

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

March 2019

### **News**

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

##### **[Antibiotics set to flood Florida’s troubled orange orchards](#)**

A desperate plan to fight a citrus scourge has public-health advocates and scientists concerned.

##### **[Ash dieback: Deadly tree fungus spreading 'more quickly'](#)**

##### **[Bean-eating bug gets into top 10 worst garden pests](#)**

Experts point to climate change for shift in garden pest and disease rankings.

##### **[Chelsea Flower Show 2019: Why there might be a lavender shortage](#)**

The RHS have banned all high risk hosts of *Xylella* from their shows in 2019, including lavender.

##### **[CSIRO releases Brazilian leaf smut fungus to target and kill invasive weed](#)**

Science agency says scourge of wandering trad could be slowed by fungus, which they have called its 'natural pathogen'.

#### **Agriculture**

##### **[Gene-edited foods are safe, Japanese panel concludes](#)**

Japan will allow gene-edited foodstuffs to be sold to consumers without safety evaluations as long as the techniques involved meet certain criteria, if recommendations agreed on by an advisory panel yesterday are adopted by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

### [Why the future of gene-edited foods is in the balance](#)

Regulators will decide the impact of the biggest advance in bioscience since genetic modification.

### [The Roundup row: is the world's most popular weedkiller carcinogenic?](#)

Producer Monsanto is facing thousands of lawsuits from customers who now have cancer. But not all experts are convinced of a link.

### [Scottish Affairs Select Committee visits to discuss future of agriculture and innovation](#)

The Scottish Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons visited the James Hutton Institute in Dundee - home of Scotland's first 'vertical farm', developed by agritech business Intelligent Growth Solutions - to meet agricultural innovation experts seeking to push forward new land management technologies in Scottish farming and crofting.

### [How to feed Scotland in 2050](#)

## **Biodiversity and conservation**

### [Widespread losses of pollinating insects revealed across Britain](#)

Wild bees and hoverflies lost from a quarter of the places they were found in 1980, study shows.

### [National Pollinator Strategy 2014 to 2024: implementation](#)

Setting out what we will be doing to improve the state of our bees and other pollinating insects and how we are monitoring progress.

### [Government to mandate 'biodiversity net gain'](#)

The Government has today (13 March) confirmed that new developments must deliver an overall increase in biodiversity.

### [Survey enables better understanding of pressures on UK's plant species](#)

The dedication of volunteers across the UK is creating an impressive resource on plant communities, thereby assisting scientific investigations into changes to our countryside.

### [Research shines light on the hidden world beneath our feet](#)

Farm soils in Wales have a richer variety and number of microbial species than in woodland, bogs and conservation land, new research has found.

### [Biodiversity decline is impacting plant health](#)

A new report from FAO throws light on the negative impacts of climate change, overpopulation, pollution and other factors on biodiversity.

## Forestry

### [First draft of the Agroforestry Review](#)

### [Europe's forests threatened by biodiversity collapse, warn campaigners](#)

Logging in Poland's Vistula lagoon described by experts as part of a 'war on nature' across the continent's ancient forests.

### [Tree loss pushing beetles to the brink](#)

### [Genetic reserve in Wester Ross to protect Scotland's national tree](#)

### [UN International Day of Forests 2019: Para-ecologists – the paramedics of the rainforest](#)

Para-ecologists, supported by the UK government's Darwin Initiative, are collecting vital data about the rainforests of Papua New Guinea and contributing to the protection of important wildlife and habitats.

### [Genetic diversity maps to help forests survive climate change](#)

Forests have a special magic for many of us. Steeped in folklore and fantasy, they are places for enchantments, mythical creatures and outlaws. But if they are to survive into the future, they may also need a helping hand from science.

## Sustainability

### [Climate change: Water shortages in England 'within 25 years'](#)

### [Wetland mud is 'secret weapon' against climate change](#)

## Other news

### [Local greenspaces important for children of all ages and backgrounds](#)

New data from Natural England shows how children are engaging with nature

### [Tapping the potential of birch water](#)

## People

### [Tony Juniper CBE appointed as Natural England chair](#)

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today confirmed Tony Juniper CBE as the new Chair of Natural England.

