

[The Trinity College Dublin Botany Department Newsletter](#)

Accomplishments

*Botany welcomes **Midori Yajima***

I am an Italian **MSc graduate in ecology, ecosystem and conservation biology**, with a background in biology and plant ecology. I am fascinated by the interface of ecological and social systems, which brought me to develop my thesis in **Bergen** (Norway), where I worked on **investigating long-term human-environmental interaction**. I'm convinced on the need of an intersectional approach to environmental-related science: after graduating I started exploring the scope of sustainability sciences and engaged in a variety of projects between **environmental activism, citizen science, and science communication**.



Midori will be working with **Jenny McElwain** on a **long-term environmental monitoring program**. She will be gathering year one baseline data of **key tree species** - selected for their botanical, ecological, and cultural value - assessing their **physiological response to rising CO2 and pollution** (PM 10 and 2.5).

Awards!

The **Nature+ Energy project** won **The Sustainable Development Award** at the **Wind Energy Ireland 2022** awards.

Thanks to **Emma King** (RA) and **Anthony Gibbons** (PhD student) for accepting the award on behalf of the whole team (**Ian Donohue, Yvonne Buckley, Jane Stout, Andrew Parnell**). The award was dedicated to **Dr Aoibheann Gaughran**, who was project manager of Nature+ Energy.



Nature+Energy

Awards!

Some of you may remember **the first Thai Ph.D. student in the Botany Department - Pranom Chantaranothai** – who is now **Emeritus Professor** in **Khon Kaen University**, Thailand. **The great news** is that Pranom has just been presented **by King Rama X** (HRH King Vajiralongkorn) of Thailand with the [Dushdi Mala gold medal](#). It is a huge honour being the highest ranked medal awarded for services to the State (i.e. Thailand) in the Arts and Sciences.



Awards!



*Pranom Chantaranothai
with the Dushdi Mala gold medal*

FORAGING - Wild garlic pesto

A recent exploration in search of **wild garlic** was successfully carried on by some of our **fabulous postgraduates** (and friends) in **Knockink Wood (Wicklow)**. The hunting ended up in a big round of pasta with fresh, green-fluorescent garlic pesto. The result was incredibly *mamma mia!*

Try our delicious product: **there will be a jar to taste in the kitchen!**



Wild garlic pesto recipe - Ingredients for 8 people

- ▶ 1.3 Kg Pasta
- ▶ 100 g leaves
- ▶ 160 g pine nuts
- ▶ 80 g parmesan
- ▶ Extra virgin olive oil
- ▶ 1 full glass of hot cooking water
- ▶ A pinch of salt during mixing



