

SBS Newsletter



TWO SBS EMINENT PROFESSORS HONOURED

The School of Biological Sciences is once again privileged to have the contracts renewed of its two renowned Professors (Prof. John O. Kokwaro and Prof. Canute P. M. Khamala).

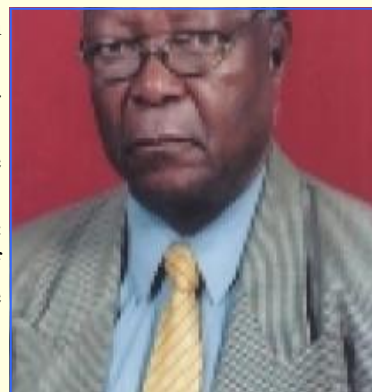


Prof. Kokwaro was born in Gem, Siaya District in 1940. After his early education in Kisumu and Bungoma Missionary College in Uganda, he joined Addis Ababa University where he studied for B.Sc. degree in Agriculture. He was awarded a Swedish Government postgraduate scholarship in 1966 and joined the University of Uppsala where he undertook research projects in systematic botany for both his M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees. He returned to Kenya briefly in 1968 for his field work, and joined the teaching staff of the Department of Botany at the University of Nairobi. He is a member of many national and international scientific organizations, including being Life Member and former Chairman of the East African Natural History Society (founded 1909), Fellow of the Linnean Society of London (F.L.S.) Fellow, African Academy of Sciences since 1995, Executive Director of AAS (1994 - 1996).

Prof. Kokwaro's research interest is on systematic and economic botany, particularly on East Africa plants. He has to date published over 70 publications including seven internationally recognized and read books. Included among his books are four on the Flora of Tropical East Africa, Classification of East Africa Crops and the world famous Medical Plants of East Africa. The use of different *Maytenus* species in traditional medicine as a cure for leukemia and other types of cancer in Kenya was first reported by Kokwaro in one of his books. Maytansine, a cancer drug was later isolated from the same plants in the United States.

Prof. John Kokwaro is an eminent Professor of Botany and a research specialist on herbal remedies at the University of Nairobi since August 1968. He is the first Kenyan to be awarded a D.Sc degree by the University of Nairobi (2008). Thesis title "Systematics and ethnobotany of selected taxa and ecosystems of East Africa".

Prof. Khamala was born in Bunayala Location, Kakamega District in 1938. He attended St Peters, Mumias and St. Mary's Yala, before proceeding to Makerere University College for his 'A' level equivalents. He attended the University of Liverpool in the United Kingdom, where he was awarded a B.Sc. degree in Botany and Zoology in 1965. He returned home and joined the Department of Zoology of the Nairobi University College as Research Assistant in 1966. He was awarded a Ph.D. degree in systematic Entomology in 1968 by the University of East Africa. He joined the staff of the Department of Zoology of the Nairobi University College (1966) where he was successively a Research Assistant, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and currently full Professor of Zoology. Besides his career, he was the Secretary of the Kenya National Academy of Sciences.



He devoted much of his professional career, at first, to the study of Insect Vectors of Diseases including Culicoides and mosquitoes and later. To Insect Pests of Cereal Crops, Grain Legumes and Vegetables. He has published about 35 scientific articles and books related to Pest and Vector Control, Insect Taxonomy and Pest Management.

Youth Encounter on Sustainability (YES) Course in Japan

Introduction

Samuel Muoria Ng'ang'a, a fourth year B.Sc., Microbiology and Biotechnology undergraduate student and the current chairman of Biological Association of Nairobi University Students (BANUS) was among the students who were selected to participate at the YES course in Japan from March 22nd to April 8th 2013.



This was an 18 days intensive course operated by ACTIS, a Spin-off organisation of ETH Zürich, in cooperation with UNEP, HOSEI University / Tokyo, and the Alliance for Global Sustainability (AGS) – an environmental research partnership between the ETH Zürich, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), the University of Tokyo (UT) and the Chalmers Technical University in Göteborg /Sweden.

