

The Interactive Resource Center & Helpdesk

Resources for scientists



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Background: What is the IRC?

- Started in 2005
- Geared towards plant scientists, particularly in developing countries, with an emphasis on plant breeding and assessment and use of genetic diversity
- Aims to address problems of lack of access to protocols, key literature, trained personnel, etc
- Personal help with specific questions
- A support system



Who is the IRC?

The IRC is housed by the Institute for Genomic Diversity at Cornell University, USA. Our location at Cornell gives us access to important resources, including facilities and faculty, that can play an important role in addressing the needs of scientists all over the globe. Nearby facilities include libraries (and networked resources), and information technologies such as the Computational Biology Support Center. These resources, together with IGD's combined expertise in research and education, make it possible for our Institute to have a significant positive impact as a capacity-building contribution to the Challenge Program. Many international scientists have taken advantage of these resources while on training visits to the IGD; establishing a Resource Center allows us to extend our resources to scientists that do not have to opportunity to visit and to better help support those who have, and returned to their home country.

The Helpdesk

- A place where users can ask questions relating to their research.
- Support given can be in the form of answering questions about experimental design, laboratory protocols, data management, laboratory maintenance, funding, training possibilities, software specifics, statistics questions, making literature available, etc.
- Scientists that have helped answer these questions include members of IGD, Cornell University, and CGIAR colleagues.
- Complementary to the GCP IP Helpdesk, the GCP Bioinformatics Helpdesk, the Data Templates Helpdesk, and the new Molecular Toolbox.

This year the Helpdesk has assisted in:

- DNA extraction troubleshooting
- advising on software programs, data scoring, and data analysis
- Sending learning module CDs to requests from over 30 countries worldwide

User emails have included teachers as well as scientists and students.



Impact: Use of the IRC

The Resource Center continues to gain an increasing number of users each year (increasing around 30% each year). In the last year, more than 6,400 unique visitors have hit the site. Users have come from all around the globe, including countries from every continent except Antarctica.

Other than the home page, most popular pages are, in order of popularity:

- ✓ Protocols
- ✓ Molecular Marker training modules
- ✓ Sorghum contact list
- ✓ DNA extraction troubleshooting guide
- ✓ Sorghum & Millet Literature
- ✓ Tutorials

What does the IRC currently include?

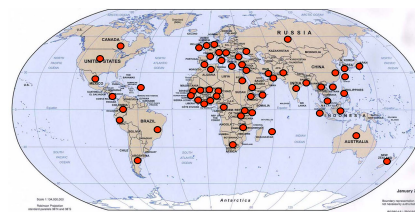
- Protocols (eg. DNA extractions, PCR)
- Links to suppliers of laboratory items
- Frequently asked questions (FAQ)
- Contact lists to other researchers
- Funding sources (for research or training)
- Key literature (full text and pdf where legally available), links to other sources
- General resources such as how to write a proposal, find a journal article, etc
- News & selected research publications, rotating each month
- Tutorials and learning modules
- "What's New" guide on the front page
- Email newsletter with updates and funding opportunities
- Helpdesk Team page



What's New? The IRC is now on Facebook!

Facebook is a free social networking site that includes groups of similarly minded people. Users can also stay in touch with friends – but this is not necessary to join the IRC group. We hope to use this venue for discussions, comments, questions, sharing ideas....

To join, just register on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>) (it's free) and look for the group Resource Center for global plant scientists. You'll recognize our header.



Map figure of where the most recent 1500 hits to the IRC have come from.

Coming Next:

Due to user requests, the next contact list will be compiled for cassava. New protocols have been requested, as well as information on basic lab safety, and links to other specific crop info.

As always, we would like your help deciding the next priorities for the IRC. Please visit the website (cards are available in the envelope below) and send feedback on what you think is missing.

Feedback appreciated!! Please send comments, requests, or suggestions to IGDResourceCenter@cornell.edu.



syngenta foundation for sustainable agriculture

<http://irc.igd.cornell.edu>

Much thanks to members of the IGD and Tammy Meeks for support.



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