

## Message from Dhirendra Kumar, PSNA President

Dear Friends,

I hope you are doing well and getting ready for a well-deserved break, celebrate Christmas and ready to say goodbye to 2023. Please take some time off and spend it with your family and friends.

I would like to thank you for instilling your trust in voting me as the PSNA president-elect in 2022. For last one year, I served the PSNA president-elect. At the 2023 Michigan meeting, I took over as President of the PSNA from Dr. Li Tian. On behalf of the entire PSNA family, I would like to thank Dr. Tian for serving as the president of the society for 2022-23 and for all the exciting work that was accomplished during her tenure. I plan to work very closely with Dr. Tian in the coming months and years.

**Dhirendra Kumar, PSNA President**



The month of July is the month of festival for all phytochemists as we all meet for the PSNA annual meeting. It is always an exciting time. The 2023 annual meeting of the PSNA at Michigan State University (East Lansing, Michigan) was a huge success. Thanks to the time-consuming efforts of Dr. Bjoern Hamberger and his colleagues, including members of the Local Organizing Committee, and the Scientific Advisory Committee. The achievements of many award winners were celebrated at this year's annual meeting including the Arthur C. Neish Young Investigator Award (Dr. Benjamin Lichman, Dr. Peter Lundquist, Dr. Gaurav Moghe, and Dr. Zhen Wang) the Plant Journal-PSNA Early Career Award (Zhi-Yan (Rock) Du, and Dr. Lars Kruse), the all the recipients of PSNA Travel Awards. Congratulations to all!

As PSNA is all volunteer society, I would also like to thank our secretary Sangeeta Dhaubhadel, treasurer Philipp Zerbe for their excellent work, and the members of the PSNA Executive Committee and the PSNA Advisory Committee that meets every month to discuss regular activities including planning for future meetings. It is also time to also thank our PSNA Editor-in-chief, Phytochemistry Reviews, Reinhard Jetter who has been in this role for many years. Reinhard has decided to step down as the PSNA Editor-in-chief at the end of 2023. PSNA is grateful to Reinhard for his service to society. I would also like to thank Hiroshi Maeda for taking over as chair of the PSNA awards committee. Thanks to all members of the award committee and the judges who helped evaluate presentations at the meeting.

PSNA young members committee is currently headed by Dr. William Hay, USDA ARS. He is already making plans for activities for the 2024 meeting. I would like to thank Dr. Monica Borghi for chairing the young members committee for 2022-23. Many of the awards given by the PSNA are to the young members of society. Society continuously works towards helping young scientists attend the annual meetings. Our

annual meetings offer panel-guided workshops for young scientists (e.g. undergraduate students, graduate students, postdocs, and early career scientists) to discuss career development in academia, government, industry, and more. If you have any suggestions, please reach out to us, and contact us if you are interested in getting involved in the PSNA committees. We are always looking for new volunteers. Your input will help immensely in informing the PSNA's priorities and goals.

It is time to welcome our new president-elect Sangeeta Dhaubhadel, Research Scientist, London Research and Development Centre, Agricultural and Agri-Food Canada. She has been elected as the 2024-2025 President of the PSNA. Dr. Dhaubhadel is currently serving as the Secretary of the PSNA.

Next year's annual meeting will be at Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon Monterrey, Mexico ([2024 meeting Flyer](#)). You should not miss this meeting. So, please get ready to attend and also invite your fellow researchers. For updates please visit [PSNA website](#).

We are also in the planning stage for the 2025 and 2026 annual meetings. The 2025 meeting will be at the York University, Toronto, Canada and the 2026 meeting will be at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Be on the lookout for announcements on the PSNA's social media pages (**Twitter**: @psnaofficial and **Facebook**: Phytochemical Society of North).

Thank you for your continued support of PSNA over the years! I wish you and your family Happy holidays and a Happy New year.

