SESSION 5
Environmental Biotechnology

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Environmental biotechnology was introduced as part of a session during the Twelfth Symposium held in Gatlinburg, Tennessee (1990). In 1992, interest in the environmental area had grown to such an extent that it warranted a separate session at the Symposium; it has been an integrated part of the Symposium ever since. The Environmental Biotechnology Session at the Seventeenth Symposium consisted of 7 oral presentations and 29 poster presentations. Topics of the oral presentations ranged from reactor engineering in biodegradation to micronutrient effects and bioavailability. Results from remediation of such challenging compounds as chlorinated organics (polychlorinated biphenyls) and hydrocarbons or glycols were presented, just to mention a few.

The poster session was well attended and many interesting topics were displayed. Treatments of streams containing heavy metals, chlorinated organics, volatile organics, or sulfur compounds were hot topics, and the researchers' presentations proved that nothing can prevent ingenuity and the power of biotechnology. Although the environmental biotechnology area is still growing, it has reached a new level of maturity in the sense that results from large-scale demonstrations are now often included in presentations rather than those from laboratory scale.

As you read the published papers, you will find that the quality of work is high and that environmental technology is an active topic that crosses multiple disciplines and international borders.