Welcome to Bea Jackson who joined Jennifer McElwain’s group to do a research master funded by the ERC project TERRAFORM. Bea will be working on the Late Devonian Archaeopteris fossils from Kiltorcan, Co. Kilkenny and North America to study some of the world’s oldest forests and their paleoenvironmental context.

“I became interested in palaeobotany during my undergraduate degree in TCD. In my free time I enjoy rock climbing, playing gaelic football, drawing and painting.”

Dr Alina Premrov recently joined the ICARUS – Department of Geography, Maynooth University (MU), where she has undertaken a temporary lecturing role in the areas of biogeography, hazards and society, environmental change, global ecosystem pressures and sustainability. At the same time she is also continuing to pursue her research under the PROTECTS project in (TCD), Botany Department (currently on temporary reduced capacity for the duration of her lecturing post in MU; she is expected to be back on full capacity in TCD after the completion of lecturing in MU in 2022).
To mark the retirement of the Chairman of the Grounds & Gardens Committee (GAGC), Prof John Parnell, a Quercus robur ‘Purpurea’ tree (Purple-leaved English Oak) was planted in the Physics Lawn to mark his time as Chairman and his invaluable contributions. This is a rare type of the native English oak, available in small numbers and not frequently listed for sale.

Wishing all the best in retirement and thank you for all that you have contributed to Trinity over the years!

And super congratulations to Anne Dubéarnès, who’s PhD graduation ceremony was held on November 5th!

"I am forever grateful to the brilliant and kind-hearted people who have surrounded and supported me without fault along this journey. The warmth, dedication and ingenuity of the staff, professors, postdocs and students of the Botany Department (and the awesomeness of the NERD club) will be a source of inspiration for years to come"

She is now back in France and looking for a postdoc in plant taxonomy, biodiversity and conservation. Best of luck 💐
Publications

• Jane Stout and former PhD students Eileen Power and Sarah Mullen co-authored a paper published in Plant Ecology and Evolution. See here: Bees increase seed set of wild plants while the proportion of arable land has a variable effect on pollination in European agricultural landscapes.

• Rachael Murphy published the first paper from her PhD research with her supervisor Matthew Saunders in Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment entitled Nitrous oxide emission factors from an intensively grazed temperate grassland: A comparison of cumulative emissions determined by eddy covariance and static chamber methods. Congratulations!

• Matthew Saunders co-authored a paper published in Plant Ecology and Evolution entitled Quantifying moss moisture stresses in undrained, afforested and rewetted peatlands located in Republic of Ireland using laboratory measurements and computer modelling.

• Matthew Saunders co-authored a paper published in Regional Environmental Change entitled Opportunities for an African greenhouse gas observation system.

Challenges

Trevor Hodkinson’s molecular lab took part in the 2021 International Laboratory Freezer Challenge. The aim of the challenge is to operate all cold storage effectively, so that energy efficiency is improved. Participants in the competition earn points by using sustainable best practices such as defrosting freezers. This year 222 labs from 17 countries participated. Our efforts in the challenge led to an estimate of saving 25.2kWh/day, while the combined effort of all the labs saved 4.6million kWh of electricity, reducing carbon emissions by 3,260 metric tons.
The freezer challenge (freezerchallenge.org) will be commencing again in January 2022. I’d highly recommend taking part. If you have any questions about the challenge feel free to contact Patricia Coughlan (coughlp@tcd.ie).

Entertainment

The Fungi Film Fest (FFF) is the world’s only film festival dedicated to the beauty, weirdness, and human influences of mushrooms, lichens, and micro fungi. This year it was split into six 60-90 minutes-long sessions, each of which was live-streamed online on November 11–13, 16–18, and 26–28.

If you missed it, stay tuned for next year!
Projects and Funding

Matthew Saunders is part of a consortium that has secured €2.9 M from DAFM to investigate adaptation, mitigation and protection strategies to increase the resilience of Irish forests and to address the impacts of climate change.

Conferences and Meetings

Matthew Saunders presented his work on the importance of peatland rehabilitation in climate mitigation at the Peatlands Gathering event and also the Peatlands Pavilion at COP26. He also presented at the recent Royal Irish Academy Climate conversation series where he spoke about grasslands, carbon and climate and the role of agriculture in the recent climate mitigation plan.

EcoEvo Blog

Congratulations to Richa Marwaha, the new editor in chief of EcoEvo Blog!

Have you already checked the latest posts? See below! Would you like to say something about a topic of your interest too? Get in touch with the editor via email (marwahar@tcd.ie)

By Andrew McManus - Myodes glareolus, a model system for studying pathogens during a biological invasion

By Aoife Cahill - Biodiversity in brownfields
Bark: An Intimate Look at the World's Trees
by Cédric Pollet

In a large number of countries around the world he has, Since 1999, French photographer Cédric Pollet tracked down the most fascinating bark from trees of forests, parks and botanical gardens, accumulating more than 20,000 images covering around 500 species. This project is part stunning art photography, part implicit manifesto for biodiversity. A true book for collections, where graphics and colours blend without limit.
Phytobooks

The Hidden Beauty of Seeds and Fruits
By Levon Biss

This is a photographic study that celebrates the wonders of nature in mind-blowing magnification. After spending months searching through the carpological collection at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, British photographer Levon Biss selected over a hundred samples to be featured in this book, captioned with scientific text that provides the backstory for each specimen.
Microsculpture: Portraits of Insects
By Levon Biss

The project is a photographic study of insects from the collections of the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Most insects were photographed in about 30 sections, each section lit differently with strobe lights to accentuate the microsculpture of that particular area of the body. Each insect portrait is created from over 8000 separate images.
I recommend all these books that are part of my personal collection. And you? Do you have any interesting book that you’d like to share here?

PHYTOBYTES needs your input!

Whether you are student or staff, please send any news you have, big or small, to Diego D. Bianchi (dbianchi@tcd.ie) with the subject heading “Phytobytes”.

Clare Lyons, Leaf

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