Dhirendra Kumar  
President (2023-2024), Phytochemical Society of North America



## ***Phytochemical Society of North America***

The Phytochemical Society of North America (PSNA) is a nonprofit scientific organization whose membership is open to anyone with an interest in phytochemistry and the role of plant substances in related fields. Annual membership dues are U.S. \$100 for regular members and \$30 for student members. Annual meetings featuring symposium topics of current interest and contributed papers by conference participants are held throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. PSNA meetings provide participants with exposure to the cutting-edge research of prominent international scientists, but are still small enough to offer informality and intimacy that are conducive to the exchange of ideas. This newsletter is circulated to members to keep them informed of upcoming meetings and developments within the society, and to provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas. If you would like additional information about the PSNA, or if you have material that you would like included in the newsletter, please contact the PSNA Secretary or visit our website at [www.psna-online.org](http://www.psna-online.org). Also check the PSNA website for regular updates.

*The PSNA is an all-volunteer organization which depends on its membership to run the organization. We appreciate the time and effort these volunteers are putting in to keep the organization up and running. As a member, please consider volunteering to serve on one of these committees. The PSNA can always use more help!*

### **PSNA EXECUTIVES 2023-2024**

#### **President**

Dr. Dharendra Kumar  
Dept. of Biological Sciences  
Box 70703  
East Tennessee State University  
Johnson City, TN 37614-1710  
Phone: 423- 439- 6928  
Email: [kumard@etsu.edu](mailto:kumard@etsu.edu)

#### **President Elect & Secretary**

Dr. Sangeeta Dhaubhadel  
London Research and Development Centre  
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
1391 Sandford St, London, ON  
Phone: 226-678-5916  
[Sangeeta.dhaubhadel@agr.gc.ca](mailto:Sangeeta.dhaubhadel@agr.gc.ca)

#### **Treasurer**

Dr. Philipp Zerbe  
Department of Plant Biology

College of Biological Sciences  
University of California, Davis  
605 Hutchison Drive, Davis, CA 95616  
Phone: 530-754-9652  
pzerbe@ucdavis.edu

**Past President**

Dr. Li Tian  
College of Agricultural &  
Environmental Sciences  
University of California at Davis  
202 Life Sciences Building  
Davis, CA 95616, USA  
Phone: 530-752-0940  
ltian@ucdavis.edu

**Editor-in-Chief,**

Phytochemistry Reviews  
Dr. Reinhard Jetter  
Dept. of Botany and Chemistry,  
University of British Columbia,  
6270 University Blvd,  
Vancouver BC, V6T 1Z4, Canada  
reinhard.jetter@botany.ubc.ca

**ADVISORY BOARD 2023-2024**

Denisse Atenea de Loera Carrera,  
Universidad Autónoma de San, Louis Potosí

Thuy Dang  
University of British Columbia

Bjoern Hamberger  
Michigan State University

Nikola Kovicich  
York University

Soheil Mahmoud  
University of British Columbia

These following Past Presidents of the PSNA are also serving on the Advisory Board

Dorothea Tholl  
Virginia Tech

Mark Berhow  
USDA-ARS

David Gang  
Washington State University

Toni Kutchan  
Danforth Center

Mark Lange  
Washington State University

Fred Stevens  
Oregon State University

Deyu Xie  
North Carolina State University

Argelia Lorence  
Arkansas State University

Ex officio: the PSNA Executive Committee 2023-2024

## **Other Committees**

### **Membership Committee**

Philipp Zerbe (Chair)  
Daniel Owens (member)

### **Young Members Committee**

William Hay (Chair, USDA-ARS)  
Praveen Khatri (member, Western University)  
Tuan-Anh Nguyen (member, University of British Columbia)  
Trine Andersen (member, Michigan State University)  
Gabrielle Wyatt (member, UC Davis)  
Zhen Wang (member, University of Buffalo)

### Awards & Recognition Committee

Hiroshi Maeda (Chair, University of Wisconsin-Madison)

