

■ News

Professors Jian Feng Ma and Naoki Yamaji receive “Highly Cited Researchers 2015” Award

A ceremony was held at Okayama University on April 27 to present Professor Jian Feng Ma and Associate Professor Yamaji Naoki—who are both affiliated with the Institute of Plant Science and Resources (IPSR)—with the Highly Cited Researchers 2015 award, which is awarded annually by Thomson Reuters to researchers in wide ranging fields of science whose work has attracted particularly high attention.

Recipients of the Highly Cited Researchers award are selected by analyzing citations and related statistics in scientific literature in related fields to determine research that has had strong impact for a given year. This year’s award was given to 3,126 scientists around the world, including 80 from Japan. This was the first time that individuals from Okayama University received the honor—and the fact that two professors were selected is nothing short of groundbreaking.

Account manager Sayaka Miwa participated in the ceremony as a representative from Thomson Reuters, while the participants from Okayama University were President Kiyoshi Morita, Executive Director and Vice President for Research Shinichi Yamamoto, and representatives from University Research Administrators (URAs). “The fact that two talented researchers from our institution were selected for the Highly Cited Researchers award makes me extremely proud, and I am looking forward to the continuing work of both Professor Ma and Associate Professor Yamaji,” commented President Morita by way of encouragement.

Both professors have worked on identification of mineral transporters and clarifying plants’ resistance mechanisms toward mineral stress, which is a type of plant stressor that includes nutritional deficiency and excess toxic mineral elements. Their research into the mechanisms that plants use to acquire the nutrients necessary for growth and direct them towards their organs—as well as both scholars’ comprehensive clarification of the mechanism through which plants divest poisonous metals of their toxicity, all the way from the level of the field to that of the gene—have been nothing short of dynamic. The selection of the professors for this award reflects how their research contributions are on the global cutting edge.



Professor Ma (left) and Associate Professor Yamaji receive their awards during the ceremony



From left: President Morita, Professor Ma, Associate Professor Yamaji and Executive Director Yamamoto