

2025



   @39northSTL

# THE PLANT SCIENCE FAMILY REUNION

*Growing the future, together.*



August 21



Missouri Botanical Garden

8:00 – 9:00

Registration & Networking

9:00 – 9:10



Dr. Rishi Masalia  
39 North

Welcome

9:10 – 9:30



Emily Lohse-Busch  
39 North

We'll kick off the Family Reunion by sharing why St. Louis is THE place for agtech and plant science innovation.

Rediscover St. Louis.

9:30 – 9:45



Matt Homann  
Filament

Discover how great science grows faster when individuals and organizations think beyond their silos.

Connect across boundaries.

9:45 – 9:55

Job Seeker Talk

9:55 – 10:05

Job Seeker Talk

10:05 – 10:25

Networking

10:25 – 10:50



Dr. Nigel Taylor  
DDPSC

See how virus-resistant cassava is moving from Danforth labs to African farms through global partnerships.

Local collaborations with global impact.



<p>10:50 – 11:15</p>		<p><i>Dr. Tessa Burch-Smith, DDPSC</i></p>	<p>Learn how advanced microscopy can diagnose viral infections in plants, tracking movement through plasmodesmata - tiny cell channels.</p> <p>Rethink how we use scientific tools.</p>
<p>11:15 – 11:40</p>		<p><i>Dr. Abby Stylianou SLU</i></p>	<p>AI is making waves in agriculture, but not every tool fits every problem. Explore case-studies and why thoughtful, context-driven AI matters.</p> <p>Choose tech with purpose.</p>
<p>11:40 – 12:05</p>		<p><i>Dr. Lúcia Lohmann Missouri Botanical Garden</i></p>	<p>From conservation to herbarium digitization, Learn how MoBot builds upon deep botanical roots to safeguard biodiversity &amp; empower scientists.</p> <p>Shaping tomorrow's nature city.</p>
<p>12:05 – 1:10</p>	<p><i>Lunch &amp; Resource Fair</i></p>		<p>Network and learn about the many scientific and civic resources that exist across St. Louis</p>
<p>1:10 – 1:20 <i>Job Seeker Talk</i></p>			
<p>1:20 – 1:45</p>		<p><i>Dr. Stephanie Gamez &amp; Matt Helms Agragene</i></p>	<p>Learn how to turn a science idea into a testable, minimum viable product.</p> <p>Spot what's worth scaling.</p>
<p>1:45 – 2:10</p>		<p><i>Jim Hedges CoverCress</i></p>	<p>Discover how to set a vision, scale your product, engage customers, and turn a prototype into a business.</p> <p>Commercialize with purpose.</p>
<p>2:10 – 2:35</p>		<p><i>Tania Seger Plastomics</i></p>	<p>Understand funding ladders and how to strategically raise capital across the lifecycle of a science-based company.</p> <p>Without funding, nothing scales.</p>
<p>2:35 – 3:00</p>		<p><i>Nick Reinke HabiTerre</i></p>	<p>Explore how to build in an emerging market—where the rules are unclear, demand is forming, and execution may matter more than perfection.</p> <p>Don't let perfect be the enemy of good.</p>
<p>3:00 – 3:20</p>	<p><i>Networking</i></p>		

3:20 – 3:30

*Job Seeker Talk*

3:30 – 3:40

*Job Seeker Talk*

3:40 – 4:05



*Dr. Miguel Vega-Sanchez,  
Bayer*

Explore how global regulatory strategy, science advocacy, and stakeholder alignment shape what innovations make it to market.

It's more than science, it's a license to operate.

4:05 – 4:30



*Dr. Michaela McGinn  
United Soybean Board*

Getting tech to the field isn't just about data—it's about trust. Learn how relationships, timing, and communication drive farmer adoption.

Just because you built it doesn't mean they'll come.

4:30 – 4:55



*Dr. Sydney Scott,  
WashU*

Unpack how moral beliefs shape consumer attitudes towards innovation in food systems, especially GMOs.

Learn how you can help shift opinions.

4:55 – 5:00

*Closing Remarks*

5:00 – 7:00

*Networking Happy Hour*