

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

November 2019

News

Top story

[New programme by RSB and ITN Productions highlights the biosciences that impact everyday living](#)

The Royal Society of Biology and ITN Productions Industry News have co-produced a news and current affairs-style programme “Biology Impacting Lives,” reporting on the advancement of biological sciences and their crucial impact.

Plant health and biosecurity

[New hope for trees affected by ash dieback](#)

[New scientific research offers hope for overcoming olive tree killer](#)

A number of promising results from innovative EU funded research presented at a recent scientific conference suggest that we might be one step closer to beating the olive tree killer *Xylella fastidiosa*.

Plant breeding

[Bangladesh could be the first to cultivate Golden Rice, genetically altered to fight blindness](#)

Approval expected for the rice, long a flashpoint in debates over GM crops.

[How Peru’s potato museum could stave off world food crisis](#)

Agri-park high in the Andes preserves the expertise to breed strains fit for a changing climate.

Agriculture

[Europe must act on intensive farming to save wildlife, scientists say](#)

EU's agriculture policy needs urgent reform, organisations tell incoming commission president.

[Food prices set to rise in UK as floods ruin crops](#)

Soaring prices likely as potatoes rot in sodden fields and farmers struggle to sow wheat.

Biodiversity and conservation

[One-third of tropical African plant species at risk of extinction – study](#)

Experts say new approach to classify plants' conservation status suggests 7,000 species at risk.

[Brazil's Amazon deforestation highest since 2008, space agency says](#)

[If you go down to the woods today ... don't come back with mushrooms](#)

Foraging for mushrooms to sell to restaurants and markets is big business. But the toll on woodlands, and the wildlife that inhabits them, is immense.

[Leaf blowers fatal to declining insects, Germans warned](#)

[Growing palm oil on former farmland cuts deforestation, CO₂ and biodiversity loss](#)

Forestry

[Large-scale tree planting 'no easy task'](#)

[Government launches new scheme to boost tree-planting](#)

£50 million Woodland Carbon Guarantee scheme will encourage farmers and landowners to plant more trees and help to tackle climate change.

[2019 Horticulture Sector Skills Survey: Arboriculture and Horticulture Results Published](#)

The results of the Arboriculture sector skills survey carried out in Spring 2019 have now been published. The new report provides evidence of many long-term issues facing the sector.

[Climate emissions from tropical forest damage 'underestimated by a factor of six'](#)

Scientists say policymakers must better account for climate impacts of damage to forests, and benefits of conserving them.

[New findings on nitrous oxide emissions from northern trees surprised scientists](#)

A recent study demonstrates that boreal forests of the Northern Hemisphere are sources of the greenhouse gas nitrous oxide (N₂O).

Other news

[Rooibos tea profits will be shared with Indigenous communities in landmark agreement](#)

The San and Khoi communities welcome the decision, which could have implications for other Indigenous groups — and biodiversity researchers.

People

[National Food Strategy Advisory Panel Announced](#)

An advisory panel of experts from across agriculture, retail, food manufacture, NGOs and academia has today been named to support the development of the National Food Strategy.

Opinion

[Climate crisis: the countryside could be our greatest ally – if we can reform farming](#)

[Climate policies 'will transform UK landscape'](#)

[Yet another widely used insecticide found to harm bees – regulators need to change their approach](#)

[To feed the world in 2050 we need to build the plants that evolution didn't](#)

[On tree planting, we should take a leaf out of Ethiopia's book](#)

While businesses and charities lead the way, the lack of strategy at the top is shameful.

Opportunities

[Call for Bioscience Skills and Careers Early Career Researcher Subgroup members](#)

BBSRC is recruiting a further three members to its early career researcher group. Ideally this would include two early career researchers working in industry (or with experience working in industry) and one BBSRC funded Discovery fellow.
Closes 2 December

[FY2020 JSPS London Call for the Short Term Pre/Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan](#)

Closes: 2 December 2019

[Invite to build interdisciplinary networks to address air quality challenges at the indoor/outdoor interface](#)

Closes: 5 December 2019

[RSB Events Officer](#)

An exciting, varied role working with all teams at the Royal Society of Biology. The events officer will be responsible for leading and supporting the delivery of key RSB events, including parliamentary receptions, policy debates, award ceremonies and careers days. Along with day-to-day event logistics, they will contribute to the events sponsorship strategy and generate event income. They will enhance the regional reputation of the RSB by supporting local activity delivered by RSB regional committees.

Closes: 8 December 2019

[UK-Canada Globalink Doctoral Exchange Scheme](#)

Closes: 12 December 2019

[School Biology Teacher of the Year Award](#)

Are you (or do you know) an amazing biology teacher? The Royal Society of Biology's School Biology Teacher of the Year Award aims to recognise outstanding and inspirational biology teachers.

Closes: 20 December 2019

[Register as an organisation getting funding directly from the EU](#)

Closes: 31 December 2019

[PULSE: Programme for Up and coming Life Sciences Entrepreneurs](#)

Closes: 31 December 2019

[British Biology Olympiad 2020](#)

The [British Biology Olympiad 2020](#) (31 January - 7 February) for post-16 students is now open for registration. The competition challenges and motivates students with an interest in biology, providing them with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. High scoring students will receive certificates and be invited to an awards ceremony in London. Please contact [Raghav Selvam](#) with any enquiries.

Closes: 24 January 2020

[Biology Challenge 2020](#)

The [Biology Challenge 2020](#) (10 - 31 March) for students aged 13 - 15 is now open for registration. The competition stimulates students' curiosity for the natural world and encourages them to take an interest in biology outside of school. High scoring students will receive certificates and be invited to an awards ceremony in London. Please contact [Raghav Selvam](#) with any enquiries.

Closes: 28 February 2020

[£500 student & early-career member 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 in connection with biological study, teaching or research.

Closes: 1 March 2020

Events

[Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation V](#)

9–10 December 2019

Institute of Physics, London

[Genetics Society Arabidopsis Meeting](#)

After a 10 year hiatus, the Genetics Society Arabidopsis Meeting is back with a two-day meeting in Durham on the 21st and 22nd of April, 2020 at the department of Biosciences. Scientific sessions will cover: Development, Abiotic Interactions, Teaching Plant Biology, Natural Variation, Biotic Interactions, Computational Biology. 21-22 April 2020, Durham

[45th New Phytologist Symposium: Ecological and evolutionary consequences of plant–fungal invasions](#)

The 45th New Phytologist Symposium will explore how human activities increasingly alter plant and soil fungal communities and the consequences of these changes. Eighteen leading scientists will share insights into the biogeographic patterns, ecological/evolutionary dynamics, and ecosystem/biogeochemical consequences of plant-fungal co-invasions.

20–23 June 2020, Campinas, Brazil

[Arboricultural Association Amenity Conference 2020](#)

Conference 2020 is to be on the main theme of Trees & Society. This is a wide subject area which incorporates many questions of interest and relevance to everyone who works in arboriculture and urban forestry, as well as other professions.

6–9th September 2020, University of Exeter

[46th New Phytologist Symposium: Stomata 2020](#)

There have been dramatic developments in our understanding of stomata in recent years. This symposium will provide a forum for stomatal scientists to hear the latest developments in stomatal research and to discuss and decide on a road map for the future. It will also place stomatal research in the overarching context of global environmental change.

11–14 September 2020, Kaifeng, China

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

And finally...

[Lichens are way younger than scientists thought](#)

[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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