

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ADVANCES IN PLANT SCIENCES (ICAPS 2012)

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In November 2012, the V Sivaram Research Foundation in association with Century Foundation, Bangalore, India, hosted an International Conference on Advances in Plant Sciences (ICAPS). The conference was held at the Empress Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand. Amongst the attendees were three CTHB members: Prof Leanne Dreyer, Dr Francois Roets and myself - Anathi Magadlela.

The conference commenced with a dinner. During this event traditional Thai food was served, accompanied by traditional dancing. It was also a time to 'meet and greet' other scientists attending the conference.

The presentations were organized into parallel sessions covering various subjects. Each day the conference commenced with keynote addresses and plenary lectures presented by various scientists from around the world, during which they were recognized for their contributions to plant sciences. Dr Francois Roets delivered a plenary lecture on the "Ecological and



evolutionary consequences of a newly discovered flower infecting smut fungus from the Cape Floristic Region of South Africa". The highlight for me among the keynote addresses was that given by Prof SVS Chauhan from India. Prof Chauhan's talk, entitled "*The Role of Reproductive Biology in Biodiversity Conservation*", covered various aspects of plant sciences, including agro-biodiversity, bioinformatics and Nano technology and its application

to modern plant biology, biological Nitrogen fixation and bio-fertilizers, plant physiology and biochemistry, climate change, plant adaptation and many more.

During the conference sessions, I presented a paper on the work I did during my MSc research entitled, "*Phosphorus deficiency affects nitrogen nutrition of two legume tree species from Fynbos Mediterranean Ecosystem, South Africa*". In addition to his plenary lecture, Dr Francois Roets also presented a paper, entitled, "*The role of mites in the dispersal of ophiostomatoid fungi of Protea*" and Prof Leanne Dreyer presented a paper, on the "*Systematic reassessment of Oxalis (Oxalidaceae) in southern Africa*".



After the conference, on the 18th of November 2012, a technical visit was organised to places of botanical and traditional importance at Chiang Mai. These included the Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden, Chiang Mai Zoo, Insect Zoo, Elephant camps, local temples and many more. These visits broadened my view of the Thai culture and the biodiversity in Thailand.

I want to thank the NRF and the DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB), for sponsoring the attendance of the conference.