Success Stories 2019

www.plantday18may.org #PlantDay
On 18 May 2019, the International Fascination of Plants Day (FoPD) was organised for the fifth time under the umbrella of the European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO).

Since the first edition in 2012, FoPD has been turning the world green with plant enthusiasts organising events that demonstrate their passion for the amazing world of plants to the public in an interactive way.

Scientists and organisations from 51 countries around the globe opened their doors in order to stir up people’s enthusiasm about plants, and highlight their importance for sustainable production of nutritious food and non-food products such as paper, timber, chemicals, energy, and pharmaceuticals, as well as horticulture and forestry.

This document contains a selection of just a few of the many success stories from around the world. Much more can be found on the FoPD website.
Europe

Latvia
The Botanical Garden of the University of Latvia
The Botanical Garden hosted over 10 improvised laboratories, which were organised in collaboration with University of Latvia, Latvian Botanical Society, The Nature Conservation Agency, and other organisations. Activities covered a wide range of topics connected to the plant world, for example biology of plant cells, protected plant species in Latvia, and soil science. On the day the Botanical Garden hosted over 900 visitors, most of whom were students.

Austria
Vienna Open Lab and Gregor Mendel Institute of Molecular Plant Biology in Vienna
143 school children (aged 8-11) first visited the Open Lab’s molecular biology laboratories, where they learnt how seedlings germinate and how nutrients are transported within plant vasculature systems. Afterwards, together with GMI researchers they planted microgreen gardens in egg cartons, which they could then take home and watch grow.

Bosnia and Herzegovina
Laboratory for Plant Physiology, The Faculty of Science, University of Sarajevo
Prof. Erna Karalija, from the Laboratory for Plant Physiology, hosted an event “Be a scientist for a day.” It started with a visit to the plant cloning lab, where participants could see all stages of plant cloning. During hands-on activities everyone could extract anthocyanins from plant material to investigate plant colours and test how they change colour in relation to pH.

Germany
Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ)
How do plants eat meat? How do they drink? How could you change their colour? How do they interact with their environment? All these questions and many more have been answered in IGZ. More than 100 children, aged 3-6 years came to spend the day with scientists; they left excited and exhausted after learning about plants by watching, listening, tasting and interacting.

Sweden
Kafé Fika at Väven in Umeå
Umeå Plant Science Centre, Umeå University, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Skogforsk, the Research Institute of Sweden, the Swedish Bonsai Society and the Broparken Gardening Project organised a diversity of hand-on activities on hidden colours in plants, microalgae, plant insets, and many others.

United Kingdom
University of Reading
Why is it that some plants smell so nice and sweet while others are really quite grossly stinky?! A set of activities—both in the lab and outside—were organised to answer those questions. Kids examined the different ways in which plants try to attract pollinators while doing their best to repel insect and microbes intending on eating or infecting them! All school groups left looking at plants in a totally new way!
France
FLAV LAB Toulouse, National Polytechnic Institute of Toulouse
Scientists from the Agro-industrial Chemistry Lab presented an innovative prototype called TRAP’nd SNIFF, which allows concentration of emitted odorant volatiles from various typical flowers of Occitania lily. Trapped volatiles are then chemically analysed and used for nature-identical fragrances.

Bulgaria
Institute of Plant Physiology and Genetics, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
Scientists from Bulgarian Academy of Science showed visitors the internal beauty of plants using microscopy images.

Croatia
Faculty of Agriculture, University of Zagreb
Together with other University of Zagreb faculties and institutes, several presentations and demonstrations were given for those fascinated with plants.

Slovenia
University of Ljubljana
Among many events happening at the University, the Department of Wood Science and Technology at the Biotechnical Faculty organised “The biggest green charmers—trees” event.

Czech Republic
Charles University in Prague
Botany Garden of the Faculty of Natural Sciences opened its door to the general public for them to participate in various hands-on activities.

Ukraine
MM Grisha National Botanical Garden, National Academy of Sciences
As part of the ethno-botanical project Ukrainians could visit the watercolour postcards exhibition “Plants of the Crimean Peninsula” prepared by Yuliya Krasylevko and botanical illustrator Olha Politylo.

Italy
Food & Science Festival, Mantova
In Mantova researchers prepared an exhibition entitled “Rhizosphere”, where visitors could explore microbes, animals and giant molecules present in the soil, and understand the delicate interactions that are at the basis of soil fertility, and of the food we produce.

Romania
Cluj-Napoca
In the Romania Faculty of Biology and Geology, Babes-Bolyai University organised an “Adopt a plant” activity.

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Serbia
Institute for Biological Research “Siniša Stanković”
The Institute for Biological Research “Siniša Stanković”, University of Belgrade, Faculty of Biology, and kindergartens “Povratak prirodi” and “Mala Sirena” held interesting and creative plant science educational activities for children.

Spain
Spanish National Centre for Biotechnology (CNB)
CNB organised a week long “Plants Love Biotech” event featuring special seminars, “The Art of Botany” exhibition, and hand-on activities on light sensing, molecular farming and phytoremediation.

