

Phytochemical Society of Europe Silver Medal Laureate 2007 Prof. Robert Verpoorte (Leiden, the Netherlands)

Professor Rob Verpoorte is head of the Division of Pharmacognosy, Section Metabolomics, at Leiden University, where he has held a professorial position since 1987. He holds a Pharmacy degree and PhD on pharmacologically active compounds from *Strychnos* species from Leiden University. He has been a guest professor in London, Uppsala, Amiens and Reims, and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Amiens in 2004.

He has published more than 550 scientific papers covering a breadth of topics including ethnopharmacology, plant cell biotechnology, methodology of natural product isolation and analysis, biosynthesis of secondary metabolites with a special emphasis on enzymology, the metabolic engineering of plant secondary metabolism, and the use of metabolomics as a tool to determine gene function, for dereplication in the context of lead discovery and in the quality control of medicinal botanical preparations.

He has written three books and has made four patent applications. He is member of the Editorial advisory board of 20 international scientific journals and has senior editorial responsibilities for four journals including the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*. His scientific reputation is also reflected in the frequency with which he is invited to present keynote lectures at international meetings on phytochemistry.

The award of the Society medal reflects “outstanding contribution to the Society or to furtherance of plant science in general”. Rob Verpoorte more than adequately fulfils both criteria. In terms of his contribution to the Society, Rob has been a past Vice-Chairman and Chairman (1992–1998) and has organised and hosted meetings for the Society. He has made a special contribution in setting up the journal *Phytochemical Reviews*, the organ for publication of proceedings of most of the PSE symposia, and of which he remains Editor-in-Chief.

With respect to his “furtherance of plant science”, the breadth and vision of Rob’s scientific research and his consistently high output of original papers is testament to his enthusiasm for the broad discipline of phytochemistry.

But in addition, and complementing both his contributions to the PSE and to the field of phytochemistry, there is his drive and ability to inspire and motivate young scientists.

He has coorganised courses in many international locations including Thailand, Indonesia, and various South and Central American countries. Until now, 42 PhD students have gained their qualifications under his guidance. Quite apart from this impressive record as a mentor and supervisor to students from many parts of the world, he, together with Professor Willi Alfermann, initiated and coorganised the first Young Scientist Meeting of the Society at Rolduc in the Netherlands. These meetings proved so popular that they quickly became an annual feature of the PSE’s conference programme and, with the help of regional representatives and the continuing support of Rob Verpoorte and Professor Alfermann, the initiative is now moving around Europe in order to allow a wider international participation from young scientists who are just starting out in their careers in phytochemistry.

Thus, in recognition of his outstanding contribution, it is with very great pleasure that Professor Rob Verpoorte is awarded the Silver Medal by the Phytochemical Society of Europe.

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Prof. Rob Verpoorte is presented with his silver medal by Angela Stafford