



# Fascination of Plants Day Interactive Exhibition Taste ! Try ! Test ...

6<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 14:00 – 19:00  
7<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 09:00 – 17:00  
Public Hall of BNP Paribas  
Piazza San Fedele 1/3, Milano

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Third International Fascination of Plants Day - Interactive Exhibition at EXPO Milano 2015**

**Brussels, 6 October 2015**

Since time immemorial, plants have been crucial to our survival and prosperity. All food, feed and renewable bioenergy production on our planet relies on solar energy, which is converted by plants and photosynthetic microorganisms to the chemical energy that maintains all life on Earth. From the world's first 'green revolution' – the invention of agriculture – in the Middle East, to today's high-tech agribusiness, plants have been at the centre of our diets, economy and much more. Plants are not only our food and fodder for animals but we also use them to make clothes, paper, paints, oils, medicines, and biodegradable plastics, among many other things. We all know that money does not grow on trees, but plants are a big part of our economic prosperity.

Securing a sustainable global supply of high quality food and feed, and supplying renewable biomass for the production of bio-based products and energy are key priorities for both European and global society. In the coming decades, the European plant sector will play an essential role in meeting this challenge and achieving this will depend strongly on the generation and transfer of new knowledge, and greater innovation in the plant sector.

The European Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future' (Plant ETP) represents the most important stakeholders that provide plant-based raw materials for the food and feed industry, chemical, pharmaceutical and other processing industries, and the (bio) energy sector. It is a platform bringing together public and private researchers, industry and the farming communities in order to align research priorities and set up strategic action plans to promote research, innovation and education in the plant sector. Plant breeders, farmers and scientists work together within the framework of the Plant ETP to develop joint solutions in order to better respond to grand societal challenges and work for supportive and clear policies for the plant and agricultural sectors.

The general public is not only important as the consumer of biobased products, but also as the societal force that supports or hinders innovations. Today, there is little public recognition of the fact that the production of sufficient and safe food in a sustainable manner requires state-of-the-art research and a strong agricultural supply industry. The lack of attractiveness of plant sciences and agriculture already begins at school. The Plant ETP is committed to increase dialogue between public and plant sectors in order to overcome the hesitation and scepticism of many parts of the European societies vis-à-vis generation and utilisation of knowledge about plant biological systems.

The Fascination of Plants Day (FoPD) initiative (<http://www.plantday12.eu>) launched in 2012 by the European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO) across Europe and by the Plant ETP at the European Parliament in Brussels (<http://www.plantetp.org/index.php/home/events?id=169>), has today become a global event. This coordinated activity promotes plant sciences to the general public, politicians and research councils and aims to get as many people as possible fascinated by plants and enthused about the fundamental and often extraordinary vital role of plants in agriculture, in horticulture, in forestry, providing food and non-food products. It is a great success in terms of the number of events organized in scientific institutions, universities, botanical gardens, and museums together with farmers and companies (in 2015, more than 900 events in 55 countries), interacting with and inspiring the public and schools with a diverse range of plant-based outreach activities.

As part of the official calendar of the European Union Pavilion at EXPO Milano 2015, the European Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future', together with EPSO, organises on 6 and 7 October 2015 an interactive exhibition encompassing various uses of plants for food and non-food uses, with a focus on nutritional security and the reduction of the environmental footprint of agriculture. The exhibition will present and discuss societal challenges and the various plant breeding technologies which can help to address them, including conventional breeding, new breeding technologies and genetic modification. These challenges include reducing the environmental impact of agriculture, while increasing food production in a sustainable way, and managing the competition between food and non-food uses of plants. The contribution of genetically modified plants to the solution of these global challenges will also be presented. *"The exhibition will provide a unique opportunity to show what plant science can do to address several issues of high social and economic relevance. It will put the fascinating world of plants in the spotlight and will plant virtual and constantly germinating seeds in the collective mind of the general public"* underlines Karin Metzloff, executive director of EPSO.

The exhibitors will be from academia, industry and farmers within the Plant ETP. The exhibition should attract the general public, especially young people (e.g. school children and students), policy makers and the media. Since the exhibition is targeted to the general public, it will take place in the city centre of Milan, in the public hallway of BNP Paribas, Piazza San Fedele 1/3. *"We believe that the exhibition will provide a unique opportunity to bring to the attention of the general public a set of scientific issues that are highly relevant to the EXPO theme "Feeding the Planet – Energy for Life" and would therefore be an important contribution from the European plant scientific community to the success of EXPO Milano 2015"* emphasises Silvia Travella, coordinator of the ETP 'Plants for the Future'.

**Title of event:** Third International Fascination of Plants Day – Interactive Exhibition at EXPO Milano 2015

**Who:** European Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future' (Plant ETP), European Plant Science Organisation (EPSO)

**When:** 6 October 2015 from 14:00 to 19:00 and 7 October 2015 from 9:00 to 17:00

**Where:** Public hallway of BNP Paribas, Piazza San Fedele 1/3, Milano

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