

■ OPENING CEREMONY OF THE DAHLEM CENTRE OF PLANT SCIENCES IN BERLIN



DCPS
Dahlem Centre
of Plant Sciences

The Dahlem Centre of Plant Sciences (DCPS), founded in 2009 at the Freie Universität Berlin, celebrated its opening with a half-day symposium on 29 September 2010. More than 200 guests followed the invitation to the recently renovated lecture hall of the Botanic Museum to hear the addresses and talks by officials from the Freie Universität Berlin, the Berlin Senate Department, and internationally renowned plant scientists.

“Berlin-Dahlem is the most appropriate place to build a Centre of Plant Sciences” said Thomas Schmülling, speaker of the DCPS. Berlin-Dahlem is home of one of the world’s largest Botanic Gardens and has a long history and tradition in plant sciences. DCPS unites around 290 persons working in the field of plant sciences at the Freie Universität Berlin. Moreover, Berlin and the surrounding Brandenburg county are home of several other institutions performing plant research. Overall, more than one thousand persons work in plant research in the larger Berlin-Brandenburg area.



Crowded lecture hall in the Botanical Museum in Berlin-Dahlem. Photo by Jan Hambura, Freie Universität Berlin.



Erik Smets, Thomas Schmülling and Thomas Borsch in discussions during a break. Photo by Michael Riefler, Freie Universität Berlin.

The three main disciplines Molecular Biology, Plant Systematics, and Ecology united in DCPS were represented during the opening ceremony by talks from internationally renowned speakers: Wilhelm Gruissem from the ETH Zürich gave an enthusiastic talk about the future requirements, promises, and challenges in crop plant breeding to feed the growing world population. Erik Smets from NCB Naturalis and the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven highlighted the past and future developments in Plant Systematics. The broad and complex field of ecology and the multitude of organismal interactions were presented by Wim van der Putten from the Netherlands Institute of Ecology.

DCPS serves as a research platform for the groups working on plant sciences in Berlin-Dahlem. It follows an integrative approach aiming to unite experts from diverse fields of plant sciences and to strengthen the already well-established plant science network in the Berlin-Brandenburg area. There is a long-standing tradition of cooperation between the plant science departments of Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the University of Potsdam, each having its specific thematic profile. The promotion of young researchers is a major structural goal of DCPS that is pursued on several levels: teaching of undergraduates, the graduate school “Molecular Plant Sciences”, and special support for young scientists. — Diana Mutz, Dahlem Centre of Plant Sciences, diana.mutz@fu-berlin.de