrann** from the Senior Sophister Environmental Science class.

PHYTOBYTES needs your input, yes you!

Whether you are student or staff, please send any news you have, big or small, to [Anne \(dubearna@tcd.ie\)](mailto:dubearna@tcd.ie) with the subject heading *Phytobytes*. Let's share the latest news and always be aware of what is happening at Botany!

Featured publication

Genetic variation in the red-listed moss *Ditrichum cornubicum* Paton (Bryophyta, Ditrichaceae) and implications for its conservation.

Christina Campbell, Daniel L Kelly, Noeleen Smyth, Neil Lockhart & David T Holyoak.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03736687.2016.1232041>

Christina Campbell (Ph.D. 2013) is lead author in a remarkable publication, just out in *Journal of Bryology*. Don't switch off there! You don't have to be interested in small mosses to find this a fascinating study: it links population genetics, ecology of extreme habitats, rare plant conservation and moss survival strategies, and has implications far beyond its confines.

At its centre is a rare and tiny moss, *Ditrichum cornubicum*, the Cornish Path-moss, known from two locations in Cornwall, one in West Cork and nowhere else in the world. All are sites of old copper mines, and the moss is recorded only from copper-rich mine spoil.



Photo by Jane Stout, November 2014.

This is just one of several rare bryophytes that Christina studied. She and her supervisory panel (Noeleen Smyth of the National Botanic Gardens, Neil Lockhart of the National Parks and Wildlife Service – both graduates of TCD Botany – and David Holyoak, bryologist *extraordinaire*) formed the Heavy Metal Group that toured southern and eastern Ireland in the early years of this decade. They worked in some of the most desolate spots in the country: barren heaps of rubble that at first sight appeared devoid of all life, looking for – and finding – species that even the average bryologist would pass over.

To add to the sense of desolation, only male plants of *Ditrichum cornubicum* are known – the species appears to reproduce solely by asexual means. In spite of this, Christina found that each of the known populations is genetically distinct from the others. The West Cork moss has five 'private alleles' – i.e. genes not found in the Cornish populations. This effectively puts paid to the theories of recent introduction (by Cornish miners/stone-masons), and confirms this as one of the rarest members of the native Irish flora. Now read on...

Daniel L. Kelly (proud supervisor).

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