

Prabha Amarasinghe

EDUCATION

- 2015- 2020 **Ph.D. Botany**, Department of Biology, University of Florida (UF), USA
2011- 2013 **MS in Molecular Life Sciences**, Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
2005- 2009 **B.S. Agricultural Technology and Management**, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (Major: Agricultural Biology)

RESEARCH AND TRAVEL GRANTS

- 2019 **Mildred Mason Griffith Botany Grant**, Department of Biology, University of Florida
2019 **Graduate Student Council travel grant**, Graduate Student Council, UF
2017 Botanical Society of America Graduate Student **research award**
2017 American Society of Plant Taxonomists Graduate Student **research grant**
2017 **Davis graduate fellowship** in Botany, Department of Biology, University of Florida
2016-2019 American Society of Plant Taxonomists **travel grants** for Botany
2017 Spring **travel awards**, Florida Museum of Natural History, UF
2016 International Association for Plant Taxonomy **research grants** in Plant Systematics

ACADEMIC AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2019-2020 University of Florida Biodiversity Institute (**UFBI fellowship**)
2012 **Plants of Tropical Asia Fellowship, China**, a field botany course at Xishuangbanna Botanic Garden, Chinese Academy of Science, Kungmin, China
2009 **J.W.L. Peiris Gold Medal in Agricultural Biology**, for the best performance in Agricultural Biology, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed Journals:

6. **Amarasinghe, P.**, S. Joshi, N. Page, L.S. Wijedasa, M. Merello, H. Kathriarachchi, R.D. Stone, W. Judd, U. Kodandaramaiah, and N. Cellinese. Evolution and biogeography of *Memecylon*. American Journal of Botany.

5. **Amarasinghe, P.**, P. Pham*, R.D. Stone, and N. Cellinese. Discordance in a South African *Memecylon* clade (Melastomataceae): evidence for reticulate evolution. Accepted.

*undergraduate

4. **Amarasinghe, P.**, N. Barve, H. Kathriarachchi, B. Loiselle and N. Cellinese. Niche dynamics of *Memecylon* in Sri Lanka: climate change effects, and conservation priorities. Diversity and Distributions. In review.

3. Jantzen, J.R. *, **P. Amarasinghe***, R.A. Folk, M. Reginato, F.A. Michelangeli, D.E. Soltis, N. Cellinese, and P.S. Soltis. 2020. A two-tier bioinformatic pipeline to develop probes for target capture of nuclear loci with applications in Melastomataceae. Applications in Plant Sciences.

***Equal contributors**

2. **Amarasinghe A.P.P.R.**, D.A.S. Siriwardhane, R.R. Samarasekera and O.V.D.S.J. Weerasena, 2015, Development of DNA Barcodes and Optimization of DNA Isolation and PCR Protocols for a Medicinal Plant *Plectranthus hadiensis*. International Journal of Science and research.

1. **Amarasinghe A.P.P.R.** and D.S.A. Wijesundara, 2011. A new species of *Rhinacanthus* (Acanthaceae) from Sri Lanka, Edinburgh Journal of Botany.

Field Guide:

A.P.P.R. Amarasinghe, Senanayake S.P. & Amarasinghe A.P.G, 2016. A field guide to the economically important plants of Sri Lanka. Stamford Lake (Pvt.) Ltd., Sri Lanka. ISBN 978-955-658-254-3.

PRESENTATIONS

Selected Presentations (T: Talks, P: Poster):

9. **Amarasinghe, P.**, S. Joshi, N. Page, L. Wijedasa, R. D. Stone, H. Kathriarachchi, M. Merello, W. Judd, U. Kodandaramaiah, and N. Cellinese. 2020. A global perspective on *Memecylon* (Melastomataceae): Insights into biogeography and character evolution. Botany virtual. **Honorably mentioned for George Cooley Award.**^T

8. **Amarasinghe, P.**, Joshi, S., Page, N., Wijedasa, L., Kathriarachchi, H., Stone, R. D., Merello, M., Kodandaramaiah, U., Cellinese, N. 2020. New insights into the origin, biogeography and character evolution of *Memecylon* (Melastomataceae) based on a hybrid phylogenetic–phylogenomic approach. Society of Systematic Biologists, Gainesville, FL.^T

7. **Amarasinghe, P.**, Pham, P., Stone, R. D., Cellinese, N. 2019. An integrated approach to understand cryptic diversity in a South African *Memecylon* clade (Melastomataceae). Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience, St. Augustine, FL.^T

6. **Amarasinghe, P.**, Joshi, S., Page, N., Wijedasa, L., Kathriarachchi, H., Stone, R. D., Merello, M., Kodandaramaiah, U., Cellinese, N. 2019. Investigating the phylogenetics, divergence times and historical biogeography of *Memecylon* (Melastomataceae) with a target enrichment approach. Botany 2019, Tucson, AZ.^T

5. **Amarasinghe, P.**, Jantzen, J., Folk, R., Soltis, D., Soltis, P., Cellinese, N. 2019. Developing a new bioinformatics pipeline to capture low-copy nuclear loci for two distant clades of Melastomataceae. Botany 2019, Tucson, AZ.^P

4. **Amarasinghe, P. J.** Jantzen, D. Soltis, P. Soltis and Nico Cellinese, 2018. Developing tools to capture loci of two distant clades of Melastomataceae. Botany 2018, Rochester, MN.^P

3. **Amarasinghe, P.** and Nico Cellinese, 2017. Niches, distribution and natural history: towards understanding the drivers of diversification of *Memecylon* (Melastomataceae). Botany 2017, Fort Worth, TX.^T