### [Environment Agency Chair reappointed](#)

Emma Howard Boyd has been reappointed as Environment Agency Chair.

## Opportunities

### [Applications opening soon: Plant Health Undergraduate Studentships 2019](#)

The UKPSF, with support from Defra, BSPP, N8 AgriFood and the David Colegrave Foundation, has arranged to provide opportunities for nine enthusiastic undergraduate students to undertake research projects with leading plant health scientists. Projects will run for 10 weeks over summer 2019, and students will receive a bursary. We will soon begin accepting applications from students for these placements. Please share this opportunity with bioscience undergraduate students who may be interested. Full details of the projects will be available in mid April, when applications will open. Please keep an eye on our [website](#) for further details.

### [Applications are now open for the 2019 Royal Society Pairing Scheme](#)

Each year 30 research scientists are paired with UK parliamentarians and civil servants. They learn about each other's work by spending time together in Westminster and the researcher's institutions. Those taking part gain an insight into how research findings can help inform policy making, and come away with a better understanding of how they can get involved.

The scheme is open to any UK based scientist who has at least two-year's post-doctoral experience or the equivalent in industry.

Closes: 7 April 2019

### [David Miller Award Applications Now Open](#)

Calling all young horticulturists and plant scientists! The SCI Horticulture Group has now opened applications for the 2019 David Miller award. Two travel bursaries with the value of £500 each along with other benefits that are available this year.

Closes: 15 April 2019

### [Innovate UK Smart funding launches with £20 million grant competition](#)

Closes: 24 April 2019

### [The RSB's Biology Week Outreach and Engagement grants information and application process is now open online.](#)

RSB members can apply for funding to run outreach and engagement activities and events during Biology Week (5th-13th October) 2019.

Closes: 29 April 2019

### [Announcement of Opportunity: Climate, environment and health](#)

Applications are invited for multilateral, inter- and transdisciplinary research projects which seek to improve understanding of the pathways between climate, environment and health as outlined in the call document.

Closes: 6 May 2019

### **[A Combined Food Systems Approach to Scaling-up Interventions to Address the Double Burden of Malnutrition](#)**

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) Collective Programme, is pleased to announce investment of up to £8.5 million to support interdisciplinary proposals that seek to work across the food system to reduce the global double burden of malnutrition.

Closes: 7 May 2019

### **[New cut-off for highlight topic ideas](#)**

NERC invites the environmental science community to submit new ideas for highlight topics.

Closes: 15 May 2019

### **[Signals in the Soil](#)**

Proposals are invited under a new research programme - Signals in the Soil (SitS). This is a new international programme between UK Research & Innovation, the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the US Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The programme will address the challenge of transforming existing capabilities in understanding dynamic near-surface soil processes through advances in sensor systems and modelling, and through this deliver sustainable, resilient and functional soils, whether managed or unmanaged.

Closes: 15 May 2019

### **[RSB Outreach and Engagement Award 2019](#)**

Are you a bioscience researcher involved in science communication? If you work in any sector of UK biosciences, apply for the Royal Society of Biology Outreach and Engagement Award 2019 and win up to £1500.

Closes: 28 June 2019

### **[Royal Society of Biology Photography Competition 2019](#)**

'Capturing movement' is the theme of this year's Royal Society of Biology Photography Competition. Life on Earth is constantly changing, and we invite you to photograph nature in motion. Supported by Eppendorf, the competition has two age categories each with a cash prize: 18 and over (£1000) and under 18s (£500). Submit up to three images. Please contact [Raghav Selvam](#) with any enquires.

Closes: 26 July 2019

### **[The Nancy Rothwell Award 2019](#)**

The Nancy Rothwell Award 2019 specimen drawing competition for 7 – 18 year olds is now open for submissions. Prizes include an experience day at the [Royal Veterinary College](#) for students, and their school can also win £100. Visit the Royal Society of Biology [website](#) for more information.