Argelia Lorence (member, Arkansas State University)

Deyu Xie (member, NC State University)

Lucas Busta (member, University of Minnesota Duluth)

Thu-Thuy Dang (member, University of British Columbia, Okanagan Campus)

### Publication Committee

Sangeeta Dhaubhadel (Chair, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)

Mark Berhow (member, USDA ARS NCAUR)

Mark Lange (member, Washington State University)

Nikola Kovicich (member, York University)

## PSNA2024 meeting- Save the date



The poster is for the Annual Conference of the Phytochemical Society of North America 2024. It features a light orange background. At the top left are the logos for 'Tecnológico de Monterrey | Research' and 'UANL UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN'. The main title 'ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE PHYTOCHEMICAL SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA 2024' is in bold blue text. Below it, a red rounded rectangle contains the text 'SAVE THE DATE' in white. The dates 'Monterrey Campus July 15-19, 2024' are in grey. On the right, a woman in a red top is smiling and eating a bowl of salad. A large green cactus slice is overlaid on the bottom right, with a chemical structure of caffeine (1,3,7-trimethylxanthine) drawn on it. At the bottom left is the logo for 'Institute for Obesity Research' with a green leaf icon. At the bottom right is the slogan 'Science in Action' with a curved arrow pointing from 'Science' to 'Action'.

PSNA will give the following awards to early-career scientists and young investigators at the 2023 Annual Meeting (<https://psna-online.org/awards/>)

## Arthur C. Neish Young Investigator Award Application Guidelines

**Deadline for nominations:** March 15, 2024

**Amount of the award:** \$2,000/award

### Eligibility and nomination:

- PSNA members may submit nominations to the chair of the PSNA Awards Committee.
- Nominations should include a CV of the nominee as well as a letter stating reasons for the nomination and how the nominee will get involved in and contribute to the advancement of PSNA.
- For these awards, a young investigator is someone within the first 5 years of establishing an independent research program, although breaks in career, such as parental leaves or other situations that warrant a pause in the tenure clock, can be considered.

### Expectations from the awardee:

- The awardee must give an oral presentation (25-30 min) at the annual PSNA meeting, where the award will be given in person.
- The PSNA expects Neish awardees to stay connected with the PSNA community by becoming a member and encouraging their lab members to attend future PSNA meetings, and get involved in the advancement of PSNA (e.g., participating in Award Committee, Young Member Committee, Advisory Board, etc.).

### Selection and notification:

- The PSNA awards committee will be responsible for all the decisions related to the Arthur C. Neish Young Investigator awards.
- Awardees will be notified by **April 10, 2024**

## The Plant Journal (TPJ)-PSNA Early Career Award Application Guidelines

**Deadline for application:** March 15, 2024

**Amount of the award:** \$2,000/award

Up to two awards may be given each year depending on the availability of funds. Any unused funds will be used for the following year's awards.

**Eligibility:**

- This award is for postdocs and research scientists in an academic institution, a research institute, or a government lab. Preference will be given to early-career individuals who are ready to start an independent position, but applications from mid-career scientists who are not principal investigators will also be considered.
- The applicant should have at least 3-4 peer-reviewed papers (at least five for mid-career scientists) published as first author, preferably as primary research articles in the field of phytochemistry or a related area.
- The applicant should apply for PSNA membership at the time of application for this award.
- The applicant should not be a previous TPJ-PSNA Early Career Award recipient.
- The awardee will not be eligible for any other conference-related PSNA awards in the year the award is made.

**Application package:**

Applicants will apply directly (no nomination) and provide the following information with their application package.

1. Research Statement (maximum three pages) describing significant contributions to date, future goals, and perspective on phytochemical research.
2. The potential topic and abstract for the invited review.
3. Abstract of the oral presentation.
4. Letter of support from the postdoc/research scientist advisor.
5. Evidence of membership of the PSNA at the time of application, and a short description about the intention to get involved in PSNA in the next five years and beyond.
6. The number of PSNA meetings previously attended.
7. CV
8. Copy of three relevant publications.

