

## Report of the Botany 2015 Science and Plants for People meeting, July 25-29, 2015

Submitted by Dr. Deena Errampalli (President, Plant Canada).

Plant Canada is an umbrella organization for six Canadian plant societies including, Canadian Botanical Association (CBA), Canadian Phytopathological Society (CPS), Canadian Society of Agronomy (CSA), Canadian Society for Horticultural Science (CSHS), Canadian Society of Plant Biologists (CSPB) and Canadian Weed Science Society (CWSS). The purposes of Plant Canada, a not-for-profit corporation, are: a. To organize and sponsor regular, effective scientific meetings and workshops under a national umbrella for plant science and related disciplines in Canada, b. To operate and maintain a strong communication network among Member Societies and their individual members, and c. To be a strong and effective force for public education and advocacy in plant and related sciences.

Plant Canada holds national scientific meetings once every four years, with one of its six member societies hosting the conference. This year, Plant Canada (with CBA as a host for 2015) co-organized its 1st international meeting entitled "Botany 2015 Science and Plants for people "with the Botanical Society of America from July 25-29 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. This joint meeting which included six plant societies based outside Canada was a first time venture for Plant Canada. A total of 14 plant scientific societies or organizations from Canada and the USA participated in the meeting: American Fern Society, American Bryological and Lichenological Society, American Society Plant Taxonomists, Botanical Society of America, International Association for Plant Taxonomy, Mycological Society of America, Society for Herbarium Curators, CBA, CPS, CSA, CSHS, CSPB and CWSS.



Photo: The Presidents or the representatives of the participating Canadian and American plant societies at Botany 2015, Science and plants for people meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Back row from left: Drs. Jon Shaw (President, American Bryological and Lichenological Society), Pat Herendeen (President, American Society Plant Taxonomists), Tom Ranker (President, Botanical Society of America). Middle row from left: Drs. Vincenzo DeLuca (President, Canadian Society of Plant Biologists), D. Jean Dodge (President, Mycological Society of America), Shahrokh Khanizadeh (Past President, Plant Canada), John Markham (President, Canadian Botanical Association). Front row from left: Drs. Samir Debnath (President, Canadian Society for Horticultural Science), Deena Errampalli (President, Plant Canada and President, Canadian Phytopathological Society), Mary Stensvold, (Secretary, the American Fern Society) and Karol Marhold (Secretary, International Assoc. for Plant Taxonomy). Missing, representatives from CWSS and CSA. Photo courtesy: Bill Dahl, BSA.

Over 1620 delegates, including 485 Plant Canada members, from five continents attended the Botany 2015, Science and Plants for people meeting and explored a wide-range of recent advances in plant sciences. The scientific program <http://www.plantcanada.ca/proceeding/2015/index.html> had a total of 1396 abstracts! There were 13 special addresses, 689 papers, 480 posters, 22 symposia with 191 symposia speakers, 3 colloquia, 6 discussion sessions and 17 workshops. The delegates participated in 23 field tours <http://www.botanyconference.org/workshops.html>

The Plenary lecture of the conference titled, "Botany is cool: so why doesn't the public know that?" was presented by Ken Thomson from University of Sheffield, United Kingdom.

A highlight of the symposia at this meeting was that co-sponsorship of a symposium by at least two different societies allowed for interaction and collaboration between different plant scientific societies. The titles of the 22 symposia shows the diversity of the subject matter that was presented and discussed at

this meeting: Phylogenomics and the 1000 plants (1KP) initiative; A Broader view for Plant EvoDevo: novel approaches for diverse model systems; Plant Secondary Chemistry: from Biochemistry to Applications; Ecological and evolutionary attributes of bryophytes of the boreal and arctic regions; New paradigms from interdisciplinary research; Recent advances in phylogeny and systematics of Brassicaceae; Blended Learning and Educational Technology to enhance Biology; Morphospaces, Morphometrics, and Phylogenetics; Basic and applied approaches to improve disease resistance in plants; Underutilized Crops for Secure and Green Futures; Celebrating More Than Three Decades of Research in Nymphaeales: A Colloquium Honoring Ed Schneider; Ecological impacts and restoration of industrial sites: roles of bryophytes and graminoid vascular plants; What can Next Generation Fungal Genome Sequencing do for you?; Integrated perspectives on the ecology, genetics and coevolution of intimate mutualisms; Advances in Modelling Plant Development; The rise and fall of photosynthate: Evolution of plant/fungus interactions from paleobotanical and phylogenomic perspectives; Desiccation tolerance in bryophytes: perspectives from early career scientists; Lab Bench to Boardroom: Developing Plant Science Ideas; Forest Tree Responses to a Changing Climate; The negotiated surveillance of parts and wholes: a symbioses-centered perspective on plant biology research; Ecological diversification and niche evolution in the temperate zone largest genus: Carex; Mesozoic and Cenozoic plant evolution and biotic change: A symposium in honor of Ruth Stockey; The evolutionary importance of polyploidy; Plant Resilience to Climate Challenges; Phylogenetic approaches to understanding biodiversity and endemism.

#### **A few highlights from Plant Canada specific activities at Botany 2015:**

**Symposia:** Plant Canada sponsored a symposium titled, Plant secondary chemistry: from biochemistry to applications, and along with other plant societies co-sponsored 6-10 symposia at Botany 2015 meeting.

**Plant Canada business meetings, certificates and awards:** The 2015 Annual Meeting of Members (AMOM) was held on Sunday July 26, 2015 at the Shaw conference Centre in Edmonton. The New board was elected during this meeting: Dr. Deena Errampalli, President and Tariq Akhtar, Treasurer the new Board for 2015-16 was installed. The contact information for the PC board can be found at . The Outgoing Board members, Carol Peterson, Treasurer and Shahrokh Khanizadeh, the President were presented with certificates of appreciation for their contributions to Plant Canada over the past 4 years. On July 27, Plant Canada held a breakfast workshop, with over 40 participants, discussed was expanding the role for Plant Canada, such as advocating for plant sciences in Canada. Carl Douglas chaired the meeting. The recommendations from this workshop will be discussed at the upcoming Plant Canada Board meetings. The Plant Canada reception was held from 6:00 to 7:00 pm on July 29. At this reception, Yousef Papadopoulos and John Markham were recognized for their contributions as the Chair of the Plant Canada Local arrangements committee for 2011 PC Meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia and for Botany 2015 in Edmonton, respectively. Plant Canada also presented 12 student travel awards, two awards for each of the six societies under plant Canada umbrella. The New Board met on July 29, 2015 and set out preliminary goals to initiate discussions to publicize Plant Canada nationally.

On behalf of Plant Canada, Errampalli thanked the organizers of the Botany 2015, Science and Plants for people meeting: Plant Canada Board; Plant Canada Scientific Organizing Committee for Botany 2015 - Dr. John Markham (Chair of the Committee; CBA), Dr. Samir Debnath (CSHS), Dr. Diane Edwards (Plant Canada), Dr. Deena Errampalli (CPS) and Dr. Anja Geitmann (CSPB); the Botany 2015 Meeting Organizing Committee - the representatives from each of the 14 participating societies from Canada and USA and the major organizers of the meeting, the Botanical Society of America representatives, Tom Ranker (President), Amy Litt (Program Director), Bill Dahl (Executive Director) and Johanne Stogran (Director of Conferences); The local organizing committees (LAC) for each of the participating societies; all the sponsors; and the delegates. In closing, the Botany 2015, Science and Plants for People meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada was a great success, it provided the stage for an international perspective and North American specific focus and allowed for networking, collaboration and discussion opportunities for the delegates and members belonging to 14 plant scientific societies.