



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# Phillip Griffiths Promoted to Associate Professor

By Joe Ogrodnick

GENEVA, NY: Phillip Griffiths was promoted to associate professor of horticultural sciences at Cornell University's New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY. Griffiths, who is from Southwest Wales, came to Cornell in 1999.

"Phillip has excellent training in both applied plant breeding and modern biotechnology, and he uses these skills in addressing key problems that face the New York bean and cabbage industries," said department chairman, Alan Taylor. "Dr. Griffiths' program has already produced significant results by transferring valuable traits across related species, thus creating useful germplasm for the seed industry to develop new vegetable varieties."

Griffiths' vegetable breeding program at Geneva focuses on the breeding and genetics of crucifer and common bean crops, specifically cabbage, snap beans, and dry beans. He focuses on the introgression of host plant resistance to economically important pests and on tolerance to environmental stresses. These foci include breeding for resistance to black rot in cabbages, white mold tolerance in common beans, cucumber mosaic virus resistance in snap beans, and heat tolerance in broccoli and common beans.

Griffiths spends significant effort on enhancing crucifer and common bean germplasm in order to transfer unique traits, and improve yield and quality in commercial cultivars. This research is supported with several laboratory protocols enabling molecular breeding and selection for traits of interest. The laboratory techniques utilized in support of the breeding research include: the development of molecular markers (RAPDs, SCARs, SSRs, RT-PCR and PCR-RFLP), embryo rescue/tissue culture, and the molecular characterization of germplasm and commercial cultivars. The program supports the needs of commercial growers, the seed industry, sustainable agriculture, integrated pest management, maintenance of biodiversity, and molecular research focused on crop improvement.

Griffiths' notable achievements include the improvement of beans for resistance to white mold and cucumber mosaic virus. Griffiths has undertaken the difficult work of interspecific hybridization of common bean and brassica oleraceae with related species, which demonstrates the program's commitment to crop improvement. He continues to work on the development of improved orange cauliflower.

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