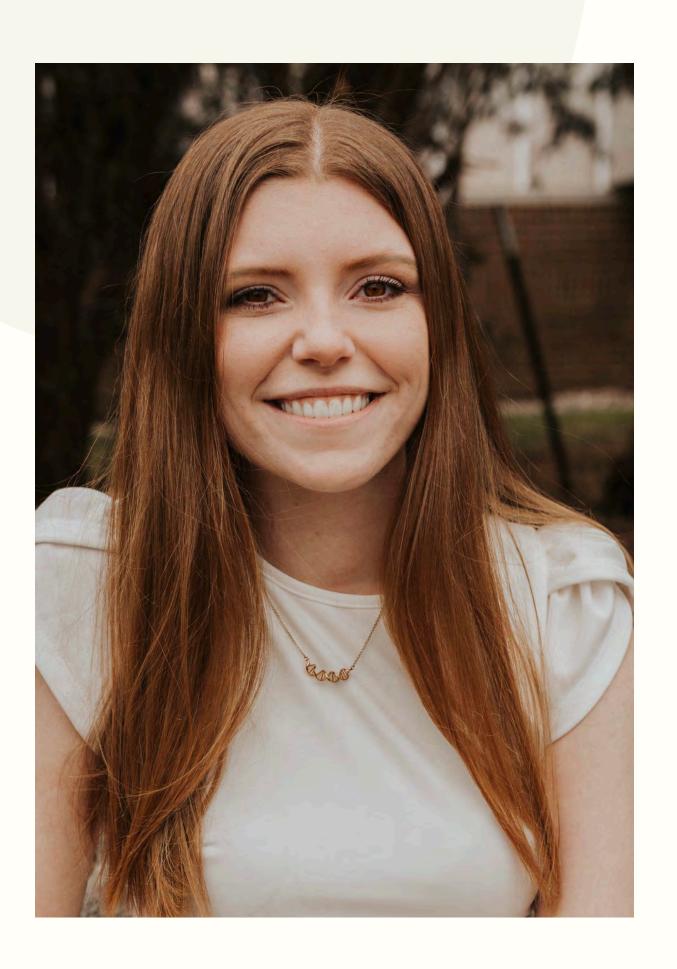# WELCOME TO THE NAPB

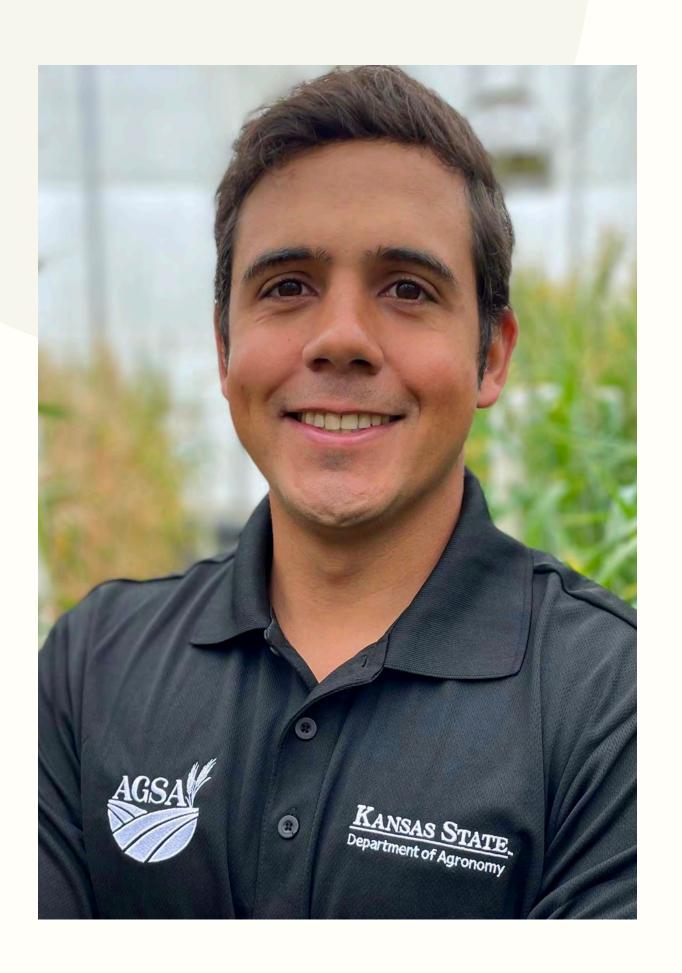*Borlaug Scholars*
2025 cohort

National Association for Plant Breeding

NAPB

Improving Plants to Improve Lives

ASHLEY BARSTOW

Earned a BS in Genomics and Molecular Genetics from MSU and is pursuing an MS in Plant Science at NDSU. Her research focuses on genomic selection in sunflower breeding, building on experiences at NDSU, MSU, and the USDA-ARS. She is also passionate about science communication and professional development.