Closes: 30 July 2019

## Consultations

### [Evaluation of the Feed Additives Regulation](#)

Closes: 3 April 2019

### [Consultation on Environmental Principles and Governance in Scotland](#)

Closes: 11 May 2019

## Events

### [Open invitation to the April Advisory Committee on Social Science meeting](#)

The Advisory Committee for Social Science (ACSS) of the Food Standards Agency is holding its third meeting.

London, 2 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

### [Botanical Microscopy 2019](#)

The 11th running of the International Botanical Meeting will in 2019 be held in the new lecture/conference facilities at Oxford Brookes University with accommodation in the famous Queen's College, Oxford. As in recent meetings there will be 7 or 8 lead speakers and the rest of the programme will be chosen from offered talks.

Oxford, 14 April 2019

### [Monogram 2019](#)

The Monogram Network meeting is the annual get together for the small grain cereal and grass research community. Academics, commercial scientists, and plant breeders gather to share the latest advances in scientific research, exchange ideas, and talk about collaboration. Monogram 2019 provides an exciting opportunity for sharing ideas and networking in a relaxed environment. Everyone from graduate students to established academics, commercial scientists and plant breeders are welcome to attend.

Nottingham, 30 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

### **Valuing our Life Support Systems 2019 – Book your place now!**

The programme for this event is now online. Book your place now for the Natural Capital Initiative's 10th anniversary summit at our early bird rates. The summit offers an independent platform for people in science, policy, NGOs, businesses and local communities to discuss and debate innovative natural capital solutions that enhance the environment and strengthen society.

London, 21-22 May 2019

### **SEB Annual Meeting 2019**

In July 2019, over 800 scientists from across the globe will come together in the hottest city in southern Europe - Seville. With the scent of orange trees, the blue of the sky, the joy of the city's festivities and the singing, playing and dancing of flamenco, Seville will intrigue and captivate you.

Seville, Spain, 2-5 July 2019

### **New Phytologist next generation scientists 2019**

New Phytologist next generation scientists is a unique meeting organised by, and for, early career researchers (PhD students and post-docs with up to five years' experience since gaining their PhD, excluding career breaks). It provides an opportunity for early career plant scientists to present research and network with their peers in a supportive and inspiring environment. In addition to presentations from early career researchers, there will be a series of plenary lectures from leading plant scientists and workshops on getting published, publication ethics, and career advice. Registration is free and includes meals, accommodation and a social event. Travel grants are also available. Places are limited, so please register early! Application deadline: 29th April 2019

University College Dublin, Ireland, 22-25 July 2019

### **44th New Phytologist Symposium: Determinants of tropical vegetation structure and function**

Vast areas of the tropics lie within climates that have the potential to support either savanna or forest. The extent to which vegetation is controlled by soils, fire, and climate has been strongly debated, and future vegetation change will depend on which of these factors most strongly regulates vegetation. This symposium will provide a forum dedicated to what seem to be widely contrasting views. The symposium will take place over three days at the Swiss Spirit Hotel and Suites Alisa, Accra, Ghana. The symposium will be organised into sessions by research topics and there will be dedicated time for discussions, posters, selected poster talks and field trips. Travel grant submission deadline: Thursday 25th April 2019. Poster abstract submission deadline: Thursday 23rd May 2019.

Accra, Ghana, 7–9 August 2019

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

## And finally...

### [Pretty Sly for a Whitefly](#)

One of the world's worst agricultural pests corrupts the alarm signals of plants, disarming those that otherwise might prepare for an assault.

### [Growing the future – a report from the UK Plant Sciences Federation \(UKPSF\)](#)

Launched in January 2019, *Growing the future* highlights to policymakers and others the excellence of plant science in the UK, and its importance to the biosciences, the economy, and society both at home and around the world. The report is available to download [here](#).

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