

Centennial Feature

Plant Pathology To Be Featured at the Science Museum of Minnesota During APS Centennial

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The Science Museum of Minnesota is a premier science museum and a key attraction in St. Paul, MN, hosting more than one million visitors per year. As part of the APS Centennial, a display on plant pathology entitled “Plants Get Sick, Too” will be unveiled at the museum during the week of July 20 and will run for approximately 3 months. The display is being created by museum designers with expertise provided by an ad hoc committee of APS members **Deborah Samac**, **Kasia Kinzer**, **Janet Painter**, and **Gail Ruhl**. The major themes of the display are to introduce visitors to plant diseases and their impact on human society and natural habitats and to highlight the role that plant pathologists play in understanding and managing plant diseases. The display will consist of four graphic panels focusing on key diseases in field, forest, backyard, and nursery settings. Each panel will have a main story, scientific concept relating to the story, fun fact, and several sidebar items providing additional information. In addition to the panels, there will be a hands-on activity with a video microscope allowing visitors to see plant pathogens up close and learn more about the specimen they are viewing. Each story is told in the voice of a real plant pathologist. Visitors will also be able to test their new knowledge about plant diseases by playing a Science Quiz. We hope that visitors will come away from the display with a better appreciation of how plant diseases have shaped human culture and society, the fascinating diversity of plant pathogens, and the excitement and rewards of a career in plant pathology.

The educational opportunities for this display are not limited to its run at the Science Museum of Minnesota. First, the committee would like to invite members attending the 2008 APS Centennial Meeting to spend time at the display talking with visitors about plant pathology. We will have a table of display items for volunteers to use that will spark questions from visitors.

The display is sure to attract many more visitors if there is a real live scientist on hand! Shifts will be approximately 2 hours. Second, the panels will be the property of APS at the end of the show. Members will be able to display them at different venues. Third, all graphics will also be available to APS for display on *APSnet*. Lastly, the APS display has been a case study for undergraduate students in the University of Minnesota course Special Topics in Design, Housing, and Apparel who have worked with the museum designers who are teaching the course, met with university plant pathologists, and learned a lot about plant pathology!



A reproduction model of the plant pathology display, “Plants Get Sick, Too,” currently being developed that will be at the Science Museum of Minnesota during the APS Centennial Meeting.



Deborah Samac is working with the University of Minnesota faculty to provide input on the materials that will be on display at the Science Museum of Minnesota.

Located on a bluff above the Mississippi River in downtown St. Paul, the museum is a wonderful place to spend an hour or a day. It has exhibits to appeal to every interest and level of education with many hands-on learning activities. There is an Imax Theater with several different films shown daily. During the summer of 2008, the museum will be hosting a special traveling display entitled “*Star Wars*™: Where Science Meets Imagination” in which costumes, models, and props from the entire *Star Wars* Saga will be on display. Members are welcome to visit during the centennial.

Please contact Deborah Samac (dasamac@umn.edu) if you are interested in volunteering at the display during the meeting or would like to arrange to have the display at your location. ■