



ASPB members share a common goal of promoting the growth, development, and outreach of plant biology as a pure and applied science. This column features some of the dedicated and innovative members of ASPB who believe that membership in our Society is crucial to the future of plant biology.

If you are interested in contributing to this feature, please contact Kelley Noone, ASPB membership and marketing manager, at knoone@aspb.org.



Name: Mary Williams
Title: Associate Professor of Biology
Place of work: Harvey Mudd College

Research area: Plant development and stress signaling

Member since: 1995

1. Has being a member of ASPB helped you in your career? If so, how?

Definitely. Being a professor in a small department in a small college is difficult. I don't have plant biologist colleagues down the hall whom I can go to with questions. ASPB provides me with that community.

2. Why has being a member of ASPB been important?

For me, one of the most significant benefits is attending the meetings. As *the* plant biologist at my institution, I have had to develop a broader perspective of plant biology than I had as a graduate student or a postdoc. I like the diversity of talks and posters at the ASPB meetings. I also like socializing at the meetings, especially the PUI breakfast! In a larger sense, ASPB does a great job of supporting, connecting, and promoting us as plant biologists.

3. Was someone instrumental in getting you to join ASPB?

Bill Purves, whom I replaced at Harvey Mudd, suggested that ASPB membership would be worthwhile. As a new assistant professor it seemed like a financial strain the first time I wrote out the check, but I'm glad he got me started. I'm giving and getting something worthwhile for my membership dues.

4. What would you tell nonmembers to encourage them to join?

Think of it as 30 cents a day (or two lattes a month) to support a good organization. We all benefit from ASPB's efforts to promote meaningful plant biology curricula to K-12 teachers, continuing federal funding for research, and understanding of plant biotechnology.

5. Have you found a job using ASPB job postings or through networking at the annual meeting?

No.

6. Have you hired anyone as a result of a job posting at the meeting or on our online Job Bank?

No.

7. Do you still read print journals? If so, where do you usually read them?

Yes, I get a lot out of the print journals. The online searching capabilities are wonderful, and the ASPB journals have some of the most user-friendly interfaces. But I like to browse the print journals when they come out. I

read the journals while I'm driving my kids around—this is LA you know. Just kidding! Actually I'm usually on my cell phone while I'm driving my kids around! I read the journals in bed.

8. What do you think is the next "big thing" in plant biology?

In vivo quantification of small molecules and metabolites, and modeling homeostasis.

9. What person, living or dead, do you most admire?

When I was in Washington, DC, last year, I visited Monticello and was amazed to learn more about Thomas Jefferson.

10. What are you reading these days?

I recently read *The Botany of Desire* by Michael Pollan, which was interesting but a little odd, and *Orchid Fever* by Eric Hansen, which I highly recommend.

11. What are your hobbies?

I have two little boys who play soccer in the fall and baseball in the spring. So the answer is either (a) I have no hobbies, or (b) my hobbies are watching baseball and soccer games.

12. What is your most treasured possession?

See answer to the previous question. Actually, my Arabidopsis mutant is pretty high on the list, too.

13. What do you still have left to learn?

Everything!



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