Lithuania
Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry (LAMMC)
Apart from events for the general public, Lithuania held a “Science Behind Plant Wellbeing” conference for PhD students in the fields of agronomy, forestry, ecology, environmental sciences, biology, biophysics, botany and zoology.

Belgium
University of Liège
On Whit Monday researchers welcomed nearly 450 visitors on “Plants & Future” events. Activities included a guided tour in research infrastructures (PhytoSYSTEMS growing facilities for plants and microalgae, in vitro culture, herbarium) and a conference on genome editing.

Hungary
Mesoromagyaróvár
Organisers held a photo exhibition and series of seminars on diverse topics, including invasive alien species and biodiversity, history of plant dyes, and plant mobile applications. Secondary school children could also learn about permeability of cell membranes, waterpotential, and survey of allelopathy of common ragweed.

Slovakia
Research Institute of Plant Production in Piešťany
The Institute prepared 19 demonstrations covering different topics related to agricultural plants. Over 660 people learned about different species of poppy, wheat, oats or legumes and their application in the food industry; weed species; gene banks; and molecular techniques used in plant research.

Poland
National Park of Bialowieża
As part of active education, the National Park of Bialowieża conducted workshops on the largest herbivorous mammal in Europe, entitled “With bison for your brother,” targeted at the youngest recipients. During the workshops, forest plants from the “vegetarian” diet of this animal—diverse vegetable delicacies—were presented and discussed. At the end of the workshop, the participants created a commemorative artistic work from plants.
**Americas**

**Canada**
- Guelph, Ontario
  Volunteers from the Canadian Society for Horticultural Sciences taught kids about plants and their importance. The kids decorated, filled them with soil and planted grass seeds!

**Brazil**
- The Institute for the Environment of PUCRS
  The Institute prepared a photograph exhibition of native plants kept in the PRÓ-MATA Centre for Research and Nature Conservation and preserved in the PUCRS’ Herbarium. The photographs were accompanied by information and fun facts cherishing plant diversity.

**Argentina**
- National University of Quilmes
  Over 20 undergrad and grad students from the Science and Technology Department came together to teach the public about the wonders of plants. The department also gathered plant vendors that brought carnivorous plants, succulents, veggies, etc. The event finished with a stand-up show.

**United States of America**
- Michigan State University
  Plant sciences met the arts in a collaboration between MSU plant scientists, the Edythe Broad Art Museum at MSU (MSU Broad), and the East Lansing Art Festival. The public explored the amazing world of plants and learned about their benefits and the exciting science that goes on at MSU.

**Oceania**

**New Zealand**
- Rotorua Public Library
  Scientists from Scion prepared a static display highlighting some of the fascinating work they do with growing and protecting trees, and developing bio-based products from wood. They also prepared a ‘day in the life of a scientist’ video.
Asia

Japan
University of Tsukuba
The University opened its doors to the general public, and provided various seminars, exhibitions, hands-on activities, and guided tours.

China
Hunan Agriculture University
A “Plant Science and Agricultural Production” event was held in Chang'an Teaching Practice Base, which enabled the participants to appreciate the charms of plants and plant science, and promoted their awareness of environmental protection. Moreover, attendees listened to a science talk, experienced the tea production process, and watched tea art performances.

India
School of Chemical and Life Sciences, Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi
In order to engage school children (age 7-12) in the fascination of plants, the Department of Botany organised a guided visit to a herbal garden and a visit to research facilities in various labs, as well as a lecture on the importance of plants. Following the event, students received a Certificate of Participation.

Mozambique
Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo
To celebrate plants and biodiversity, the University Botanical Garden invited the general public to participate in plant workshops, listen to talks in the garden, and watch plant documentaries.

Africa

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Media, organisers, patrons, and visitors of Fascination of Plants Day events used social media to share their excitement about plants using the following hashtags: #PlantDay, #PlantsDay, #FoPD, #FascinationOfPlants. We’ve selected only a few of many posts. To see more follow the hashtag links.
Some of the events organised as part of the Fascination of Plants Day 2019 were covered in local press and the Internet news feeds. Click on articles to read more.
Thank you!

Thank you to all 56 National Coordinators mobilising the community in their countries; 5 Global Coordinators synchronising the effort and providing central resources; 4 National patronages: Ing. Miroslav Toman, CSc, Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic; The Association of the Private Farming of the Czech Republic; Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic; National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine; and international partners and sponsors: The Global Plant Council, SPPS, BASF, Copa Cogeca, Eucarpia, and ISHS. Thank you to all engaged in Fascination of Plants Day events, all volunteers sharing their knowledge about plants, and those who sent their success stories to us and helped in creating this booklet.

Next Fascination of Plants Day will take place around 18th May 2021.

Fascination of Plants Day
May 2021

National Coordinators
Gaston Vaghi Medina (Argentina)
Hannah Birke (Australia)
Margit Laimer (Austria)
Claire Périlleux (Belgium)
Silvia Ten (Bolivia)
Erna Karalija (Bosnia & Herzegovina)
Cristiane Follmann Jurinicz (Brazil)
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