The 2013 Japan YES course was set for only 26 well selected students at the time from different parts of the world and different fields of study. Living together at Hosei University, Tama campus, Japan, the students were guided by an international team of Faculty and facilitators of the member universities, and offered lectures, workshops, and field experiences, as well as the opportunity to work together as a team on solutions and action plans, globally and for their own region in a multi-disciplinary approach.

Through YES Alumni Network, Samuel is currently developing strategies for sustainable water, energy & waste resource management systems in University of Nairobi. He is also working on Innovative solutions to hunger, food insecurity, and unsustainable agriculture in the country

My view is that sustainability should be introduced in the country (Kenya) early enough as part of education curriculum for sustainable future generations.

Samuel would like encourage young undergraduate students to apply for such training programmes since they provide unforgettable life experiences such as international network and development of new professional opportunities, values and views on emerging topics like Climate Change and Sustainability.

For any additional information on YES please consult web-page: www.actis-education.ch

PHD PROPOSAL PRESENTATIONS

TITLE: Molecular Epidemiology of Echinococcus and Taenia Species in Dogs from Cystic Echinococcosis Endemic Areas in Kenya

CANDIDATE: Mr. Erastus Mulinge

DATE: Thursday, May 23, 2013

TITLE: Study of the defensive mechanisms of *Apis mellifera* against pests and analysis of honeybee collected pollen in Cameroon

PRESENTER: David Tembong Cham

DATE: Thursday, May 02, 2013

TITLE: Evaluation of Lambdacyhalothrin incorporated into 1,4-Dichlorobenzene for the control of insect vectors of malaria and Leishmaniasis

PRESENTER: Kaburi Josyline Cirindi

DATE: Thursday, May 02, 2013

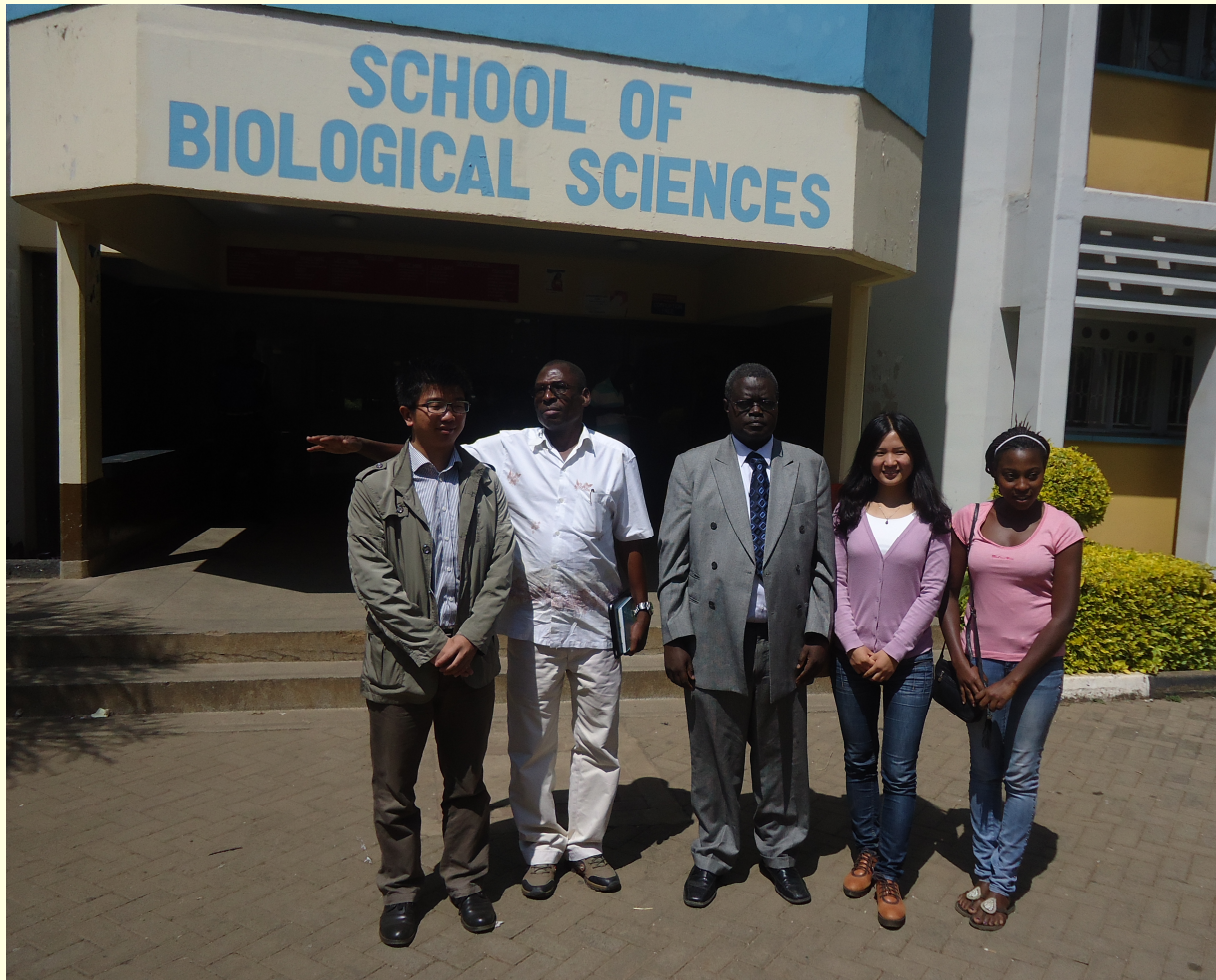
TITLE: Semiochemicals Mediating Attraction In The Coconut Coreid Bug *Pseudotheraptus Wayi* Brown 1955

