



European Plant Science Organisation  
[www.epsoweb.org](http://www.epsoweb.org)

## **Winner announcement**

# **EPSO Young Plant Scientist Award 2016**

---

*Brussels, 18.1.2016*

EPSO is happy to announce the two winners of the first EPSO Young Plant Scientist Award: **Ruie LIU was selected on fundamental plant research and Malaika K EBERT on applied plant research. EPSO initiated this award to encourage the development of ideas and imaginative thinking in the plant sciences.** Ruie and Malaika will have the opportunity to present their research during a plenary session of the Plant Biology Europe EPSO/FESPB joint congress to be held in Prague on June 26<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> 2016. In addition, each awardee will receive 200 € and EPSO will cover their registration and travel to the meeting.

The winner of the award for **fundamental** research: **Ruie Liu** is a very strong young scientist. Her work has uncovered a really novel process in fruit development (the Committee were not aware of other reports of demethylase activity in regulating developmental processes). To get a PNAS paper as first author after 2 years of PhD is very impressive. This paper represents the first time that a European lab takes the lead in reporting on understanding the molecular epigenetic basis of regulation of a developmental process in plants. Although a very good model, tomato is not as easy to study developmental processes as Arabidopsis, and fleshy fruit ripening cannot be studied in Arabidopsis. This applicant has other strong publications on cotton.

The winner of the award for **applied** research is: **Malaika Ebert** who has adopted a creative approach to engineer immunity against an important class of pathogens. She has studied an important fungal pathogenesis system where the pathogen makes a toxin. She has discovered not only the biosynthetic pathway for toxin synthesis but also a degradation pathway whereby the pathogen (fungus) protects itself. The Committee particularly liked Malaika's suggestion that the degradation pathway could be introduced into host crops as a defence mechanism, which showed considerable 'biotechnological imagination'. As a mycologist this student has stepped outside of her immediate field to come to the EPSO/FESPB meeting which is to be commended and encouraged.

The selection criteria as published in the [Call Text](#) were: The novelty of the idea or approach being taken; the potential of the research to improve understanding or outcomes in the selected field of plant science; and the clarity with which the problem or research topic is conveyed to a non-specialist plant scientist.

We would like to thank the distinguished jury members Cathie Martin (chair), Carole Caranta, Jose Pio Beltran and Ton Bisseling. The two winners were selected from among 40 PhD students who submitted from 27 different entities and 12 countries across Europe to the EPSO YPSA call.

---

**Contact:** EPSO Office; +32-2213-6260; [epsos@epsomail.org](mailto:epsos@epsomail.org)

**Timelines:**

Announcement of EPSO Young Plant Scientist Award Call:	For 2015 call: 5.11.2015
Deadline to receive nominations:	30.11.2015
Check Eligibility (need to belong to a member institute):	4.12.2015
Consider and evaluate applications based on abstract and mini-cv:	7.12. – 10.1.2016
Announcement of winners:	18.1.2016

**Useful links**

EPSO Young Plant Scientist Award: [www.epsoweb.org/epsos-young-plant-scientists-award?1864290068=1](http://www.epsoweb.org/epsos-young-plant-scientists-award?1864290068=1)

Plant Biology Europe EPSO/FESPB joint congress, Prague 26-30.6.2016

- Conference website: [www.europlantbiology2016.org](http://www.europlantbiology2016.org)
- EPSO information at [www.epsoweb.org/prague-2016](http://www.epsoweb.org/prague-2016)

EPSO communications: [www.epsoweb.org/epsos-communications](http://www.epsoweb.org/epsos-communications)

EPSO member institutes and universities: [www.epsoweb.org/membership/members](http://www.epsoweb.org/membership/members)

EPSO representatives: [www.epsoweb.org/membership/representatives](http://www.epsoweb.org/membership/representatives)

**About EPSO**

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents more than 220 research institutes, departments and universities from 28 European countries, Australia, Japan and New Zealand, and 3.200 individuals Personal Members, representing over 28 000 people working in plant science. EPSO's mission is to improve the impact and visibility of plant science in Europe, to provide authoritative source of independent information on plant science, and to promote training of plant scientists to meet the 21st century challenges in breeding, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, plant ecology and sectors related to plant science. [www.epsoweb.org](http://www.epsoweb.org)