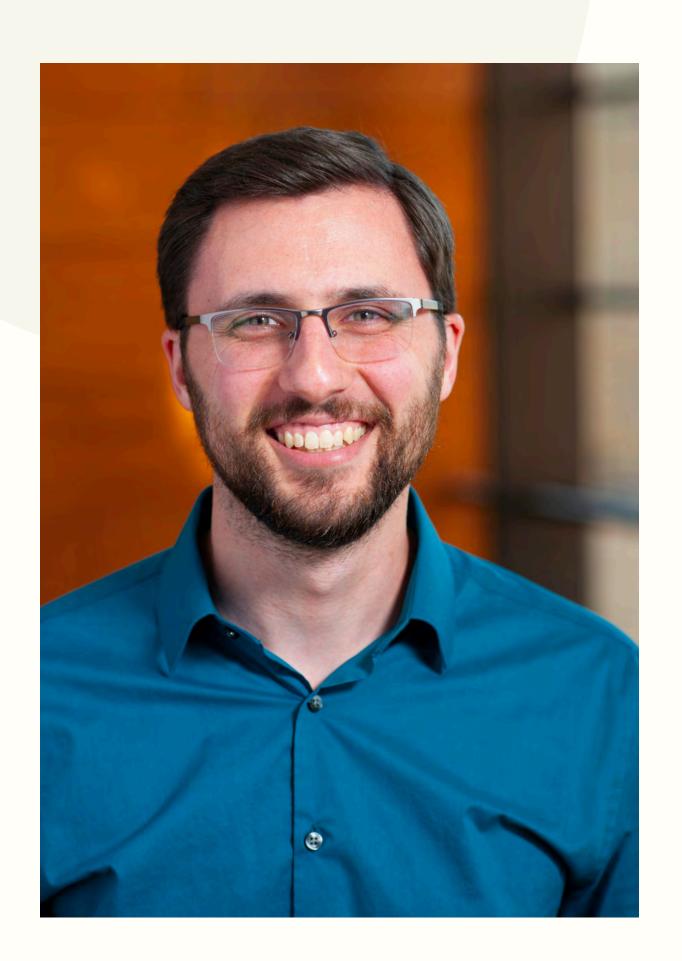
LUCAS BATISTA

Ph.D. student in Quantitative Genetics and Plant Breeding at Kansas State University, with a B.Sc. in Agronomy from Universidade Federal de Lavras and a M.Sc. in Plant Science from NDSU. He has interned at Corteva, Biotrigo Genética, and KWS Cereals. His research focuses on wild wheat introgression, genotype-environment interactions in Kansas wheat, and predictive models for breeding.
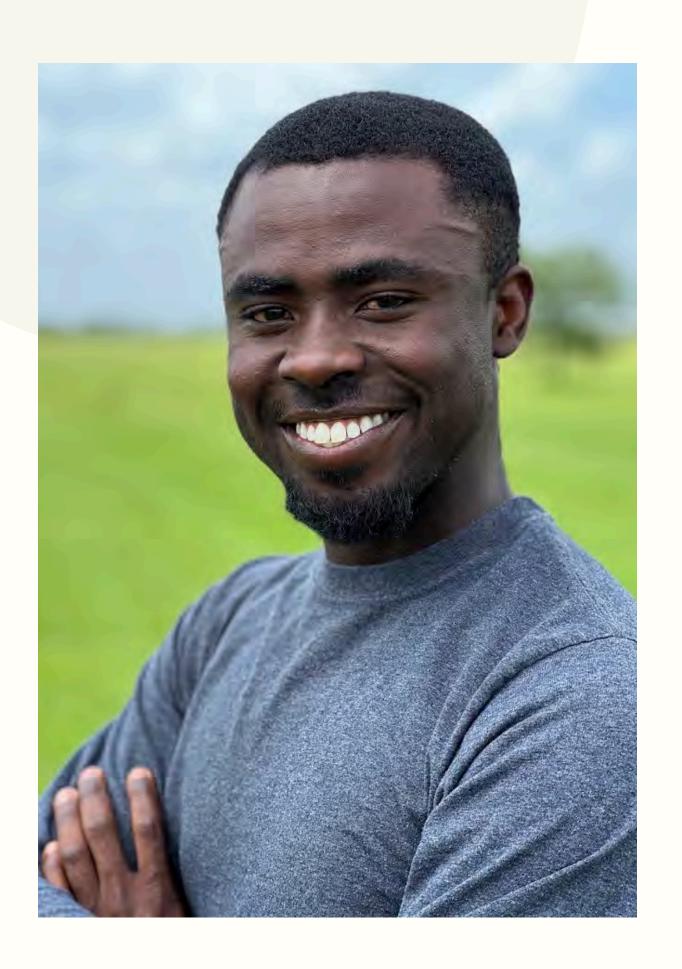
JONATHAN BERLINGERI