Please send the completed application package in a single PDF file to Dr. Hiroshi Maeda at [maeda2@wisc.edu](mailto:maeda2@wisc.edu).

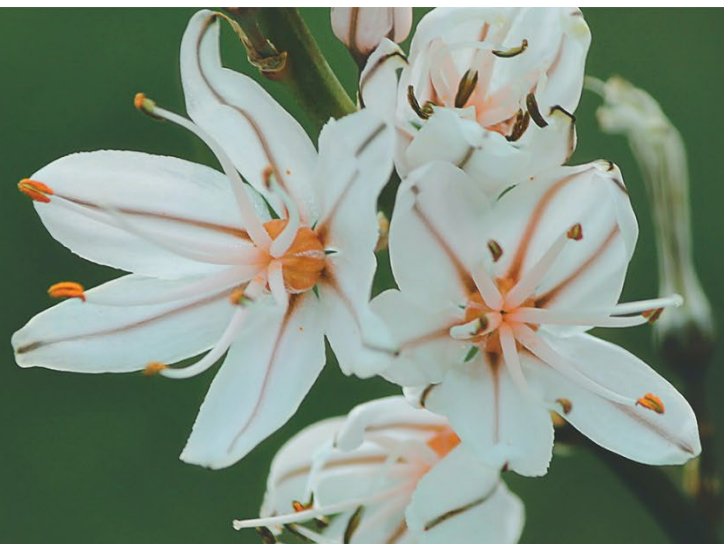


**Expectations from the awardee:**

- The awardee must give an oral presentation (25-30 min) at the annual PSNA meeting.
- The awardee should acknowledge the support of sponsors of the award in their talks.
- The Plant Journal will extend an invitation to the awardee to contribute a TPJ Focused Review for publication.

**The outcome of the application:**

- The PSNA awards committee will be responsible for all the decisions related to the awards.
- All applicants will be notified about the outcome of their application by **April 10, 2024**



## Current PSNA Executive Committee Members

President Elect: Dharendra Kumar



Research interests: Understanding the salicylic acid-mediated biotic and abiotic signaling pathway in plants. Most of the current research in my lab is focused on the characterization of the SABP2-interacting proteins. We hope to develop stress resistant crop plants with less dependence on pesticides and other chemicals

President Elect & Secretary: Sangeeta Dhaubhadel



Research interests: Seed quality and defense-related traits in legume crops such as soybean, pea and common bean. Our research goal is to understand the molecular mechanisms underlying the synthesis of specialized metabolites involved in those traits and identify the regulators that control the synthesis/accumulation of these beneficial compounds in legumes.

Past President: Li Tian



Research interest: My research group is interested in understanding how phytonutrients (e.g. phenolics) are made in plants using molecular, genetic, and biochemical tools. We also examine how accumulation of phytonutrients in plants is controlled by different factors under various environmental conditions. Our long-term goal is to apply the knowledge obtained from these investigations to improve the nutritional value and agronomic performance of crop plants.

Treasurer: Philipp Zerbe



Research interests: functional genomics, metabolomics, biochemical and genetic approaches to investigate the biosynthesis, regulation and function of specialized terpenoid metabolites in bioenergy, food and medicinal plants with the goal to develop resources for crop optimization and natural product engineering.

