

2nd International “*Erwinia*” Workshop

Isle de la Reunion

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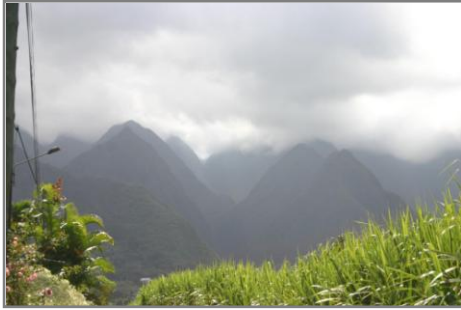
Group photo of workshop delegates.

On 5-6th June 2010 the second International *Erwinia* Workshop (IEW) was held prior to the ICPPB (International Conference on Plant Pathogenic Bacteria) in Reunion (the first workshop was in Dundee, Scotland in 2006), and was organised by members of the University of Pretoria and chaired by Ian Toth (SCRI). The meeting consisted of a number of talks and posters from many of the main groups world-wide working on enterobacterial plant pathogens. This year also saw the inclusion of work by Robert Jackson (Reading University) on the interactions between human enteric pathogens and plants – an area that we hope will become an important part of the IEW in future. It became clear very quickly that many things have changed in this field since the last meeting. There are now many more genome sequences for the enterobacterial plant pathogens than the 2-3 available in 2006 and these were being successfully exploited in a number of areas, including diagnostics, pathogenesis and epidemiology. New disease problems that had emerged over the last few years were discussed, including *Dickeya* spp. on potato in Europe and *Pantoea ananatis* of *Eucalyptus* in South Africa. These issues had led to the development of improved diagnostics and typing methods to monitor and track populations, as well as new insights into the pathogenesis and other lifestyle determinants of these pathogens. We heard about interesting new findings on the regulation of pathogenicity and the role of recently identified pathogenicity determinants (such as the Type VI secretion system) in disease development

12th International Conference on Plant Pathogenic Bacteria

The 12th meeting of the ICPPB began on Monday 7 June and ended on Friday 11 June. We were welcomed by the organizing committee and by members of the INRA and CIRAD to the beautiful island of Réunion. One of the key aspects of the 12th conference was the evolutionary strides made since then in the field of genomics, with no less than nine talks on the first day

discussing the genome sequencing of a broad spectrum of plant pathogenic bacteria from a wide range of genera, including *Pseudomonas*, *Erwinia*, *Pantoea*, *Ralstonia*, *Pectobacterium* and *Xanthomonas*. What can be done once the genome sequences of these phytopathogens are available was also made clear, with the speakers discussing the use of comparative and functional genomics to understand their evolution, biology, epidemiology, plant-microbe interactions and pathogenicity. A particularly prevalent topic was the evolution of phytopathogenic bacteria with the uptake of various pathogenicity determinants through horizontal acquisition.



Delegates were given a day off on Wednesday to digest and discuss the information that had been presented over the previous two days during an awesome trip to the volcano, Piton de la Fournaise” on the Island of Reunion. For most of the delegates, being on top and walking in the crater of a volcano was a first and an unforgettable experience. After this, we were treated to a traditional meal and drinks at a geranium oil distillery, followed by a scenic trip around the Island, to “Jardin des Mascareignes” (Botanical Gardens of

Marscareignes”. It was very interesting to learn about the current projects regarding conservation of the floral biodiversity of Reunion, and to walk around the beautiful, tropical gardens.

This superb conference with outstanding talks which sparked lively discussions, as well as with excellent food and organization, closed with the election of the scientific committee for the 13th ICPPB to be held in 2014 in China.



The volcano, Piton de la Fournaise.