

2026 ANTON LANG MEMORIAL AWARDS AND SEMINAR

Monday, April 20, 2026

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Michigan State University



4:00 P.M. Graduate Student and Postdoctoral
Research Associate Awards



4:10 P.M. Anton Lang Memorial Seminar

“Plant-pathogen interactions in
a warming climate”

Sheng-Yang He

Duke University

Anton Lang Memorial Award Recipients Graduate Students

1998: Harley Smith
1999: Philipp Kapranov
2000: Mark Johnson
2001: Jim Kastenmayer
2002: Diane Jackson-Constan
2003: Lei Li
2004: Wayne Riekhof
2005: Tony Schilmiller
2006: Hiroshi Maeda
2007: William Underwood
2008: Leron Katsir
2009: Michael Ruckle
2010: Eric Moellering
2011: Sankalpi Warnasooriya
2012: Kyaw Aung
2013: John Withers
2014: Ya-Ni Chen
2015: Chia-Hong Tsai
2016: Li Zhang
2017: Joshua MacCready
2018: Eric Poliner
2019: Ben Mansfeld
2020: Kellie Walters
2021: Evan Angelos
2022: Phil Engelgau
2023: Hannah Parks
2024: Joshua Kaste
2025: Anne Steensma
2026: Rees Rillema

Research Associate Award

1998: Hyung-Taeg Cho
1999: Diane Bassham
2000: Anton Sanderfoot
2001: John Froehlich
2002: Qiao-Ling Jin
2003: Roger Thilmony
2004: Jeong Hoe Kim
2005: Dongsu Choi
2006: Hui Chen
2007: Fred Beisson
2008: Kinya Nomura
2009: Yan Lu
2010: Jeong-Kyu (Abe) Koo
2011: Tony Schilmiller

2012: Weiqing Zeng
2013: Rebecca Roston
2014: Giovanni Stefano
2015: Christopher Oakley
2016: Ian Major
2017: Clement Aussignargues
2018: Han Bao
2019: Luciana Renna
2020: Bryan Ferlez
2021: Hainan Zhao
2022: Peipei Wang
2023: Maria Del Carmen Santos Merino
2024: Xinyu Fu
2025: Deepak Bhandari Dharamchand Bhandari
2026: Amanda Koenig

Seminar Lecturers

1998: Maarten J. Chrispeels
1999: Winslow R. Briggs
2000: Peter Quail
2001: Russell L. Jones
2002: Deborah Delmer
2003: Andrew Hanson
2004: Jan Zeevaart
2005: Hans Kende
2006: Ove Nilsson
2007: Mark Estelle
2008: William Lucas
2009: Richard Amasino
2010: Sarah Hake
2011: Postponed
2012: Joanne Chory
2013: Natasha Raikhel
2014: Alan M. Jones
2015: Diana Kirilovsky
2016: Julia Bailey-Serres
2017: Richard Vierstra
2018: Kazuo Shinozaki
2019: Jorge Dubcovsky
2020: Michael Thomashow
2021: John Shanklin
2022: Govindjee
2023: Thomas D. Sharkey
2024: Robert Last
2025: Maureen R. Hanson
2026: Sheng-Yang He



Anton Lang Memorial Fund

Anton Lang, founding Director of the Plant Research Laboratory (PRL) at Michigan State University, died on June 24, 1996. The Anton Lang Memorial Fund was established in his honor by friends and former coworkers. Proceeds from this fund are being used to support the annual Anton Lang Memorial Lecture and to recognize each year a graduate student and a postdoctoral research associate who exemplify the research excellence, ideals, dedication, and vision of Anton Lang. Postdoctoral and graduate student awardees are selected on the basis of research carried out while at MSU. The lecturer is chosen by the PRL Seminar Committee, and the Personnel Affairs Committee of the PRL selects the student and postdoctoral awardees. Each award consists of a cash prize and an inscribed gift; in addition, the names of the lecturer and awardees will be on permanent display in the PRL.

Anton Lang

Anton Lang was born in 1913 in St. Petersburg, Russia. He received his Doctor of Science degree at the University of Berlin in 1939, specializing in plant biology. He held research positions in Berlin and Tübingen until his emigration in 1949, first to Canada and then to the U.S. Dr. Lang was on the faculty of the University of California at Los Angeles from 1952 to 1959 and of the California Institute of Technology from 1959 to 1965. In 1965, he moved to Michigan State University to become the first Director of the Plant Research Laboratory. He oversaw construction of the building, hired the original faculty, and set the tone of the PRL in ways that are still felt today, particularly with respect to collective responsibility for excellence in research and related scholarly activities. Under his leadership, the PRL became one of the world centers for research and training in plant biology. Anton Lang retired as Director of the Laboratory in 1978 and as Professor Emeritus in 1983. He authored over 120 papers, dealing mainly with the ways by which plants optimize their time of flowering in response to environmental cues. His scientific accomplishments brought him numerous honors. In 1967, he became the first MSU faculty member to be elected to the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, and in 1976, he received the MSU Distinguished Faculty Award. He was recognized with the Stephen Hales Prize and the Charles Barnes Life Membership Award of the American Society of Plant Physiologists, both in 1976, and with an honorary doctorate from the University of Glasgow. He was a member of the German Academy of Natural Scientists and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Anton Lang belonged to a group of eminent plant physiologists who profoundly influenced the field through their research, writings, and public service. For 25 years, he was managing editor of *Planta*, one of the premier journals in experimental plant biology, and was an editor of the *Encyclopedia of Plant Physiology*. From 1971 to 1974, he chaired the National Academy Committee on the Use of Herbicides in Vietnam, an effort that included field work in that war-torn country.



Sheng-Yang He

Sheng-Yang He is currently the Benjamin E. Powell Distinguished Professor of Biology at Duke University and an Investigator at Howard Hughes Medical Institute. He has held faculty positions at the University of Kentucky, Michigan State University and Duke University.

His lab is interested in elucidating the molecular mechanisms underlying plant-microbe interactions. Results from his lab, most of which were produced at MSU during his time as a PRL faculty member (1995-2020), have led to basic insights into processes that govern bacterial pathogenesis, plant immunity, plant hormone signaling and the immune function of plant stomata. Recent research in his lab begins to shed light on how climate conditions influence infectious diseases and how plants regulate microbiota homeostasis.

Dr. He received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Zhejiang University (agricultural campus), China, and a PhD degree from Cornell University, USA. He is a Clarivate Highly Cited Researcher, a Past-President of the International Society of Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions, an editorial board member of *Current Biology*, *PNAS* and *SCIENCE*. While at MSU, Dr. He was elected as a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and as a member of the United States National Academy of Sciences.