



European Plant Science Organisation
<https://epsoweb.org>

Winner Announcement

EPSO Young Plant Scientist Award 2020

Brussels, 6.3.2020

EPSO is happy to announce the two winners of the third EPSO Young Plant Scientist Award: Apolonio I. HUERTA was selected for his fundamental plant research and Ann-Katrin BEUEL for her applied plant research. EPSO initiated these awards to encourage the development of ideas and imaginative thinking in the plant sciences. Apolonio and Ann-Katrin will have the opportunity to present their research during a session of the Plant Biology Europe EPSO / FESPB joint congress to be held in Turin, Italy between 29.6.2020 and 2.7.2020. In addition, each awardee will receive 200 €, the local organizing committee will cover their registration and EPSO their travel to the meeting.

The winner of the award for **fundamental research** is **Apolonio I. Huerta**, of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zurich. Apolonio is working on resistance to Fusarium, which is one of the most important fungal plant pathogens, globally. It also causes one of the most intractable diseases to study. He is working beyond gene-for-gene resistance by looking at how changes in cell wall integrity impacts plant immunity. He is characterizing the Arabidopsis plasma membrane receptor, RFO1, as a novel cell wall integrity (CWI) sensor. Using multidisciplinary approaches, he has elucidated how plants perceive and relay pathogen-associated changes to their cell walls via these dedicated receptors, including identification of potential cell wall-derived ligands, *in vivo* receptor dynamics at the plasma membrane, downstream signalling cascades and how the role of RFO1 continues to evolve in plants. Apolonio's work holds enormous promise for development of effective resistance strategies for the many crops affected by Fusarium.

The winner of the award for **applied research** is **Ann-Katrin Beuel**, from the Fraunhofer Institute for Molecular Biology and Applied Ecology IME, Germany. Ann-Katrin developed a smart modular lighting system to optimize production of secondary metabolites in plant cell cultures, by combining her understanding of biotechnology with her interests in engineering. This system is very flexible allowing optimized lighting conditions to be tailored to production of specific, high value metabolites in cell cultures. The system has been patented supporting its innovativeness and originality in assessing the influence of lighting conditions on productivity of plant cell cultures, which will allow for production of valuable compounds by plants, sustainably.

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, Ernst van der Ende, Alan Schulman and Josef Gloessl. The two winners were selected from

among 21 PhD students who submitted from 19 different entities and 13 countries across Europe to the EPSO YPSA call.

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Timelines:	For 2020 call:
Announcement of EPSO Young Plant Scientist Award Call:	20.12.2019
Deadline to receive nominations:	31.1.2020
Check Eligibility (need to belong to a member institute):	3-4.2.2020
Consider and evaluate applications based on abstract and mini-cv:	10-28.2.2020
Announcement of winners:	6.3.2020

Useful links

EPSO Young Plant Scientist Award: <https://epsoweb.org/all-events/plant-biology-europe-2020-turin-italy/>

- o YPSA call: https://epsoweb.org/download/12-19_12_20_epsos_young-plant-scientists-award-2020_call/
- o YPSA application: https://epsoweb.org/download/19_12_20_epsos_young-plant-scientists-award-2020_application-form/

Plant Biology Europe EPSO / FESPB joint congress, Turin, 29.6.2020 and 2.7.2020

- o Conference website: <https://europlantbiology2020.org/>
- o EPSO information at <https://epsoweb.org/all-events/plant-biology-europe-2020-turin-italy/>

EPSO communications: <https://epsoweb.org/news/>

EPSO member institutes and universities: <https://epsoweb.org/about-epsos/epsos-members/>

EPSO representatives: <https://epsoweb.org/about-epsos/representatives/>

About EPSO

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents more than 200 research institutes, departments and universities from 31 countries, mainly from Europe, and 2.700 individuals Personal Members, representing over 26 000 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 including science advice to policy, 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. <https://epsoweb.org> | EU Transparency Register Number 38511867304-09