



PERA e-AGRI NEWSLETTER

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE - UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

SERVICE EXCELLENCE, LEADERSHIP, COLLABORATION, ADAPTABILITY AND INNOVATION

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Events

US Delegates Visit National Referral Laboratory at Agricultural Biotechnology Centre



United States Permanent Representative to the UN Agencies in Rome, Cindy McCain and US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Julie Chung visited the Agricultural Biotechnology Centre, Faculty of Agriculture on 28th September 2022. The delegates visited the National Referral Laboratory established recently through the Biosafety Project of the Food and Agriculture Organization along with the Ministry of Environment. Then the delegates had a discussion with Prof. M.D. Lamawansa, Vice Chancellor, University of Peradeniya, Prof. Sarath Kodithuwakku, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Heads of the Departments, Directors of the Centres, and several senior academics from the Faculty of Agriculture. The Vice Chancellor handed over a one-page document on "Restoration and Rebuilding the Agri-Food Sector of Sri Lanka: Medium to Long-Term Strategy" to Ambassador McCain, highlighting Key recommendations of the Faculty of Agriculture to current food crisis in the country.

In addition, Dr. Mariano J. Beillard, Senior Regional Agricultural Attaché, US Department of Agriculture-Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA-FAS) and Ms. Thilani Kankanamge, Agricultural Specialist, USDA-FAS, at the US Embassy in Colombo joined the US delegation visit on 28th September and had a separate meeting on current Research and Development work.

Apiary to Strengthen Honeybee Related Research and Teaching

The Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya is in the process of establishing an apiary to strengthen its honeybee related research and teaching. The apiary will also be helpful to provide beekeeping technologies to a wider community both inside and outside the University. Mr. Jagath Randeniya donated an observation hive to the Faculty. The observation hive is helpful in studying the behaviour of the honeybees inside the colony. Prof. S.S. Kodithuwakku, the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, Dr. N.U. Jayawardana, the Head of the Department of Agricultural Biology and Dr. W.H. Jayasinghe, Department of Agricultural Biology participated this event.



Webinars on “Technological and Strategic Advancements for Agricultural Sustainability”



The Department of Agricultural Biology conducted two webinars and one seminar under the theme “Technological and Strategic Advancements for Agricultural Sustainability” targeting a wider audience including university students, professionals and other interested parties in the country. Resource persons representing both foreign and local organizations contributed to these workshops.

Webinar on “Next Generation Plant Breeding: Integrated Multi-Omics Technologies in Predictive Modelling” was conducted by Dr. Prabha Amarasinghe, Molecular Biologist, MOgene, USA.

Webinar on “Citrus Huanglongbing: A Pathogen Triggered Immune Disease and its Implications in Disease Management” was conducted by Prof. Nian Wang, Department of Microbiology and Cell Science, Citrus Research and Education Center, University of Florida, USA. Mr. H.K.M.S. Kumarasinghe, Extension and Training Division, Department of Agriculture, Peradeniya served as the resource person for the seminar on “Troubleshooting in Home Gardening; Pest and diseases problems.”



Appointments



Prof. S.A.C.N. Perera of the Department of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya has been appointed as the President of the Institute of Biology, Sri Lanka, at its 42nd Annual General Meeting held on 30th September 2022.

Promotions



Prof. D.M. De Costa has been promoted to the post of Senior Professor of Plant Protection in the Department of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya with effect from 09th September 2021.

Capacity Building

Residential Workshop on Leadership, Teamwork and Citizenship Development for the New Entrants

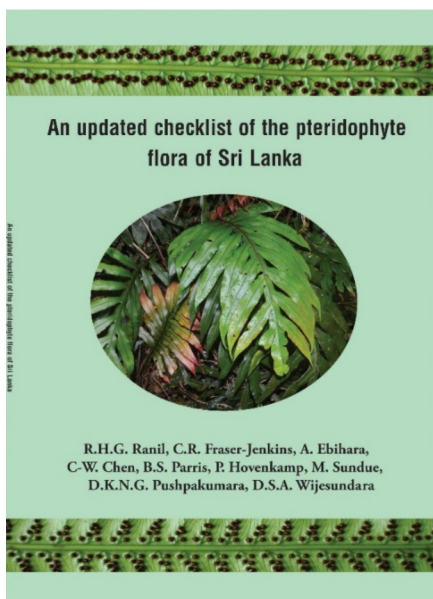
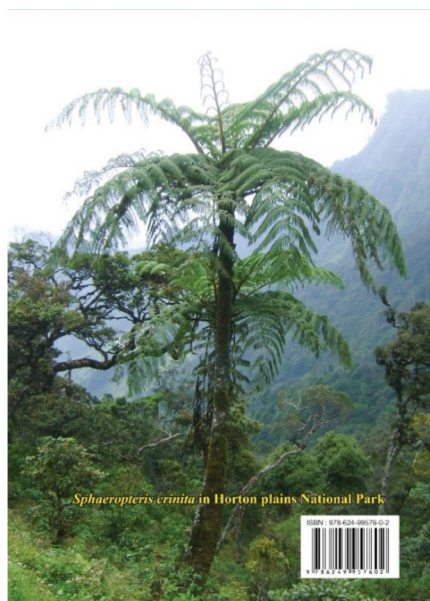