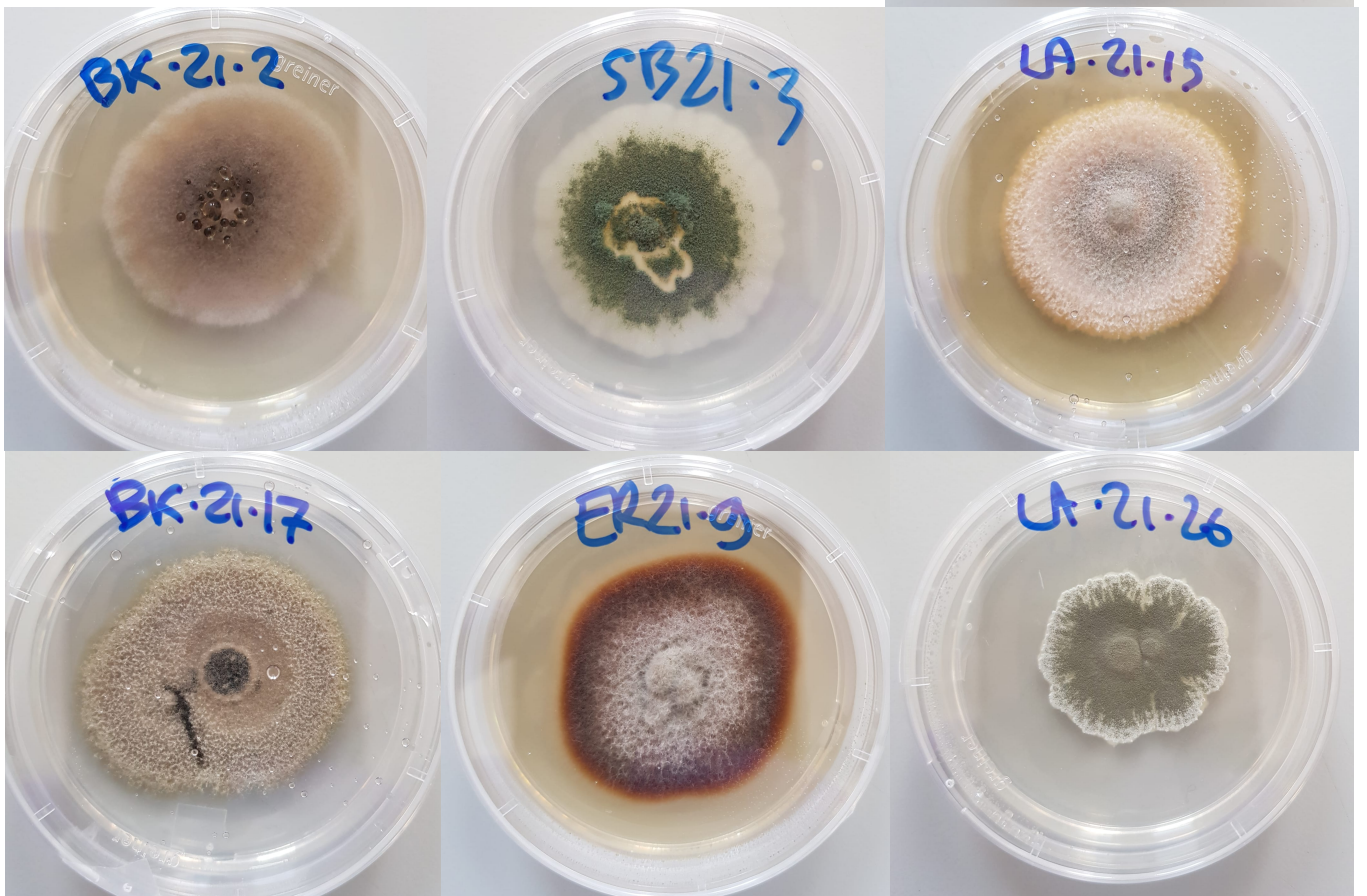
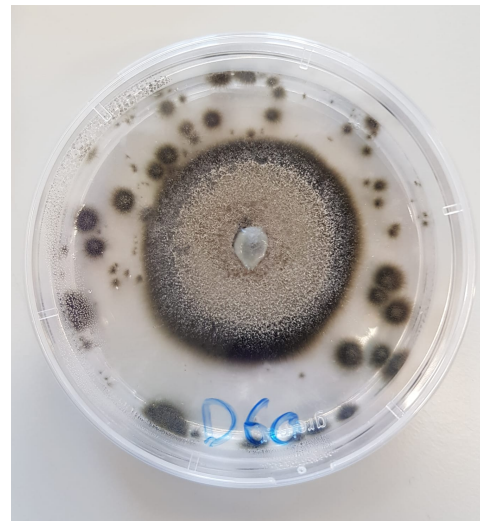
SAVE THE BEES Campaign

The **SuperValu** “[Save the Bees](#)” **Campaign** was launched in Botany by **Minister for Rural and Community Development, Heather Humphreys**, **SuperValu MD Ian Allen**, and **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan** co-founders **Jane Stout** and **Una FitzPatrick**. The campaign, in collaboration with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, has sent packs containing guidebooks, posters and bookmarks to every primary school in Ireland. School children are being encouraged to provide “pit-stops for bees” by growing bee-friendly flowers in their gardens, and to collect cards featuring Irish bees and flowers from SuperValu stores. **For more see [here](#).**



Beautiful Endophytes - there is a hidden collection of fungal isolates stored in the fridges of the labs in the School of Natural Sciences

Everybody knows the Botany Building for its historical Herbarium. Only a few are aware of the collection of fungal cultures that have been stored along the years, as a result of research projects focused on this class of microorganisms. There are hundreds of petri plates stored in fridges and card boxes. As a side project of his PhD, **Diego Bianchi** would like to take action on this aspect and valorise this microbial heritage through high-resolution pictures and artistic collaborations.



Gran Canaria expedition trip

The **Plant and Environmental Sciences Field Skills module** was back in action this year – **36 students and staff** spent a week in **Gran Canaria**.