2. **Amarasinghe, P.** and Nico Cellinese, 2016. A preliminary molecular phylogeny of *Memecylon* (Melastomataceae) reveals novel insights into its biogeographic patterns. Botany 2016, Savannah, GA: 263.^P

1. **Amarasinghe A.P.P.R.**, D.A.S. Siriwardhane, R.R. Samarasekera & O.V.D.S.J. Weerasena, 2014, Chemical profiles and DNA barcodes for a Sri Lankan medicinal plant *Plectranthus hadiensis*, Abstracts of the 2nd International Conference on Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Traditional Medicine, December 2014, IIM, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka 2(1): 105.^T

Oral and Poster Presentations (by mentees):

3. Pham, P., **A.P.P.R. Amarasinghe**, R.D. Stone, N. Cellinese, 2019. A preliminary analysis to understand the ploidy variation in a South African *Memecylon* clade (Melastomataceae). Undergraduate Symposium, Department of Biology, University of Florida.

2. W.A.D.K. Wijesooriya, A.R.P.D.U.K.R. Ambadeniya & **A.P.P.R. Amarasinghe**, 2015. Development of chemical profiles and preliminary phytochemical screening for shoots of *Rhinacanthus* species (Acanthaceae) of Sri Lanka. 71st Annual sessions of the Sri Lanka Association of the Advancement of Science 71(4):108

1. S.H. Punchihewa, **A.P.P.R. Amarasinghe**, S.P. Senanayake & P.A. Paranagama, 2015. Preliminary phytochemical screening and evaluation of anti-inflammatory properties of *Albizia*. 71st Annual sessions of the Sri Lanka Association of the Advancement of Science 71(4):107

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2016 to date **Teaching Assistant**, Department of Biology, UF. Courses teaching: (BSC2011 Integrated Principles of Biology LabII, BSC2010 LabI & BSC2010 Lab-online)
- 2013-2015 **Lecturer (temporary)**, Department of Botany, University of Kelaniya. Courses taught: (Form, Structure and Classification of Angiosperms, Horticulture, Plant Systematics and Bioinformatics, Plant Physiology and Biochemistry)
- 2009- 2010 **Lecturer (temporary)**, Department of Agri. Biology, University of Peradeniya, Courses taught: (Botany of Field Crops, Crop Systematics and Plant Biochemistry)

MENTORSHIP

- 2020-2021 Camille Pierre and Robert Lewis (undergraduates). *Cannabis sativa* fiber and wax projects.
- 2018-2019 Phuc Pham (undergraduate-UF)- flow cytometry for a South African *Memecylon* clade (Biology Graduate Student Association 2019 award for *Memecylon* project)
- 2015 W.A.D. K Wijesooriya and A.R.P.D.U.K.R. Ambadeniya (undergraduates-Sri Lanka) chemical profiles for *Rhinacanthus*
- 2014 S.H. Punchihewa (undergraduate-Sri Lanka)- phytochemical and anti-inflammatory screening of *Albizia*

EDITORIAL ACTIVITIES

- 2012-2021 **Peer Reviewer of Journal Articles** – Applications in Plant Sciences, Phytotaxa, Sri Lanka Journal of Indigenous Medicine, Edinburgh Journal of Botany
- 2014 **Reviewer of Abstracts** – Abstract book of Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science annual sessions

OUTREACH AND SERVICE

To Academics and Policy

- 2018-2019 Faculty search **committee member**, Department of Biology, UF
- 2013-2014 **Curriculum revision committee**, Department of Biology, University of Kelaniya: introduced new Plant Biochemistry and Statistics syllabi to second year undergraduates and developed study guides

- 2014 **Organizing Committee Member** – National symposium of Invasive Alien Species (IAS 2014), Sri Lanka
- 2013 **Nomenclature Committee Member** - Ceylon cinnamon nomenclature committee, appointed by Ministry of Minor Export Crop Promotion, Sri Lanka

To the community

- 2018-2019 Green house **representative** and seminar support **committee member**, University of Florida Biology Graduate Student Committee
- 2018 **Volunteer** Summer teaching camp for high school teachers (May)
- 2017 **Invited Resource Person** - Workshop on Biogeography, National Herbarium of Sri Lanka
- 2016-2018 **Volunteer** various events at the Florida Museum of Natural History (Earth Day - April, She's a scientist (for girl scouts) – November, One tree-one planet – Summer 2018)
- 2017 **Guest Seminars-** Evolution of *Memecylon*: From global patterns to fine-scale processes in the Old-World tropics- Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, 2021; Niches and natural history of taxa, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2017
- 2016 **Science Fair Judge** - Kanapaha middle school, Gainesville, USA
- 2014 **Invited Resource Person** - Workshop on DNA barcoding, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
- 2013 **Guest Speaker** - Identification of medicinal plants using morphology, Department of Indigenous medicine, Municipal Council of Colombo, Sri Lanka

SOCIETAL MEMBERSHIPS

- 2016 to date **Member**, Botanical Society of America
- 2014 to 2020 **Student Member**, American Society of Plant Taxonomist
- 2018 to 2019 **Student Member**, Society for the Study of Evolution
- 2016 **Member**, International Association for Plant Taxonomy
- 2016 to 2018 **Student Member**, Torrey Botanical Society
- 2016 to 2017 **Student Member**, Society of Herbarium Curators
- 2014-2015 **Secretary**, Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science (SLAAS), Agriculture & forestry section, Sri Lanka
- 2013-2014 **Committee member**, SLAAS, Agriculture & forestry section, Sri Lanka