The programme for the new entrants to the Faculty of Agriculture was successfully conducted from 22-25 August at Mahailuppallama sub campus. The Programme focused on improving the Leadership, Teamwork and Citizenship and career. The programme was conducted by Dr. Chandana Jayawardena with the assistance of Dr. Nipuna Perera, Dr. Parakrama Weligamage and temporary academic staff members.



Publications

An Updated Checklist of the Pteridophyte Flora of Sri Lanka



During the past three decades, the field of plant taxonomy has made substantial progress due to the advancement of science and technology and as result, many taxonomic revisions have been carried out. Hence, it is important to update the taxonomic status of species with modern taxonomic findings. "An updated checklist of the pteridophyte flora (lycophytes and ferns) of Sri Lanka" provides authenticated and updated botanical names for all recorded pteridophytes species in Sri Lanka. This checklist includes 389 taxa (365 species plus 17 subspecies and 7 natural hybrids) belonging to 123 genera and 31 families which is a significant number compared to the country's land size. The checklist also includes 84 colour photographs of 67 pteridophyte species.

This checklist is a multi-authored publication and contributors are Dr. R.H.G. Ranil (Sri Lanka), Mr. C.R. Fraser-Jenkins (Portugal), Dr. A. Ebihara (Japan), Mr. C.W. Chen (Taiwan), Dr. B.S. Parris (New Zealand), Dr.P. Hovenkamp (Netherlands), Dr. M. Sundue (USA), Prof. D.K.N.G. Pushpakumara (Sri Lanka), and Prof. D.S.A. Wijesundara (Sri Lanka). The checklist was published by the ECERO Publishers and Distributors, Gampaha, Sri Lanka. This will be a handy reference for anyone who is interested in studying Sri Lankan pteridophytes.

Activities of the Student Societies

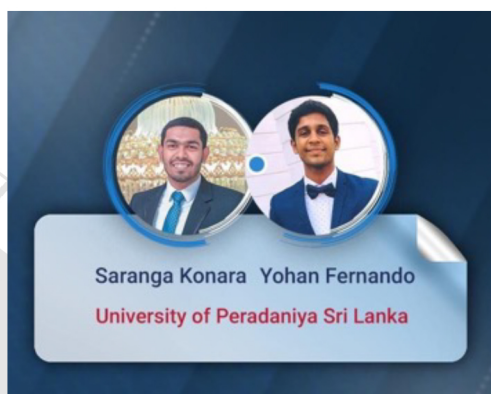
'Team Pera' led by the Biology Guild Becomes the Global Winners of University BioQuest - 2022

Bioquest is a global annual competition conducted by the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF.org) with the aim of protecting life on earth. In this competition, the Universities help mapping biodiversity across the world. The competition consists of two major sections leading to the selection of the best wildlife spotters and identifiers. In the year 2022, the game was conducted via an app with the participation of over 20 university teams across the world.

'Team Pera', representing University of Peradeniya became the global winners for the 4th consecutive time securing championships in both spotters (team) and identifiers (team) defeating all other universities. The team members Methmini Rupasinghe and Yohan Fernando achieved the best find – 1st Place and champion spotter – 3rd place respectively. "Team Pera" was led by the Biology Guild, Faculty of Agriculture and Zoologists Association, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya.



Students Achievements



Mr. Saranga Konara (AG/17/075) and Mr. Yohan Fernando (AG/17/045) participated in Indo-Pacific Quiz Competition Organised by Rajagiri College of Social Sciences and Supported by U.S. Mission in India and got selected for top 32 teams in the first round.