PhD candidate at UC Davis, specializing in developing tools for breeding grain legumes and leafy greens with enhanced nutritional quality and stress tolerance. He is actively involved in teaching and service at UC Davis. He earned a B.S. from Cornell University, where he researched anti-nutrient factors in wheat and contributed to Cornell's Nutrient Management Spear Program.

MICHAEL BURNS

Ph.D. candidate at the University of Minnesota, is developing machine learning tools for food-grade maize breeding. He's also founded programs like Phytograd Lunch and Learn and the Community Plant Breeding Team, which connect students with the university and local immigrant communities. After graduation, he plans to help plant breeders implement innovative trait evaluation technologies.
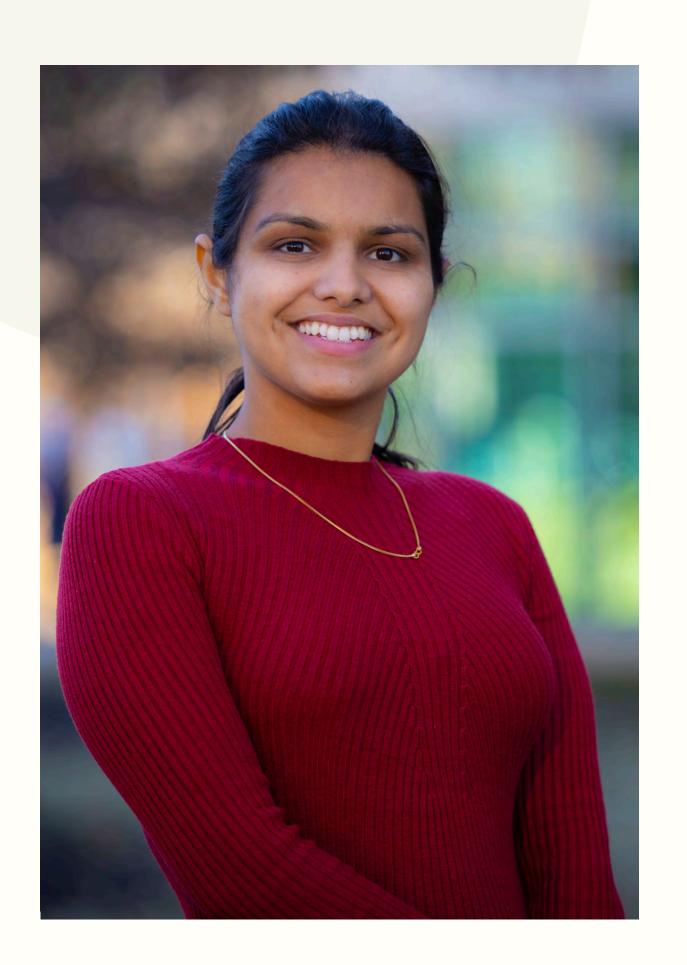
SAMUEL IPINYOMI

Samuel Ipinyomi, a Ph.D. candidate in Plant Breeding at the University of Florida, researches genetic resistance to Fusarium wilt in tomatoes. He chairs the African Plant Science Symposium, mentors African students in STEM, and volunteers as a guitarist for local worship services in Florida.

ANN FRANCES JARRELL

PhD student at the University of Georgia, focusing on russeting and genomic resources for diploid potato breeding. She holds a B.S. in Biology from UNC and discovered her passion for plant science through an REU internship. She has also led fundraising efforts and volunteered for science outreach, aiming to develop sustainable crop varieties.

