

## **PlantSci Newsletter – a monthly round-up of plant science policy headlines and stories**

**December 2018**

### **News**

#### **Plant health and biosecurity**

##### **[UK-wide consortium to combat serious threat to plant health](#)**

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Right Honourable Lord Henley, announces funding for a major bacterial plant diseases research programme supported by UK Research and Innovation's Strategic Priorities Fund.

##### **[Ash dieback: Ash woodlands 'may flourish once again'](#)**

##### **[Forestry Commission act on tree pest detected in Kent](#)**

The tree pest eight-toothed spruce bark beetle (*Ips typographus*) has been discovered in Kent.

##### **[Deadly rose virus which could wipe out British flowers is likely to come to UK, RHS says as it backs project to sequence DNA](#)**

A deadly rose virus which wipes out entire flower populations and is impossible to get rid of is likely to come to Britain, the RHS has warned after sponsoring a study into the disease.

##### **[Report floating pennywort this winter, says Environment Agency](#)**

Reminder issued after EA removes 1,000 tonnes of the invasive species from the Anglian region's rivers.

##### **[First Dutch bananas could help tackle worldwide fungal threat](#)**

University grows 60 plants on coco peat and rock wool, avoiding soil-borne disease.

## **Agriculture**

### **[Restrictions on the use of metaldehyde to protect wildlife](#)**

Ban on the outdoor use of metaldehyde introduced to protect wildlife.

### **[Dame Glenys Stacey review proposes farm regulation shake-up](#)**

A more supportive, flexible and incentives-led approach to farming regulation has been recommended as part of a review into the sector published today.

### **[World Soil Day marks importance of healthy farmed environment](#)**

The importance of soil health for both productive farming and a healthy environment has been brought home today on World Soil Day (5 December).

### **[Stronger pesticide regulations likely needed to protect all bee species, say studies](#)**

Regulators worldwide currently use honeybees as the sole model species failing to account for potential threats posed by agrochemicals to the full diversity of bee species from bumblebees to solitary bees, which are probably more important for pollination of food crops than managed honeybees.

### **[Ideological divisions mar the pesticide special committee's last act](#)**

A deeply divided European Parliament's PEST Committee stuck to its broad mandate and approved a diluted final report on pesticides, as political confusion continued to hinder attempts to revise the current protocol for their authorisation.

## **Food security**

### **[How to Sustainably Feed 10 Billion People by 2050, in 21 Charts](#)**

### **[Phosphorus: the Hidden Bedrock of the UK Food System](#)**

There is a growing threat to the UK's food system, and most of us aren't even aware of it.

## **Biodiversity and conservation**

### **[15 biggest emerging trends and threats to biodiversity in 2019](#)**

Experts have identified the emerging but little understood trends that could have a big impact on the natural world in 2019.

### **[Nation's botanical treasure troves 'under huge threat'](#)**

## Forestry

[Why massive effort needs to be put into growing trees on farms](#)

[Call for women to take up jobs working with trees](#)

[Scotland signs up to forestry pledge](#)

First Minister commits to Bonn Challenge.

## Opinion

[Gene edited food imports into EU will be almost impossible to spot](#)

The scientist responsible for the only public trial of a gene edited crop in Europe has said the EU decision to reclassify the plants as GM will cause a regulatory nightmare for food standard agencies.

## Opportunities

[STEM for BRITAIN](#)

STEM for BRITAIN Exhibition of Posters by early-career research scientists, engineers and mathematicians. The final of the 2019 STEM for BRITAIN event will take place at the Attlee Suite, Portcullis House, Westminster on Wednesday, 13th March 2018, sponsored by Stephen Metcalfe MP, Chairman of the STEM for BRITAIN organising group of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee.

Closes: 4 January 2019

[Trustee / Council member - Royal Society of Biology](#)

Help lead the Royal Society of Biology

The Royal Society of Biology is seeking a new Trustee to serve a minimum four year term. The Trustees set the strategic direction and provide a key leadership role in ensuring the Society meets its charitable aims and objectives through its current, and future, three year business plan. You will be joining a senior level Board covering all aspects of bioscience from macro-systems to whole organisms to the molecular biosciences.

Closes: 11 January 2019

[BBSRC Innovator of the Year](#)

Innovator of the Year recognises and rewards individuals and small teams who have harnessed the potential of their excellent research, and is open to all researchers funded by BBSRC within the past six years.

