

The newsletter from the Botany Department at Trinity College Dublin

Botany welcomes the following new staff:

- **Professor Jennifer McElwain** is the new **Chair of Botany** (18th since 1711 and the first woman!). Jenny is a past TCD Botany graduate and moves from UCD.
- **Lisa Ashton** is a Research Assistant in Jenny McElwain's group. She graduated from the University of Ottawa in 2014 with a Honours BSocSc in International Development and Globalization. In 2016 she completed the MSc. Global Change: Ecosystem Science and Policy program at University College Dublin.
- **Ning Zhou** is a PhD Candidate at Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences. She won a one year CAS fellowship to join Jenny McElwain's group to undertake research on Triassic and Jurassic Ginkgo and paleo-CO₂ and will return to China in early November this year.
- **Dr Brian Murphy** is now research associate working with Trevor Hodkinson on an Enterprise Ireland Commercialisation Fund project called **E-Seed** that aims to commercialise the application of endophytes to crop production.
- **Cecilia van de Belt** is a new Technical Officer covering for Patricia Coughlan's maternity leave.
- **Cian White**, former Zoology undergraduate, is starting a PhD in Jane Stout's group on Biodiversity and ecosystem functioning in urban nature based solutions.

News



- Huge congratulations to **David Madden**, a recent graduate from the Plant Sciences programme, who has won the regional award in the Earth and Environmental Sciences category of the **Undergraduate Awards Programme 2017**, for his final year thesis entitled "A physiological assessment of the bioenergy crop *Phalaris arundinacea* L. in the phytoremediation of salt-affected soil". This distinction places David at the top of national submissions and in the top 10% of global submissions to this category from students across 47 countries.
- **John Parnell** has been elected as a full editor of the **Flora of Thailand** series. He remains on the Editorial Board.

Publications

- Two new volumes of the **Flora of Thailand** series, for which **John Parnell** is on the Editorial Board, have just been published: Volumes 13(3) & 13(4). They cover a number of ecologically critical and taxonomically difficult families including the Dipterocarpaceae and Eriocaulaceae.
- Two former Ph.D. students in Botany **Amornrat Prajaksood** and **Pranom Chantaranothai** have, along with **John Parnell**, published an account of the Eriocaulaceae of Thailand in the series **Flora of Thailand** (Flora of Thailand 13(3) 434-511).



Conferences

▪ The Botany Department hosted an international conference, **SUSTAIN: Endophytes for a Growing World**, on 28th - 29th August 2017. The conference, funded by Science Foundation Ireland, was held in the Museum Building and attracted nearly 70 delegates from 22 different countries, including Australia, Canada, Chile, India, New Zealand and most European countries. The conference was a great success, with many interesting and stimulating talks and posters. Delegates were given every opportunity to network and socialise, and we held an evening food and wine reception to facilitate this. Many new friends and contacts were made, giving us the opportunity to develop future collaborative research. The conference was a perfect opportunity for Botany to demonstrate that we are now one of the leading global centres of endophyte research and development.



▪ Prof. John Parnell and Botany PhD students Sukontip Sirimongkol, Ponlawat Pattarakulpisutti and Anne Dubéarnès attended the **17th Flora of Thailand Conference** in Krabi, Thailand. Sukontip, Ponlawat and Anne gave talks to present their research projects, respectively entitled “*Henckelia* in Thailand”, “Factors influencing plant species composition of flood plain vegetation in Nong Thung Tong Non-Hunting area, Peninsular Thailand”, and “Systematics of the genus *Embelia*, Primulaceae – Myrsinoideae”.



Outreach

- **Jane Stout** was part of a panel discussion exploring the future of sustainable grassland at the DAFM [Grassland Symposium: Role of Sustainable Grassland in Foodwise 2025](#).
- **BBC RADIO** has recorded a program with **Jenny McElwain** in the herbarium on Thursday 21st on reconstructing past atmospheric CO₂ using fossil plants and on how herbarium archives are used to provide calibration data sets for paleo-CO₂ reconstructions.

Upcoming Events



- **Probe: Research Uncovered At Trinity College Dublin** returns on 29th September 2017 with a packed programme of talks, experiments, comedy and workshops showcasing the best of Irish research. Click [here](#) for the programme of events.

Post doc opportunities

- There are two post doc opportunities on a new ERC Proof of Concept Grant called **PlantSensekit**. The deadline for application is **September 29th, 2017**. See <https://www.tcd.ie/Botany/Vacancies/> for further details.

Trees of TCD – submit your pictures!

The booklet on the **Trees of TCD** (3rd edition, 2011) is now out of print. In light of the number of losses – and fresh plantings - on campus in recent years, a fresh revision of the booklet is being prepared. There is already quite a good collection of photographs of trees on the campus - but with a strong bias towards pictures taken in spring. We are therefore inviting pictures of **trees on the campus in their autumn colours**. Both pictures of whole trees and close-ups of branches, leaves, fruits etc. are welcome. Please record the location of any picture – ideally with the tag number of the tree. (There is a small aluminium tag nailed to the trunk of the majority of trees on the campus).



Please submit your pictures in electronic format to Ms. Mary-Pat O'Sullivan, mpsullvn@tcd.ie, not later than **December 1st 2017**. There will be a prize or two for the best entries!

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) with the subject heading Phytobytes. Let's share the latest news and always be aware of what is happening at Botany!