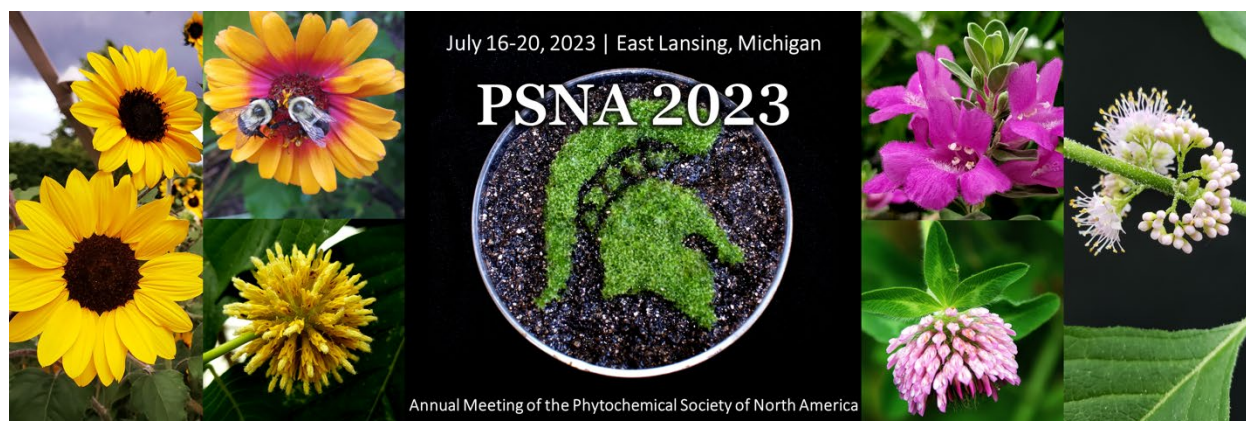
Editor-in-Chief, Phytochemistry Reviews: Reinhard Jetter



Research interests: Reinhard Jetter's research group is studying the surface waxes of various model plants and crops, spanning a wide range of metabolites from fatty acid derivatives to terpenoids, phenolics and polyketides. Current projects focus on the chemical analysis of the complex wax mixtures and the characterization of key enzymes involved in their formation.

## 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference of the Phytochemical Society of North America

East Lansing, MI July 16 – 20, 2023



The 62<sup>nd</sup> annual PSNA meeting took place at the Kellogg Conference Center at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Nearly 130 attendees from Europe, Asia, Africa, Canada, Mexico, and the USA gathered to discuss a broad spectrum of topics related to plant chemical diversity. Of the representatives, close to half were students, about 25% postdocs and just under 30% faculty. It is worth to highlight that about six in ten talks were delivered by outstanding students and postdocs, recognizing the significance of the meeting for early career researchers. A dedicated session on career development, networking, CV and mock interview workshop and panel discussion with representatives from the industry, the biotech sector, and government organizations was considered as extremely informative.

The meeting covered a wide variety of topics with nine symposia including Gene Discovery and Functional genomics; New Technologies, Analytics, and Pathway Discovery; Metabolic Engineering; Plant Synthetic Biology; Chemistry, Food Security and Nutrition; Botanical Medicine, Flavors and Fragrances, Ecology, Plant-Environment Interactions, and Computational Biology. Notably, this year saw the first Symposium on Indigenous Connections, which the organizers



sincerely hope will serve as an inaugural event for future meetings.

The second PSNA Women's breakfast was very well attended, despite being held in the morning after the Trivia night. It would not have been possible without the great organization by Monica Borghi (Utah State University, USA),

Trine Andersen (Hamberger Lab, Michigan State University, USA) and Gabrielle Wyatt (Zerbe Lab, University of California, Davis, USA). The Trivia night was organized by Nick Schlecht (Hamberger Lab).



The PSNA supported 20 attendees with travel awards. We were enthusiastic to see 18 student awards and an exceptional representation of three quarters of women awardees.

Poster award recipients were Jaynee Hart (MSU, postdoc), Lina Gomez-Cano, (MSU, graduate student), Nicholas Schlecht (MSU, graduate student), Sonia E. Evans (University of Toronto, graduate student), Abigail M. Jones (West Virginia University, undergraduate student), Nicole Babineau (University of Minnesota-Duluth, undergraduate student).