SEHIJPREET KAUR

PhD student at the University of Florida specializing in plant breeding and quantitative genetics. Her research focuses on using genomic models and AI to improve strawberry breeding. She holds a B.S. from Punjab Agricultural University and an M.S. from the University of Florida and is the Social Media Editor for The Plant Phenome Journal.
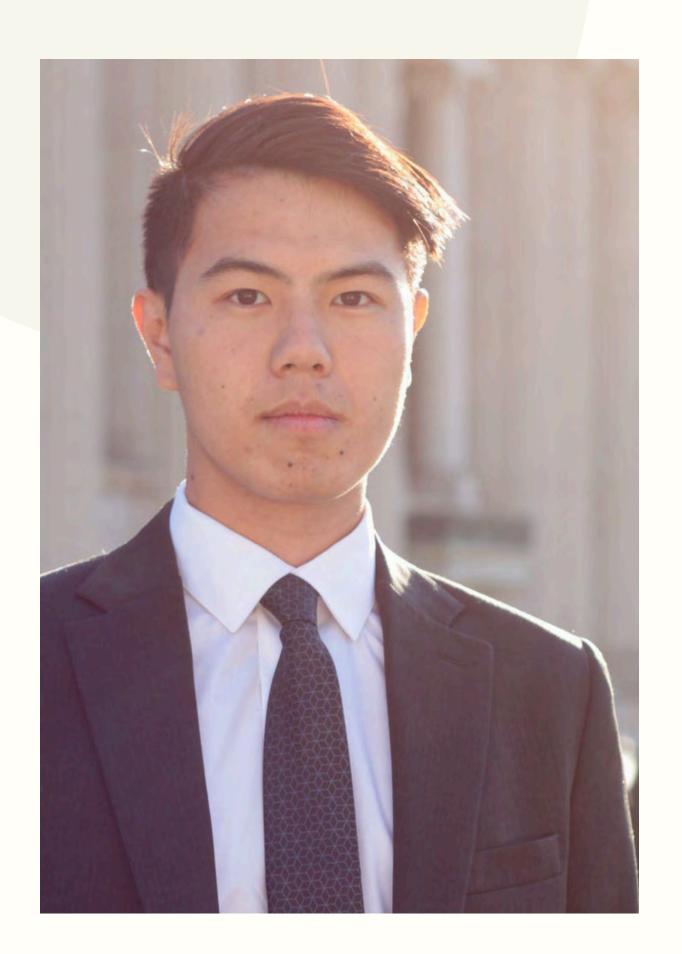
CREE KING

Second-year Master's student at UC Davis specializing in alfalfa plant breeding and genetics. Her research focuses on identifying genetic markers for traits that improve yield, survival in low-input systems, and drought resilience in California's rainfed rangelands. She also mentors undergraduates and organizes the Plant Sciences Symposium.

PRABESH KOIRALA

A MSc student at Lincoln University of Missouri, pursuing a degree in Sustainable Agriculture. His research focuses on carbon sequestration by industrial hemp. He holds an M.S. in Agriculture from Agriculture and Forestry University, Nepal. As a 2025 NAPB Borlaug Scholar, he aims to expand his expertise in crop breeding and sustainability.

FORREST LI

A 4th-year graduate student at UC Davis, studying genetic variation in germplasm collections for climate-adaptive breeding. Using CIMMYT maize data he studies landscape genomics and maize gene flow. Outside research, he leads a middle school STEM outreach program and enjoys hiking and woodworking. Forrest has. BSc in bioengineering at UC Berkeley and worked on sorghum and sugarcane genomics at CSHL.

RAFAEL MARMO

A second-year M.S. student at the University of Arkansas. He earned a B.S. in Agronomy from the Federal University of Lavras, Brazil. His research focuses on soybean grain yield stability across environments, identifying genomic regions linked to stability, and developing genomic prediction models to enhance breeding efficiency. He is involved in various graduate student groups at UARK.