Key aims of the module were **to understand why certain plants grow in different places** – the **morphological, physiological** and **ecological traits** that have evolved for life in particular environments and the impacts of human activities. **Students learned how to** sample vegetation in the field accurately and representatively, conducted ***Environmental Impact Assessment*** scoping exercises, and designed, conducted, analysed and presented mini research projects.



Projects

Jordan Chetcuti has been working with **Jane Stout** for the last two years on creating a bumblebee agent-based model as part of the **PoshBee project**.

Jordan finished up with Trinity College on the 31st of March. He will, however, continue this bumblebee work and start to work on other species in the [Social-Ecological Systems Simulation centre](#) of the [Department of Ecoscience](#) at [Aarhus University](#) from the 19th of April. This time, moving to Denmark from the beginning of April. Jordan can be reached on Twitter [@JordanChetcuti](#).”



Publications

A paper in which **John Parnell** is one of the co-authors ([World Flora Online: Placing taxonomists at the heart of a definitive and comprehensive global resource on the world's plants](#)) published by Wiley in **Taxon** **is among the top cited papers of the journal.**

We are hiring! - TERRAFORM Project

Application deadline: 20th of April 2022

Two exciting PhD Scholarship positions on the **Evolution of Paleotraits in Paleozoic and Mesozoic Plants** are available in our ERC funded **TERRAFORM project** with **Prof. Jennifer McElwain**. PhD candidates will receive necessary training and support from international supervisors and team peers. They will have the chance to conduct research in the cutting edge **Variable Atmosphere and Light Laboratory** or take part in **fieldwork** in Cretaceous cuticle bearing **fossil localities across Europe**.

TERRAFORM aims to investigate the biosphere impacts on the Earth system over geological time. It will specifically address **how the evolution of plant traits impacted the carbon, nutrient and hydrological cycles** in deep time.

TERRAFORM will be a labour-intensive team-based research project with experimentation, biogeochemical analyses and preparation of varied plant material. The project will use well-established records of paleo-atmospheric composition together with novel paleo-trait proxies and plant weathering experiments to interrogate how plant functional trait evolution TERRAFORMed the Earth. **Shifts in carbon assimilation, litter decomposition, evapotranspiration and the plant biochemical niche will be tracked over a 300-million-year record of land plant evolution** to improve understanding on how the terrestrial biosphere modulates the long-term carbon cycle via weathering of silicate rocks.

For more information and to apply
click [here](#) and [here](#)

Athena SWAN/EDI Newsletter

Updates

The School of Natural Sciences Athena SWAN/Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee are in the process of working towards **silver accreditation**. We are currently collating information and working through the application process. **This is a sizeable project and will span the next few months onwards.**

News

The **11th February** was **International Day of Women and Girls in Science**. Designated by the UN, the day serves to spotlight females in STEM. Although it is a day to celebrate their successes, it is also an opportunity to draw attention to the gender inequality that still exists within science and what we can do to improve it. **If you missed it** there were some great highlights over on twitter using **#womeninscience**, including on the TCD twitter account **@tcdublin**.

Resources

Speak Out was launched in **November 2021**, a tool **to anonymously report bullying, violence and harassment**. You can find the Speak Out tool and relevant supports on the new webpage [here](#).

If you would like more information, please view our [website](#).

You can contact the Athena SWAN/EDI committee at fraser.mitchell@tcd.ie



ÈTICO, Sartoria Marchigiana - Tailors from the Marche Region, Italy

Marta and **Valentina** are two girls passionate about the recovery of **ancient crafts**, such as **tailoring** and **natural dyeing**. Their brand, Ètico - Sartoria Marchigiana, was born in 2019 from asking themselves how they could possibly **reduce the environmental impact caused by clothing production**.



"Our job is to go for a walk in the woods, collect the leaves of the plants we know and that can be used for printing, place them on the fabric which is then rolled around a wooden support and steamed. Et voila, after a few days we have the imprint of the leaves printed on the fabric».

***"Every item is unique.
The shades of natural colors and botanical prints do not allow for identical replicas, it is nature that decides, alchemy".***

ÈTICO, Sartoria Marchigiana - *Tailors from the Marche Region*



ÈTICO, Sartoria Marchigiana - *Tailors from the Marche Region*



PHYTOBYTES needs your input!



Whether you are student or staff, please send any news you have, big or small, to Diego D. Bianchi (dbianchi@tcd.ie) with the subject heading “Phytobytes”.