Closes: 30 January 2019

### **Sustainable Intensification & Valuing Nature in Dialogue: enabling researchers to work across environment and farming policy interests**

The Valuing Nature Programme in partnership with the Sustainable Intensification Research Network (SIRN) invites applications from early-career researchers to take part in a free three-day workshop. This workshop aims to support the development of capability for researchers to work across the diverse disciplines needed to link Sustainable Intensification and Natural Capital frameworks. Confirmed speakers and mentors include Michael Winter (University of Exeter), Andy Whitmore (Rothamsted Research), Ece Ozdemiroglu, (eftec), Rosie Hails (National Trust), Robert Fish (University of Kent) and Charles Godfray (University of Oxford).

Closes: 28 January 2019

### **Royal Society of Biology travel grants**

Student and early-career members of the Royal Society of Biology can now apply for a travel grant of £500 to support future overseas travel to attend a biology-related project or conference. Learn new lab and field techniques, gain professional development skills, and network with international academics with the support of a travel grant. Please visit the Society's [website](#) for further information and to read reports from [previous grant recipients](#). Closes: 1 March 2019

## **Consultations**

### **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers**

The consultation presents a ten-year opportunity to shape the revisions that are needed to ensure the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers remains fit for the future. The Concordat can make a real difference in improving the environment and career development for researchers and is important in helping develop the pipeline of talent and ensuring the UK maintains its leading position in research and innovation. Organisations and individuals, including all staff engaged in research, as well as those managing or supporting research and researchers, should consider responding to the consultation.

Closes: 7 January 2019

### **Committee calls for ideas from the public**

The Science and Technology Committee has decided again to create an open opportunity for the science community and the wider public to suggest science and technology areas for scrutiny.

Closes: 8 January 2019

### **Brexit, Science and Innovation: Preparations for 'No-Deal' inquiry launched**

The Science and Technology Committee invites short written contributions from the science and innovation community and others on: what a No Deal Brexit would mean for the science and innovation community; and the adequacy of what the Government and its non-departmental public bodies are doing to prepare for such an outcome.

Closes: 23 January 2019

### **25 year environment plan: measuring progress**

The government is seeking views on the indicators that should be used to show environment change and how to measure progress against the 10 goals of the 25 year environment plan.

Closes: 25 January 2019

### **Scrutiny of the draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill inquiry launched**

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee and the Environmental Audit Committee have launched a joint call for written evidence for pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Environment (Principles and Governance) Bill.

Closes: 31 January 2019

### **Biodiversity net gain: updating planning requirements**

The government is seeking views how to improve the planning system in England to protect the environment (biodiversity net gain) and build places to live and work.

Closes: 10 February 2019

## **Events**

### **Molecular Plant Biology Symposium**

This symposium is a full day program of talks showcasing cutting edge research and the facilities available at each of the N8 institutions. There is an exciting line up and lots of time for discussion and networking.

Durham University, 1 April 2019

### **11th Tri-National Arabidopsis Meeting (TNAM 2019)**

For the last 20 years, TNAM has established itself as a premier plant science meeting in Europe that attracts many participants and also much international attention. In addition to two keynote lectures presented by Tetsuya Higashiyama and Wolf Frommer, TNAM 2019 features an exciting scientific program highlighting frontier plant research from Arabidopsis to crops, including technology development. With more than 26 invited speakers and 250 expected participants, combined with the strong plant research community in Europe and in Switzerland, TNAM 2019 again presents an exciting opportunity to engage in discussions on frontier research.

Zurich, 10-12 April 2019

### **Heads of University BioSciences (HUBS) Annual Meeting 2019**

We are delighted to invite all members to attend the inaugural HUBS Annual Meeting. Early-bird registration is now open for this two-day conference, which will feature sessions on research, higher education policy, and teaching and learning in the biosciences.

Cambridge, 30 April - 1 May 2019

For the full events list, please see the [UKPSF website](#).

## And finally...

### [The secret life of plants: Ten new species found this year](#)

#### [The Biologist](#)

In the latest issue, we look at a unique [outdoor experiment](#) testing responses of a forest ecosystem to enriched levels of carbon dioxide. We also have an [interview with Dame Georgina Mace](#) about the scale of the global crisis of biodiversity loss, and how she stays positive in the face of relentlessly worrying trends. Members can download the full issue [here](#).

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