Awards for the best oral presentations were given to: Joshua Kaste (MSU, graduate student), Gordon Younkin (Cornell University, graduate student), Brendan Abiskaroon (Michigan State University, graduate student), Catharine (Charlay) Wood, (University of York, UK, graduate student).

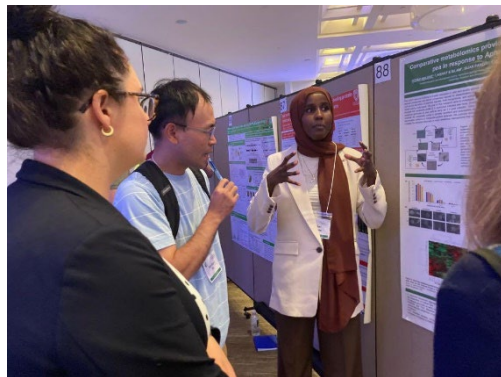
The Plant Journal – PSNA Early Career Awards went to Lars Kruse (University of British Columbia, Canada).

The PSNA Arthur C. Neish Young Investigator Award recipients were Benjamin Lichman (University of York, UK), Peter Lundquist (Michigan State University, USA), Gaurav Moghe (Cornell University, USA), and Zhen Wang (State University of New York at Buffalo, USA).



The meeting host Björn Hamberger (Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, MSU) greatly acknowledges the support from the PSNA Executive and

Advisory Committee Armando Alcazar Magana (University of British Columbia), Denisse Atenea de Loera Carrera (Universidad Autónoma de San Luis Potosí), Mark Berhow (USDA, ARS, Peoria, Illinois), Monica Borghi (Utah State University), Thuy Dang (University of British Columbia), Sangeeta Dhaubhadel (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, London, Ontario), David Gang



(Washington State University), Reinhard Jetter (University of British Columbia), Nikola Kovicich (York University), Dharendra Kumar (current president, East Tennessee University), Toni Kutchan (Danforth Center), Mark Lange (Washington State University), Hiroshi Maeda (Chair of the Awards Committee, University of Wisconsin), Soheil Mahmoud (University of British Columbia), Cecilia McIntosh (East Tennessee State University), Fred Stevens (Oregon State University), Lloyd Sumner (Noble Foundation/University of

Missouri), Dorothea Tholl (Virginia Tech), Li Tian (previous president, UC Davis), Deyu Xie (North Carolina State University), Philipp Zerbe, University of California, Davis).

We are immensely proud about the special contributions by the local Organizing Committee, without whom this meeting would not have happened: Britta Hamberger (Research Assistant, Hamberger Lab), Joshua Kaste (PhD student, Shachar-Hill Lab), Peter Lundquist (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology), Lucas Reist (PhD student, Hamberger Lab), Seung Yon (Sue) Rhee (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Director MSU Plant Resilience Institute), Tom Sharkey (Biochemistry and Molecular Biology), Angel McKay Whiteman (PhD student, Hamberger Lab), Alexander Wilson (Northern Michigan University).

#### *Excursion to Red Cedar Spirits, Phytochemical Extraction Plant*



We thank Red Cedar Spirits, Maeve Basset (Education Program Director, W.J. Beal Botanical Garden and Campus Arboretum) and Zachary Constan and graduate students of the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams for the tours during our excursions.

Funding for the meeting came from Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Department, College of Natural Science, Office of Research and Innovation, MSU-DOE Plant Research Laboratory, Drug Discovery Program (all MSU), Thermo Fisher Scientific, UC Davis Department of Plant Sciences, Metware Biotechnology Inc.. Their generous contributions supported the travel awards and specifically made it possible to hold the first Symposium on Indigenous Connections.



