

■ Meet-a-Member: Line Nybakken

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Why did you choose to work on plant UV-effects? I had been working on light stress in lichens for my master thesis and in a subsequent summer job for Wolfgang Bilger. After one year as a high school teacher in forestry I got an offer from Wolfgang that I could not refuse: PhD with field work in the French Alps, alpine Norway and at Svalbard. I used a prototype of the Xenon-PAM to measure

UV-screening in plant species that grew at all three places along this natural UV-gradient.

What is your research-specialisation?

Well, I may do too many different kinds of studies...but I would say that the ecology and physiology of chemical defences is the topic which has always been closest to my heart. I also have broad experience with outdoor experiments, which I consider more and more important to answer relevant ecophysiological research questions.

Of which UV-related accomplishment are you most proud, and why?

I am proud of the pioneering work on UV-induction of defensive, screening compounds in lichens, done at my university. It all started when my colleagues Knut Asbjørn Solhaug and Yngvar Gauslaa found out that they could rinse out these pigments by using 100% acetone. After that, we have had a lot of fun! Another exciting result is the understanding of the role of UV-B in autumnal bud set in aspen, which was found in the studies of my PhD-student Christan Strømme.

Can you tell a funny story relating to your work on UV-effects?

Hmm...it for sure was not very funny when it happened, but afterwards it became a good story! When I had arrived at the high altitude field station at Col du Lautaret for my first field campaign in the French Alps, I realized that the Xenon-PAM did not work. I called Wolfgang, who

told me to go to Würzburg (Germany) to get the instrument fixed by the technician who had built it. After a long day travelling by bus, plane and train I arrived in Würzburg, where the instrument was fixed in just 20 minutes while I was having lunch...! I got a plane ticket for next morning, and spent the night at the university's guest room in the botanical garden. Surrounded by lush tropical vegetation, I found out that I had picked up food poisoning with my lunch, so the night was spent at the toilet in the cellar, trying to avoid the huge tropical cockroaches climbing on my legs. But the story had a happy ending: the day after I arrived safely back in the beautiful surroundings of Lautaret, and the Xenon-PAM has behaved well ever since that day.

Have you got any hints, tips or other advice to share? Working with UV is exciting, but difficult to do correctly! When you are planning an experiment, do not hesitate to ask for help, there are many experts in UV4Plants, and my experience is that people are always willing to help!

What made you join UV4Plants? In the COST action, I had developed research collaborations and friendships, it was just natural to join its continuation; the UV4Plants!

How would you like UV4Plants to develop in the future? I have enjoyed the discussion-intensive workshops, and I hope we will have more of those in the future!

Who would you like to appear in a future "Meet-a-Member"? Susanne Neugart!

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