



BitSoc News Letter

Department of Biotechnology,
Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management,
Wayamba University of Sri Lanka



Activities

- ◆ Seminar presentation by Mr. Manju Gunawardana/SLINTEC
 - ◆ Achievements by BitSoc members
 - ◆ Award winner - Digital story telling
 - ◆ Welcome – Dr. MAPC Piyathilaka
- ◆ Faculty Talk – Dr. DR Gimhani/ Dr. MAPC Piyathilaka
- ◆ Postgraduate research at the Department of Biotechnology
 - ◆ Arrival of new lab equipment- ULT freezer
- ◆ Introductory session on Department of Biotechnology for new comers at FAPM

Seminar Presentation by Mr. Manju Gunawardana
“How to convert applicable research into innovative product with marketability?”

BitSoc members organized a seminar on “How to convert applicable research into innovative product with marketability?” on 28th October 2016 at FAPM under the coordination of Dr. (Mrs.) DR Gimhani, Senior Treasurer of BitSoc to make a forum for undergraduate students, academic staff and researchers to discuss issues related to research and innovation management. The seminar was conducted by Mr. Manju Gunawardana, Senior Research Scientist & Consultant Business Development at the Sri Lanka Institute of Nanotechnology (SLINTEC) and CEO at the Hybrid Technologies Pvt Ltd.



**Achievements by BitSoc Members.....
Congratulations!**

Award winner - Digital story telling

Mr. GKIS Madola, who represented BitSoc has won the 3rd place in Digital Story Telling Competition for University Science Societies -2016, under the theme “Science for Healthy living” organized by the National Science Foundation. Mr. GKIS Madola was awarded with a plaque, a certificate and a cash prize at the World Science Day 2016 Schools Programme, held at BMICH on 10th November 2016.



NRC – Theme Oriented Research Grant

BitSoc member, Dr. BLWK Blasooriya with a multidisciplinary group of scientists from several national and international institutes has received the Target Oriented Research Grants-2016 by NRC of Sri Lanka for the research proposal titled “Development of eco-friendly farming technologies to minimize inorganic fertilizer usage while maintaining adequate productivity and improving soil fertility in rice fields”. Principal Investigator of the project is Dr. RS Dharmakeerthi, Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture University of Peradeniya and Dr. Balasooriya works on producing a cyanobacteria based biofertilizer as a co-Investigator in work package 2.

NRC Merit Awards for scientific publication 2014

Two BitSoc members, Prof. Nisha Kottearachchi, and Mr. Sachinthaka Dissanayake received NRC Merit Awards for the paper titled, “Development of CAPs marker for the Badh2.7 allele in Sri Lankan fragrant rice (*Oryza sativa*) published in Plant Breeding journal.

Faculty Talk

“Faculty Talk” which is organized by FAPM, is a forum for academic staff, researchers and undergraduate students to discuss general topics of current interest and matters related to Agriculture. BitSoc member Dr. DR Gimahani conducted the 19th Faculty talk on “Molecular Mapping of Salinity Tolerant QTLs in Rice” on 06th February 2017 and Dr. MAPC Piyathilaka conducted the 20th Faculty talk on “Molecular identification of toxigenic cyanobacteria and effects of cyanotoxins on human renal cell lines” on 01st March 2017. Both staff members of the Department of Biotechnology initiated research oriented dialogue among academic staff, researchers and undergraduate students in the faculty addressing important issues in the agricultural field.



Introductory session on Department of Biotechnology for new comers at FAPM

Department of Biotechnology organized an informative session to introduce the applications of biotechnology and activities of the department to the newcomers to the faculty within the “induction programme for new entrants- 2017” on 13th February 2017. The session was coordinated by Head/Department of Biotechnology, Dr. K Vivehananthan.



Welcome - Dr. MAPC Piyathilaka

BitSoc warmly welcome newly appointed Probationary Lecturer Dr. MAPC Piyathilaka to the Department of Biotechnology. Dr. Piyathilaka has obtained B.Sc. (special) Degree in Zoology with a first class from University of Kelaniya and Post Graduate Diploma in Toxicology from Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo. She received PhD in Zoology from University of Sri Jayewardenepura specializing Environmental Molecular Toxicology in 2015.



Arrival of New Lab Equipment- -80°C freezer

An Ultra-low Temperature Freezer (-80°C) (Thermo Fisher Scientific, USA) has been received at the Biotechnology Laboratory via NSF - Support for Research Equipment Grant No: RG/2015/EQ/17. The grant was applied by Prof. DPSTG Attanayaka as Dean/ Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management and Dr. BLWK Balasooriya as the responsible officer of the equipment. Equipment is available at biotechnology laboratory for the use of the students and staff of the faculty.



Postgraduate research at the Department of Biotechnology

Ms. DBR Swarnathilaka, Assistant Director (Research) at Plant Tissue Culture Research Station and Central Nursery of the Department of Export Agriculture, has registered as an MPhil student in the Department of Biotechnology. She undertakes research on *In-vitro* propagation and induction of micro rhizome of Ginger (*Zingiber officinale* Rosc.) cultivars Local, Chinese and Rangun with Prof. NS Kottearachchi as the supervisor.



Ms. Buddini Abhayawickrama who obtained a B.Sc. (Special) degree in Zoology with a second class upper division (honours) from University of Kelaniya, is reading for PhD Degree at the Department of Biotechnology under the supervision of Prof. NS Kottearachchi. Her proposed post-graduate study titled “QTL map based candidate gene discovery for salt tolerance in rice (*Oryza sativa*)” is funded by NRC and the project is mainly based on whole genome resequencing of two rice varieties, AT354 and Bg352 by Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) and interrogating the coding sequences to detect mutated sequences leading for candidate gene discovery for salt tolerance.

Ms. Imaya Amarawansa, a graduate from University of Peradeniya with B.Sc. (Agriculture) joined Biotechnology Laboratory for postgraduate research on “Cyanobacteria based N biofertilizer for paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka” via a NRC funded project with the supervision of Dr. BLWK Balasooriya. She is reading for MPhil degree at University of Peradeniya.

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Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new - Albert Einstein