## Young Members Activities during PSNA2023

PSNA-Young Members Committee (YMC) organized various events for early career researchers who attended PSNA 2023

The Early Career Workshop offered opportunities for young scientists to ask questions regarding their next career steps in an open setting. The Early Career Workshop was hosted by Ray Collier (University of Wisconsin-Madison) and featured scientists working in academia, government, and industry. The keynote speaker was Garret Miller (Manus Bio) who described his transition from



a graduate student to an early-career industry scientist. Afterward, the panel addressed audience questions about interviews, networking, and the difficulties in navigating career shifts.

The PSNA Phytochemical Trivia Night – fast becoming a beloved tradition for PSNA young members – tested the phytochemical knowledge of young members and senior scientists alike. A large group of PSNA attendees gathered together at a local bar for this fun and informal event. Be sure not to miss it at the next meeting.



In addition, the YMC hosted the second annual Women's Breakfast event. This event encouraged female scientists to share their experiences as women in science in a relaxed collegial environment. The society is home to a number of field-leading female scientists who generously shared their knowledge and insight. PSNA is committed to gender balance and welcomes all PSNA members – regardless of gender – to attend the next Women's Breakfast event.

The activities organized by the YMC are an excellent opportunity for early career researchers to socialize and seek advice from senior members on how to move to the next step in their careers. Join us next summer on the occasion of the PSNA 2024 Meeting held at Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, Monterrey, Mexico.

The YMC members for PNSA 2023 were: Monica Gorgi (Chair; Utah State), Armando Alcazar Magena (ex-Chair; University of British Columbia), Praveen Khatri (Western University), Tuan-Anh Nguyen (University of British Columbia), Trine Anderson (Michigan State University), Lucas Reist (Michigan State University); William Hay (USDA-ARS), Gabriel Wyatt (University of California-Davis).

Join us next summer on the occasion of the PSNA 2024 Meeting held at Michigan State University!

## PSNA 2022 Arthur Neish New Investigator Symposium

Zhen Wang



Dr. Zhen Wang is an Assistant Professor of Biological Sciences at the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York. She completed her Ph.D. research at Michigan State University, studying chloroplast membrane lipid biosynthesis and subcellular trafficking in *Arabidopsis thaliana*. She then did her postdoctoral research at the University of California, Berkeley and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. Her postdoctoral research used synthetic biology and metabolic engineering tools to engineer *E. coli* for high-titer production of medium-chain olefins as biofuel and renewable material. As an independent researcher, she combined her interest in plant biochemistry and metabolic engineering to explore the metabolic pathways of diverse plant natural products and provide solutions for the sustainable production of these compounds. Her lab utilizes various tools such as multi-omics, systems biology, biochemistry, genetics, and structural biology to answer basic questions in plant natural product biosynthesis. Her lab currently focuses on cardiac glycoside biosynthesis in foxglove plants and other plant terpenoid biosynthetic pathways. Her contributions to science include plant membrane lipid biosynthesis, renewable fuel production, and plant natural product biosynthesis.

Gaurav Moghe



Gaurav Moghe is an Assistant Professor in the Plant Biology Section in the School of Integrative Plant Science at Cornell University. He obtained his PhD in Genetics and Quantitative Biology from Michigan State University, followed by postdoctoral research in Rob Last's lab, also at MSU, on evolution of acylsugar biosynthesis in the Solanaceae family. The Moghe Lab at Cornell integrates comparative genomics and bioinformatics with molecular biochemistry to address questions related to evolution of plant specialized metabolism. Research in the Moghe Lab spans species in the Convolvulaceae, Solanaceae and Poaceae families. Gaurav is the co-founder of the Phytochemical Section at the Botanical Society of America and of the PhytochemTalks seminar series.

