

■ News

International collaboration at the Okayama University Institute of Plant Science and Resources (IPSR)

Reflecting the continued internationalization of research at IPSR, the Institute's director Professor Masahiko Maekawa and Professor Eric Richards from Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research (BTI) (Ithaca, NY, USA) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on 26 August 2015.

“It is a highly meaningful fact that the two institutes with approximately century long history agreed on making international collaborative efforts to improve food security by scientific approaches,” said Professor Maekawa at the signing ceremony. Later, to mark the special occasion, Professor Richards gave a lecture on plant epigenetics and stress responses.

In related activities underscoring the aim of acting as an international research hub in plant research, the Institute organized the 2nd IPSR International Training Course (24-28 August 2015) on the theme of “Methods in Plant Stress Research”. This course was initiated in 2014 with the goal of providing unique opportunities to young Japanese researchers for concurrent training and interaction with scientists from overseas.

This year three young Japanese researchers have been joined by their counterparts from UK, USA, and Taiwan to study modern mass spectrometry (MS) analytical methods using cutting-edge instruments such as MALDI-TOF-MS, LC-MS/MS, and GC-MS at the IPSR. This year, for the first time, all training sessions were held in the new Advanced Plant Science Research Building opened in April 2015.

The instruments were used for fingerprinting-based identification of bacterial species isolated from leaf samples; plant hormone determination (jasmonic acid, salicylic acid, abscisic acid); and analysis of plant volatiles released from herbivore attacked plants.



Dr. Richards (BTI) and IPSR Director Dr. Maekawa at the MOU signing ceremony.



Participants during the hands on training at IPSR.

The course included lectures covering theoretical aspects of each method as well as hands on training to use the equipment and master analytical protocols.

Notably, this year's course included a plenary lecture by Professor Eric Richards entitled "The interface between epigenetics and plant stress responses", followed by a round table discussion about major issues in epigenetics, regulation of environmental responses and evolution.

Finally, the participants each gave short presentations about their own current research projects.

Additional details about the course can be found at IPSR website:

<http://www.rib.okayama-u.ac.jp/information/20150902.html>

Contact:

Institute of Plant Science and Resources,
Professor Ivan Galis
Tel : +81-86-434-1235