

The 18th International Phytotechnology Conference, held from October 22 - 24, 2024 in the beautiful region of Kerala, India, concluded with resounding success. This year's theme, "Phytotechnologies for Sustainable Environment and Food Safety", inspired participants to engage deeply in discussions on cutting-edge advancements and collaborative approaches in the field of phytotechnology.

## Highlights and Participation

This year's conference featured over 107 presentations from participants around the world, who shared their research and insights in 8 concurrent sessions. Each session was meticulously planned to foster engagement and dialogue on various facets of phytotechnology, from plant-based environmental remediation to sustainable agricultural practices. Keynote presentations by leading experts, Vara Prasad, a Distinguished Professor at *Kansas State University, USA* on "*Phytotechnologies for Food Security and Environmental Sustainability*" and Dr. Boashan Xing, a Distinguished Professor and Director, *Stockbridge School of Agriculture, UMass Amherst USA* on "*Microplastic in the Environment: Global Environmental and Human Health Perspectives.*" A career development session and discussions for students and early career researchers provided valuable insights and practical knowledge that attendees can apply in their respective fields.

An exciting feature of the conference was the inclusion of 22 students oral presentations, and 18 students poster presentations, which provided a platform for emerging researchers to showcase their work and receive constructive feedback from experienced professionals. This commitment to student participation highlights the conference's dedication to supporting the next generation of phytotechnology leaders.

The event also drew a vibrant international audience, with 220 participants from over 19 countries, enhancing the discussions with global perspectives. The exchange of ideas among attendees with diverse academic and cultural backgrounds added depth to the conference, reflecting the shared global interest in phytotechnology's potential to address environmental challenges. The recording of the presentation can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/@IPC-18/streams>

## Awards and Recognition

In recognition of excellence in the field, the conference honored outstanding achievements with the Milton P Gordon award to Dr. Liz Rylott, University of York, UK, and the Distinguished Service Award to Prof. Jos Puthur, University of Calicut and Prof. Om Parkash Dhankher, Stockbridge School of Agriculture, UMass Amherst USA. Further, Students presenters were awarded the best oral presentations and best Poster presentations award. These awards included categories such as exemplary research contributions, innovative approaches, and student achievements. Recipients included:

### Winners of Students' oral presentation IPC-18:

1st Prize: Pietro Peroni, University of Bologna, Italy

2nd Prize: Riya Johnson, University of Calicut, Kerala, India

3rd Prize: Erin Lincoln, Merrimack College, USA

### **Winners of Poster presentation IPC-18:**

1st Prize: Atish Kumar Behera, Birla Institute of Tech. and Sci., Hyderabad, India

2nd Prize: Sandra P.V, University of Calicut, Kerala, India

3rd Prize: Josphat Kiunga, UMass Amherst, USA

### **Cultural Experience Looking Ahead**

The 18th International Phytotechnology Conference in Kerala, India, offered attendees a rich cultural experience that beautifully complemented the scientific program. Kerala's renowned hospitality and vibrant traditions were on full display, providing participants with an immersive introduction to the local culture. From traditional music and dance performances to sampling Kerala's famous cuisine, attendees enjoyed a unique opportunity to experience the region's heritage. Special excursions were also arranged, allowing guests to explore Kerala's scenic landscapes and historical sites, fostering a deeper connection to the locale and creating memorable moments of cultural exchange among international participants. [Cultural experience Videos at IPC18](#)

### **Looking Ahead**

As the conference came to an end, attendees departed Kerala with renewed motivation, inspired by the knowledge and connections they gained. Feedback underscored the impact of the event, with many expressing excitement for future research endeavors and innovations sparked by their conference experience. Plans are already underway for next year's conference, with hopes to build upon the success and momentum of this event.

The organizing committee extends its gratitude to all speakers, attendees, and volunteers whose dedication made the 18th International Phytotechnology Conference (IPC-18) a memorable success.