CONGRATULATIONS
Staff of the Research School of Biology have once again achieved outstanding results in the annual Vice-Chancellor’s Teaching Awards, with an individual Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Teaching Excellence to Chris Fulton, EEG, and a team citation for outstanding contribution to student learning to the team which presents Biol2121 - Plants: Genes to Environment.

Chris Fulton joined the ANU as a lecturer in 2006, moving here from a postdoc position at James Cook University. He is a Chief Investigator in the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies, and teaches in third-year Marine Ecology (BIOL3116), Carbonate Reef Field Studies (EMSC3019), Australian Vertebrates (BIOL2111) and The Blue Planet (EMSC1006), as well as offering undergraduate research projects.

The Biol2121 teaching team, Adrienne Nicotra (convenor), EEG, Ulrike Mathesius, PS, Michael Djordjevic, PS, Gonzalo Estavillo, PS, Beth Beckman, CEDAM, and Amy Davidson, EEG, come from a range of backgrounds and career stages. This course is the keystone in the ANU’s plant science curriculum. Its research-led approach gives students a theoretical and practical understanding of integral links between genes, cells, whole plants and the environment. In the first part of the course the lecturers - Adrienne, Ulrike, Marilyn Ball, PS, and Michael - present the theoretical and conceptual material, delivered through a ‘structured discussion’ approach designed by the team in collaboration with Beth Beckman. In the second part of the course the students form teams of Plant Detectives and engage in laboratory-based research. Their objective is to investigate the effects of a gene mutation in an unidentified Arabidopsis variety on physiology, form and response to environment. The students are guided in their detective work by a manual written by Gonzalo, Adrienne and Ulrike. Gonzalo runs the lab, with support from other members of the teaching team and demonstrator Amy Davidson, PhD student in EEG. The detective work culminates in the students using their data, together with public online resources, to identify the mutation.

The course offers a research-led experience that involves both students and teachers in a collaborative intellectual challenge. The model has application well beyond this particular course, and shows how it is possible to engage groups of students in research projects at a second year level.

NEW ROLE
Trent Orchard is to take on the role of Building Coordinator across the School. Trent has 12 years experience in the RSB workshop and has been second-in-charge in the workshop for seven years. In his new role Trent will have responsibility for all building management and maintenance issues across RSB and will liaise with Facilties & Services on behalf of the School, as well as with the Colleges of Science project managers in relation to the new building. He will play a major role in coordinating the move to the new building, as well as in planning the refurbishment of other areas in RSB.

CONGRATULATIONS
Congratulations to the mid-year honours cohorts who handed in their theses the week before last.

FAREWELL
Thomas Payne, PS, will be winding up his work on the apomixis project with Enrico Perotti to take up a position with the Central West Catchment Management Authority in Gilgandra.

GRANTS AWARDED
Adrienne Hardham, PS, has been awarded a grant from the Hermon Slade Foundation to support research on the motility of zoospores of the plant pathogen Phytophthora nicotianae.

Ajay Narendra and Jochen Zeil, EEG, have been awarded a research grant of $84K over three years from the Hermon Slade Foundation for their project on jack jumper ants.
AIDS ORPHANS

It is easy to think that in the new South Africa problems have been sorted out and black people are doing alright. But that is not true. There is widespread, crippling poverty. Hard as it is to believe, there are people starving to death. My brother (a retired businessman) heard of a very poor community in Zululand so he went and had a look. He found seven children living in an unused cow pen. Their parents had died of AIDS and their hut had burnt down. Around the corner there was a pair of very old people whose children had died of AIDS, leaving them with no form of support; they were literally eating weeds. These people need food, medical supplies, warm clothing, blankets and some form of shelter. My brother is doing what he can, but he needs as much help as he can get.

YOUR JUNK CAN MAKE MONEY FOR A VERY HUNGRY CHILD

Late last year we voted on a charity for RSB to support. The outcome of the vote was that we will support the AIDS orphans.

We are going to have our first charity event for this excellent cause on Wednesday, 2 June, in the Robertson Foyer. It will be a TRASH ‘n TREASURE. If everyone brings a few things from home (an item of clothing; an old vase; a home-made bottle of jam) we will put it all together and have a lunch-time sale.

PLEASE can I ask everyone to start bringing in their old stuff. There will be a collection box for each building:
Robertson Building (Diane’s office)
Gould & Banks buildings (Audra’s office)
Building 41 (Cathie’s office).

Please take the time and effort to get involved– Pat Backwell.

PAPERS ACCEPTED


Rafiqi, M., Gan, P.H.P., Ravensdale, M., Lawrence, G.J., Ellis, J.G., Jones, D.A., Hardham, A.R., Dodds, P.N. Internalization of flax rust avirulence proteins into plant cells can occur in the absence of the pathogen. Plant Cell.


Wallenius, T.C., Peakall, R., Oberprieler, R. Volatile, thermogenesis and dehiscence patterns of Macrozamia communis (Zamiaceae): implications for cycad pollination research. The Botanical Review.