

## **CSPB/SCBV Carl Douglas Award 2023 Winner Summary**

The 2023 committee for the Carl Douglas Postdoctoral Prize received three applications from Canadian and international research institutes. This year's pool of applicants included very strong plant scientists in diverse research areas. Applications were ranked based on originality of research, productivity of the individual, and participation in teaching and mentoring. Evaluations were based on each candidate's reference letter, curriculum vitae and personal statement. The adjudication committee was composed of Dr. Christian Danve M. Castroverde (Chair, Wilfrid Laurier University), Dr. Mark Minow (Postdoc Rep, University of Georgia), Dr. Mehran Dastmalchi (Ad-hoc, McGill University) and Dr. Lauren Erland (Ad-hoc, University of the Fraser Valley). The committee thanks all applicants, as well as referees for supporting the applications.

The 2023 Carl Douglas Prize recipient is Dr. Devang Mehta. Dr. Mehta received his Bachelor's degree from VIT University (India) before completing his Master's degree from Imperial College London (UK) in 2013 and his Ph.D. degree from ETH Zurich (Switzerland) in 2018. During his doctorate, Dr. Mehta studied extrachromosomal circular DNA (eccDNA) in plants and notably invented a novel method for eccDNA analysis called CIDER-Seq.

During Dr. Mehta's Swiss National Science Foundation-funded postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Alberta working with Dr. Glen Uhrig, he conducted cutting-edge research in plant proteomics. Recently, Dr. Mehta started a tenure-track position at KU Leuven in Belgium by winning a competitive BOF-ZAP (Special Research Fund Professorship) mandate. Dr. Mehta has applied his expertise to understand the global proteomic and phosphoproteomic landscape of plants under nutrient stress. In addition, he took the lead in developing a new quantitative proteomics method called *BoxCarDIA*, which is currently being used to generate the first plant circadian protein atlas. For this work, Dr. Mehta has published several articles in broad-readership and highly respected scientific journals. He has also provided open-source software and code that stem from his sustained research output. Finally, he is a co-inventor for a U.S. Provisional Patent to improve plant productivity based on an NSERC Alliance-funded project.

In addition to his research output, Dr. Mehta has supervised and mentored students in the laboratory. He has also served as a Guest Lecturer for a Plant Biology course at the University of Alberta. Importantly, Dr. Mehta is a driving force within the Elife Early Career Advisory Group and the CSPB EDI Committee to promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the sciences. He also leads the Elife Ambassadors Program and has served as a TEDMED 2020 Research Scholar.

Beyond the academic sector, Dr. Mehta is quite prolific in knowledge mobilization to the external community. He has been featured in widely subscribed outlets like PBS, Vox, Al Jazeera and Sirius XM Radio. Finally, Dr. Mehta is also a strong advocate for responsible science and improving research culture in academia, having written articles on these important topics in journals like Nature and Elife.

The CSPB/SCBV is very pleased to reward the Carl Douglas Prize to Dr. Mehta for his important advances and leadership in plant biology. We are looking forward to hear more about Dr. Mehta's research. Congratulations on this well-deserved prize!