Peter Lundquist



Dr. Peter Lundquist is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Michigan State University and a member of MSU's Plant Resilience Institute. His research interests focus on the intersection of chloroplast biochemistry and stress physiology. A primary focus of his group's research is the study of plastoglobule lipid droplets of plant chloroplasts and their role in plant stress tolerance. His research discoveries have led to the prevailing view of the plastoglobule as a central orchestrator of stress adaptation. Dr. Lundquist earned B.S.



degrees in agronomy and biochemistry from Kansas State University in 2006 before completing his PhD in Plant Biology at Cornell University in 2012. He carried out post-doctoral research training first as an Alexander von Humboldt post-doctoral fellow in Düsseldorf, Germany, and subsequently as a researcher at the Noble Research Institute (formerly the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation) in Ardmore, OK, before his current appointment at Michigan State University in 2018.

Benjamin Lichman



Dr Benjamin Lichman received his MSc in Natural Sciences from the University of Cambridge and his PhD in biochemistry from University College London. His doctoral research, under the guidance of Professors John Ward and Helen Hailes, focussed on the mechanism and applications of norcoclaurine synthase. He then joined the group of Prof Sarah O'Connor at the John Innes Centre to investigate iridoid biosynthesis in plants. In 2018 he was appointed a lecturer at the Centre for Novel Agricultural Products at the University of York. Benjamin is currently a UKRI Future Leaders Fellow and manages a research group investigating the origins and applications of plant natural product biosynthesis.

## The Plant Journal- PSNA Early Career Awards

Lars Kruse



Dr. Lars Kruse currently holds a postdoctoral position at the University of British Columbia's Michael Smith Laboratories, working under Dr. Joerg Bohlmann. He leads a team focused on engineering *Nicotiana tabacum* to produce montbretin A, a potential new treatment for Type 2 diabetes. Furthermore, his works includes pathway discovery of high-value plant metabolites such as elucidating the biosynthetic pathways for short-chain alkanes in different pine tree species for biofuel applications. Previously, Dr. Kruse held a postdoctoral position at Cornell University, working with Dr. Gaurav Moghe. His research centered on the evolution of large metabolic enzyme families and their acquisition of new functions and substrates This work was funded in large parts through a German Research Foundation fellowship. Dr. Kruse earned his Ph.D. from the University of Kiel, Germany, under the guidance of Dr. Dietrich Ober. His doctoral research focused on pyrrolizidine alkaloid biosynthesis in various plant species.

Driven by a fascination for plant phytochemical diversity and its evolutionary origins, he is dedicated to learn how this rich source of metabolites can be harnessed for human well-being. With expertise in plant biochemistry, bioengineering, and synthetic biology, he works to uncover the full potential of plant metabolites. Dr. Kruse is also co-organizer and co-initiator of the virtual seminar series "PhytochemTalks", a bi-weekly, virtual seminar series for the phytochemistry community. The series is dedicated to empowering early-career researchers and showcasing their research, fostering a spirit of collaboration and knowledge-sharing within the community.



## Organizing Committee

Lucas Busta

(University of Minnesota Duluth)

Lars Kruse

(University of British Columbia)

Gaurav Moghe

(Cornell University)

Co-organized by the *Botanical Society of America's Phytochemistry Section* and the *Phytochemical Society of North America*

Upcoming Phytochemtalks [https:// phytochemtalks.github.io/](https://phytochemtalks.github.io/)

Recorded Phytochemtalks [https:// www. y o u t u b e . c o m / c h a n n e l / UCFV30BetZd2-urinwIUvqqw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFV30BetZd2-urinwIUvqqw)

## Your Publication Highlights in the PSNA Newsletter

The PSNA newsletter (also shared on Twitter and Facebook) highlights your recent publications and features first authors that are current PSNA members. Interested? Then, please send us a brief non-technical summary of your paper including the title and authors, and a publication link and graphical abstract or image, if possible. In addition, provide a photo and a brief statement including the first author's affiliation and research interests.

Please send your contributions (text as word document; images as pdf or jpg files) by email to Sangeeta Dhaubhadel ([sangeeta.dhaubhadel@agr.gc.ca](mailto:sangeeta.dhaubhadel@agr.gc.ca))

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sangeeta Dhaubhadel (Secretary, PSNA)