KARTIKA NALLE

Graduate student at UC Davis, researching non-dormant alfalfa germplasm. Earned her bachelor's from Nusa Cendana University, where she focused on smallholder farming in Indonesia. With eight years of experience leading organic farming workshops at P4S Karya Agri, her work has gained recognition from the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture and TVRI. She also founded an organic farm business, mentoring interns and advocating for local germplasm preservation.
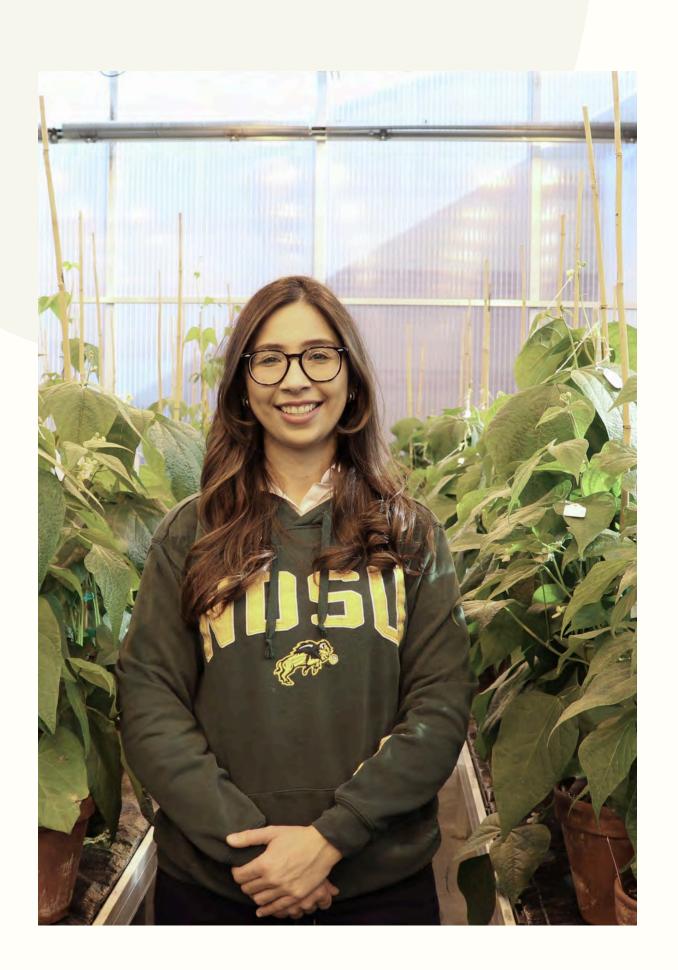
KARLENE NEGUS

Fourth-year Ph.D. student at Iowa State University, researching AI for genomic selection in maize and image-based phenotyping. She holds a B.S. in Animal Science and an M.S. in Plant Science from Missouri State University. Karlene has mentored high school students and held leadership roles in student organizations.

MATTHEW NORMAN

A fourth-year PLSC student at Cornell University. His thesis focus on early maturing pigeon pea varieties in Malawi. He holds leadership roles as Co-President of the Translator Interpreter Program and Chair of the CALS Ambassadors Program. He plans to pursue a Ph.D. focusing on statistics and participatory breeding to support smallholder farmers.

MARIA DE OLIVEIRA

She discovered her passion for plant breeding in 2012 at a corn breeding research station. After earning a master's in soybean breeding, she is now completing a Ph.D. in dry bean breeding at NDSU, using drones and robots for phenotyping. She is also involved in the NAPB Graduate Student Working Group and is honored to be a Borlaug Scholar as she nears the end of her degree.

KUSHBOO RASTOGI

Ph.D. candidate at Texas A&M University, specializing in rice genome editing and stress tolerance. She holds an M.Sc. from Seoul National University and a B.Tech. from Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. Khushboo has held leadership roles, organized workshops, and won multiple awards. She is passionate about sustainable agriculture and enjoys plant propagation.

INES REBOLLO

Ph.D. candidate at the University of Minnesota, specializing in quantitative genetics for plant breeding. She focuses on genomewide prediction in maize and has experience modeling genotype-by-environment interactions for rice. Inés co-leads the Community Plant Breeding Team and is involved in committees to advance crop improvement and sustainability.

LOVEPREET SINGH

PhD student in soybean breeding at the University of Minnesota, focusing on genomics-assisted breeding. He is part of the SOYGEN project and holds a B.S. from Punjab Agricultural University and an M.S. from Mississippi State University. He leads student groups, as Vice-Chair for the NAPB Graduate Student Working Group, and is passionate about science communication and crop improvement.

