Soil is Art Exhibition, Symposium

Since the earliest cave paintings, humans have been using soil-derived pigments to communicate with each other. Today, we have many tools for soil communication, including using soil as a basis for art. The modern soil-based art movement has been contributing towards raising the public awareness of soil—to help expand understanding that soil is not only beautiful, but a critical natural resource as important to our quality of life as clean air and clean water (Toland et al., 2019; Ozlu and Arriaga, 2019).

As scientists, we understand the importance of the soil resource as well as its endangered status. The challenge lies in creatively communicating to the public why and how this natural resource is essential for human survival (McBratney et al., 2019).

Great strides have been made in these communication efforts, which can be seen in the growing soil health movement, the widening interest in safe food sources, and in the expanding social media coverage and interest in soil.

This year at our Annual Meeting in San Antonio, we will be highlighting soil art for its aesthetic appeal as well as its potential as a communication method. The meeting will feature an art show in the exhibit hall that will showcase paintings, pottery, sculpture, and other works created from soil as well as a soil art symposium session.

There will be an opening reception 10 November at 7 pm immediately following the keynote address, and the exhibit will remain open until the end of the meeting.

The symposium will take place on 11 November from 2 to 4 pm and will feature speakers discussing soil-based art, soil art as a communication tool, and the history of soil art.

We invite you to come to the symposium and the exhibit to learn more and join the conversation about how we can use soil art and creative communication to build a better future for us all.

References

Unique Multi-Community Symposium on Environmental Quality

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to attend a session at the Annual Meeting that covered the breadth of topic areas linked by a common ASA section? Are you interested in a session that addresses questions like these: How can we move beyond carbon-negative farming? Is biochar all it’s cracked up to be? How can we sustainably intensify agriculture to meet the world’s growing food demand while sustaining our natural resource base? These topics and more will capture the attention of those who attend the ASA Environmental Quality (EQ) Section’s second “Megaposition—Crosscutting Issues in Environmental Quality” on Monday morning from 7:55 am to noon.

The purpose of the joint symposium, or “megaposition,” is to minimize “symposium fatigue” by the number of symposia within the EQ Section at the meeting, maintain the elevated status of symposia compared with regular oral sessions, provide communities within the EQ Section the opportunity to reach a wider audience highlighting pertinent issues within their topic areas, and foster interdisciplinary collaborations. Each of the seven communities within the EQ Section nominated a distinguished speaker to discuss pertinent issues within that community’s topic area within the overarching theme of the Annual Meeting, “Embracing the Digital Environment.”

continued on page 34
course and athletic fields provide part-time employment and learning/research experiences for students. In the past, the breeding program has released 4 patented bermudagrass cultivars, 2 St. Augustinegrass cultivars, and heat tolerant and brown patch resistant bentgrass germplasm. The successful candidate will use both traditional and advanced methods for improving quality traits of turfgrasses and will conduct a broad range of cooperative, industry focused, field and laboratory research projects in support of the turfgrass industry in Mississippi and beyond. Responsibilities may also include the development and teaching of courses in turfgrass management, turf evaluation, and plant breeding, as well as advising undergraduate and graduate students. **Minimum qualifications** include an earned Ph.D. in horticulture, agronomy, plant science/ecology, or related discipline with demonstrated specialization in turfgrass science/turfgrass breeding. Postdoctoral work in turfgrass science; expertise in field research related to turfgrass management/production systems; demonstrated ability to attract outside funding; excellent interpersonal, oral, and written communication skills; and an aptitude for working with industry clientele are desired. Individuals who are ABD will be considered. **TO APPLY:** visit www.jobs.msstate.edu, and search 498167. MSU is an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, ethnicity, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, disability status, age, sexual orientation, genetic information, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. We always welcome nominations and applications from women, members of any minority group, and others who share our passion for building a diverse community that reflects the diversity in our student population.

---

**Out of This World Soil and Crop Science Tour**

Because a trip to Mars would be a bit far from Texas, we have arranged for the next best thing. Tour the NASA facilities in Houston and discuss the relevance of soil and crop science to space exploration. This trip will depart from San Antonio on Wednesday, 13 November at 6:00 pm and will end at the Houston International Airport at 5:00 pm on Thursday, 14 November with participants staying in Houston on Wednesday night.

The morning of 14 November will include a private, behind-the-scenes tour of the Johnson Space Center—the communication and research hub for NASA in Houston—with NASA Scientists Dan Barta and Don Henninger, who will present on microgravity plant growth experiments and bioregenerative life support testing (plants, bioreactors, etc.). See several of the chambers where they did human testing of bioregenerative life support systems and spacesuits that are in development for the lunar and Mars explorations; tour the Historic Apollo Mission Control Room and International Space Station (ISS) Control Room (where you can watch current ISS operations); enter the ISS spacecraft mockup; and explore Rocket Park. The afternoon will be spent on your own exploring Space Center Houston, which is home to a spacecraft exhibit, a space suit exhibit, the original shuttle carrier, a shuttle replica, and much more. See https://bit.ly/30zAeXn.

Interested in this topic? You may also enjoy attending the symposium, “Astropedology and Space Exploration: Synergies between Planetary and Soil Sciences Oral,” on Tuesday, 12 November from 1:30 pm to 3:45 (see https://bit.ly/30zpF6V).