

IS-MPMI Reporter

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IS-MPMI REPORTER DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting items for the next issue is April 26, 2013.

Share your news, accomplishments, and upcoming meeting details with your colleagues. Submit articles, announcements, and any ideas you may have for the next issue. You can send an e-mail (ismpmireportereditor@scisoc.org) or submit your item online (www.ismpminet.org/newsletter/submissionform.asp).

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Sophien Kamoun,
President

A Letter from the President

Trees and Trends

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The latter part of last year brought home the importance of our science. In October 2012, tests from necrotic ash twigs taken from Ashwellthorpe Wood in Norfolk (just a few kilometers from our campus) confirmed that the explosive disease epidemic of late summer 2012 had been caused by the ascomycete fungus *Chalara fraxinea* (teleomorph *Hymenoscyphus pseudoalbidus*). It turned out that the pathogen had already spread to many parts of the country, threatening Britain's 80 million ash trees. In Denmark, where *Chalara dieback* has been raging for a few years, about 90% of the ash trees had become infected.

The disease captured the interest of the British public and media. *The Times* (of London) devoted about half of its front page of October 26 to the "Deadly Ash Disease," dedicating more space to this topic than to a "James Bond Special." The British government convened the emergency committee COBRA to discuss the ash dieback threat. By November, the #ashdieback hashtag was trending on Twitter and the media coverage became intense. The broad public interest and media storm were a pleasant surprise, complementing recent positive coverage of plant pathology in the context of food security. The lesson I take from the ash dieback situation is that we need to pay attention to problems that engage the attention of the public. When we can contribute to a problem that concerns the public, we have an obligation to step in. No matter where we are on the scale from basic to applied research, we all have a role to play.

Fungal diseases are not the only threat to ash trees. In the Midwestern United States, the emerald ash borer, a buprestid beetle, has been causing havoc since it was first detected near Detroit, Michigan, in 2002. An article published online in *The Atlantic* on January 22, 2013, discussed the increased mortality noted in counties most affected by the beetle. "When Trees Die, People Die," the title read. The study highlights potentially unexpected relationships between plant diseases and human welfare. This should serve as a reminder of the wider implications of our science.

Our community has long been aware of the importance of pests, such as insects and nematodes, as key interacting organisms of plants—although this is not necessarily reflected in the name of the society. The emerald ash borer is one example among many of the pests that impact natural and managed plant communities. Research on this topic is booming and the potential for novel discoveries is huge. If I were to take a student aside, just like that businessman did with the Dustin Hoffman character in the classic 1967 movie "The Graduate," I might as well tell them "I just want to say one word to you, just one word—aphids!" (in the movie it was "plastics"). There is a great future in aphids, just think about it! Consider these insects' bizarre parthenogenetic mode of asexual reproduction or their complex relationships with the viruses they vector. Note the astonishing diversity of structures that gall-forming aphids induce in plants. These days, we even think that aphids behave like "pathogens with legs" by secreting effectors into their host cells.

Yet much remains to be discovered about the molecular mechanisms underlying the interactions between plants and animal pests. Current knowledge is covered in the January 2013 issue of *Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions (MPMI)*, which is entirely focused on molecular plant-nematode and plant-insect interactions. I hope that this issue will contribute to a better appreciation of nematode and insect systems

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Get Geared Up for Greece!



If you haven't had a chance to visit Greece, go there today. You don't have to book a plane ticket yet. The XVI Congress organizers created a preview video (www.mpmi2014rhodes-hellas.gr/index.php?pid=1) that debuted in Kyoto, Japan, last year. Take a trip to the island of Rhodes, Greece, and discover the beauty and history of Greece without leaving your desk. The video also shows breathtaking views of Athens and some sites to see while you are in Greece. Want to see even more beautiful images of the landscape and culture of Greece? The website photo gallery (www.mpmi2014rhodes-hellas.gr/index.php?pid=18) has several stunning images to get you excited about the upcoming meeting July 6–10, 2014. Keep your eyes on www.mpmi2014rhodes-hellas.gr/index.php for the latest congress updates. ■



COMING EVENTS

March 25–28, 2013

Society for General Microbiology Spring Conference

Manchester, United Kingdom

www.sgm.ac.uk/meetings/MTGPAGES/MA_Programme.cfm

April 21–25, 2013

17th International Reinhardtsbrunn Symposium on Modern Fungicides and Antifungal Compounds

Friedrichroda, Germany

www.reinhardtsbrunn-symposium.de

August 10–14, 2013

APS-MSA Joint Meeting

Austin, Texas, U.S.A.

www.apsnet.org/meet

August 25–30, 2013

10th International Congress of Plant Pathology (ICPP 2013)

Beijing, China

www.icppbj2013.org

Include your meeting in IS-MPMI's printed and online event calendar. Submit online at www.ismpminet.org/meetings/calsubmit.asp.

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ecosystems," according to **Jane Glazebrook**, editor-in-chief of *MPMI*.

Glazebrook announced **John Carr**, **John McDowell**, and **Matteo Lorito** as special focus issue editors who will recruit minireviews on translational research written by key scientists. "We expect this issue to be highly cited, and the single-topic format gives researchers a place to present their work alongside the related work of their peers to show the collective progress being made in translational research. If you are doing work in this area, you will want to take advantage of this opportunity to be part of something special," she said.

All accepted papers that meet the submission deadline and scope will be included in the special issue. Review of all submitted papers will be handled by the *MPMI* Editorial Board and edited by *MPMI*'s professional editorial staff members, who are dedicated to publishing your paper at the highest standard of quality. *MPMI* articles are submitted to CrossRef, allowing citation tracking and connectivity as this research area moves forward in *MPMI* and other scientific journals. Articles will also be indexed by *ISI Web of Science*, *PubMed*, and other important access portals.

If you are working on research that is translational in nature and would like your paper to be considered for the special **Translational Research Focus Issue**, please submit your manuscript online at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mpmi> and select the focus issue option. Papers must be submitted by **September 30, 2013**. For questions, or more information about the scope of this issue, please contact *MPMI* Editor-in-Chief Jane Glazebrook at glazebrokatj@umn.edu. ■

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by the membership of the International Society for Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions (IS-MPMI). There are remarkable similarities in the mechanisms by which pathogens and pests interact with plants. Common themes include the role of plant immune receptors and signaling pathways and their perturbation by pathogen or pest effectors. I expect that every IS-MPMI member will find useful and interesting tidbits in this issue. Many thanks to outgoing Editor-in-Chief **Gary Stacey** and Guest Editors **Saskia Hogenhout**, **Melissa Mitchum**, and **Geert Smant** for delivering such an excellent volume.

As announced at the Kyoto Congress, **Jane Glazebrook** has now taken charge of *MPMI*. This issue of the *IS-MPMI Reporter* introduces the new Editorial Board that Glazebrook recruited. Following the January 2013 Focus Issue mentioned above, and the equally timely and successful November 2011 "Focus on Symbioses," I expect the *MPMI* Editorial Board to continue to raise awareness of hot topics. I am certain they would welcome your suggestions. Sure, ash, beetles, and aphids are cool but there are plenty more exciting research topics to investigate. ■