TAJINDER SINGH

Undergraduate at Mississippi State University studying Microbiology and Agricultural Systems with a Computational Biology certificate. Interned at HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology, contributing to Hemp breeding and peanut sequencing. Community leader and mentor. Finishing degree in Fall 2025 and will pursue a PhD in plant breeding, genomics, and plant-microbe interactions.

HARMEET SINGH

Ph.D. candidate at the University of Missouri's Fisher Delta Research Center, focused on improving soybean yield and stress resilience. He holds a BSc in Agriculture and an MSc in Plant Breeding & Genetics. Harmeet is involved in outreach and serves as Secretary of the GWC scholars program and editor for Crops & Soils Magazine. His goal is to develop climate-resilient crops and support farmers.
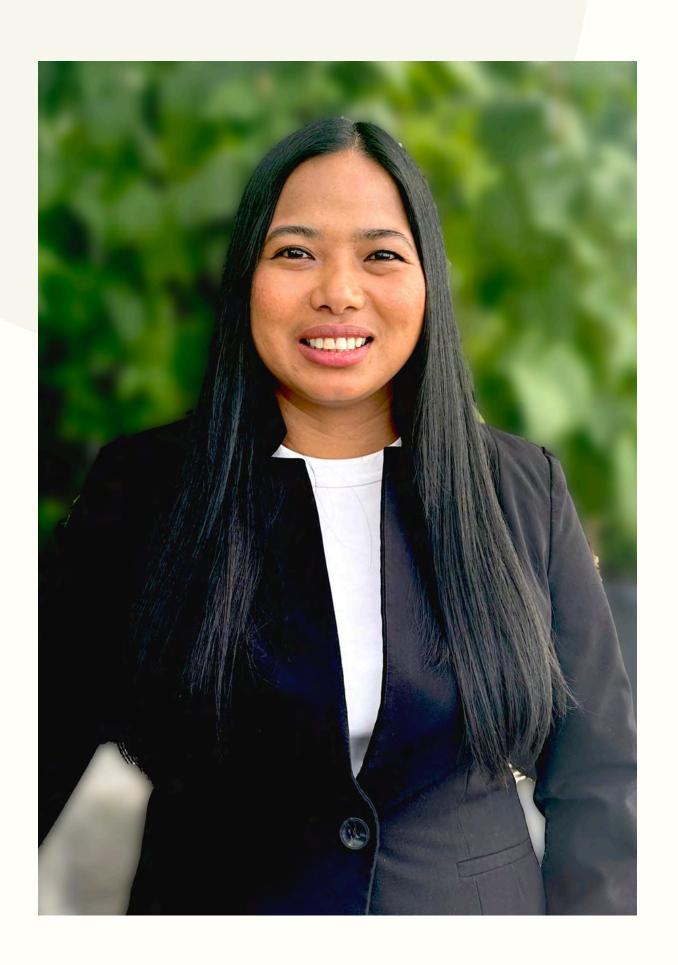
GURMINDER SINGH

Ph.D. candidate at North Dakota State University, studying wheat resistance to tan spot disease. He works in the Wheat Molecular Genetics Lab at USDA-ARS and previously earned an M.S. in Plant Pathology. Gurminder leads gene editing discussions in the PlantGENE Canopies Program and organizes workshops to foster collaboration in plant breeding.

LANDON TROUT

Undergrad senior at Kansas State University major in Agronomy with a focus on Plant Science and Biotechnology. He will pursue an M.S. at K-State on wheat leaf rust resistance. Leadership experience includes the Wheat State Agronomy Club and KSU national crops team. He aims to lead his own breeding program.

GRACE VINARAO

PhD student in Plant Sciences at the University of Wyoming, researching field pea yield stability and prairie junegrass genetics. She previously worked on crop improvement at the University of the Philippines Los Baños and aims to develop climate-smart crops for smallholder farmers.

HABIB WIDYAWAN

Fulbright Ph.D. candidate at the University of Georgia. His research involves mapping resistance loci and developing molecular markers for breeding. He taught plant breeding at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Indonesia and was recognized for breeding Euphorbia francoisii. He has held leadership roles at UGA and plans to return to Indonesia to establish a breeding program at UGM after his Ph.D.

SEE YOU ALL IN HAWAII

National Association for Plant Breeding

NAPB
Improving Plants to Improve Lives

2025

May 19-23, 2025
Big Island
Kona, Hawaii
Outrigger Resort