

Oklahoma State University DASNR plant breeder Yanqi Wu receives national honor

STILLWATER, Okla. – The National Association of Plant Breeders has announced that Oklahoma State University’s Yanqi Wu is receiving one of its most prestigious honors: The NAPB 2010 Early Career Award.

“Dr. Wu is extremely deserving of this national award, which officially recognizes an individual in the plant breeding field who has demonstrated exceptional accomplishments in his or her research, teaching and collaboration with others,” said Jodi Scheffler, chair of the NAPB awards committee.

An assistant professor of grass breeding and genetics with the Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, Wu joined the OSU faculty in July 2006.

“Yanqi has been a valued and beneficial presence, helping the division to provide science-based solutions to concerns and issues of Oklahoma’s rural and urban agricultural interests, as well as advancing scientific understanding about plant breeding in general,” said Dave Porter, head of OSU’s department of plant and soil sciences.



Oklahoma State University plant breeder Yanqi Wu (left) and graduate student James Todd examine test plots for desired variety characteristics. (Photo by Todd Johnson)

Wu’s current research is focused on the development of new cultivars, and genetic and genomic research on important agronomic traits in bermudagrass used for turf and forage, as well as switchgrass used for bioenergy.

“Yanqi has secured more than \$4.7 million in research grants, showcasing the importance with which his scientific inquiries are viewed by funding agencies,” Porter said.

Wu’s research is currently funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture; National Science Foundation; U.S. Golf Association; Sun Grant Initiative, South-Central Region; Oklahoma Bioenergy Center; and the statewide Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station system, among others.

His responsibilities also include teaching the graduate-level course, “Plant Breeding Methods,” advising graduate students and postdoctoral scientists and service on state agency committees that have a significant effect on the continued development and enhancement of crops supporting Oklahoma’s multi-billion-dollar agriculture industry.

Wu earned his Bachelor of Science degree in animal science from China’s Ningxia Agricultural College in 1985, his Master of Science degree in forage science from China’s Sichuan Agricultural University in 1988 and his doctoral degree in crop science from OSU in 2004.

He completed his postdoctoral research with the USDA's ARS Plant Science Research Laboratory in Stillwater from 2004 to 2006.

Prior to coming to the United States, Wu served on the faculty at Sichuan Agricultural University, with teaching and research responsibilities in the forage and turfgrass sciences.

Wu is the initial recipient of the NAPB Early Career Award. The NAPB was officially formed in August, when 200 public and private breeders, government representatives and graduate students from across the United States gathered for the 4th Annual Meeting of the Plant Breeding Coordinating Committee in Johnston, Iowa.

“The PBCC provides expertise, leadership and discussion forums on matters affecting U.S. plant breeding, including research, education and relevance to current and future national needs,” Scheffler said.

The PBCC is a national project administered by USDA and the Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors.

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