PRESENTER: Egonyu James Peter

DATE: Wednesday, 10th April, 2013



Postgraduate Students setting Ngu Tsetse trap in Kiboko during a field trip



VISIT BY CHINESE SCHOLARS

The School of Biological Sciences through Prof. Jenesio I. Kinyamario will once again be privileged to host visiting Chinese Scholars: Mr. Haixing Meng, Ms. Cidy Cao, and Ms. Zidi Wang from UNEP and Tongji University, China on **Saturday June 08, 2013 from 10:00am to 12:00pm**. The purpose of the visitation is to establish and evaluate existing research facilities in the School for possible future cooperation on but not limited to the Environmental and Biological studies among other mutual beneficial activities. The team from the School of Biological Sciences will be led by Director, Dr. Elijah Akunda.

Tree Planting, April, 2013



On 5th April 2013, students and staff of the School of Biological Sciences participated in a tree planting event at the college. The event was significant because other participants included distinguished Japanese Professors, scientists and volunteers as well as involvement of the Mitsubishi Corporation which was represented by the General Manager - Kenya, Mr. Masatoshi Wada. This was the second such tree planting in the college where a new technique was used, 'the **Miyawaki Method**' - the first having taken place around the same time last year. The Miyawaki method has been used extensively in Japan and worldwide to restore degraded forests and has proved one of the fastest way to ensure fast vegetation growth due to use of two ecological principles. First, when plants are grown at high density, they compete for resources that are important for their growth. Some of the key factors that they compete for are light, nutrients, water and space. Since plants must use light energy to photosynthesize and manufacture their own food, then light competition results to the plants all having enhanced growth to capture sunlight since those that are left behind and cannot tolerate shading by the others would get eliminated naturally. Thus by planting the trees at a high density, this competition for light is brought about resulting to higher than normal vertical growth.

SBS MICROBIOLOGY & BIOTECHNOLOGY STUDENTS' VISIT TO ILRI.



ILRI Campus, Nairobi-Kenya

A group of Nairobi University Microbiology & Biotechnology Students Association (NUMSA) members with their patron Dr. LILIAN WAMBUA far left on the front line, at International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) for an academic visit on 12th April 2013.

The students successfully visited the levels 1,2 & 3 laboratories, they met most of the research scientist, research assistants, research fellows, laboratory technicians and interns. They additionally visited CGIAR, BecA ILRI hub and other biosciences facilities. They were in details taught and informed on the scientific occurrences within the labs. The day

was a great success and the club would like to encourage the school of biological sciences to support such trips in future.

The club appreciates both the SBS and ILRI management for making the educational visit a success.

NUMSA ATTENDS THE 3RD KEMRI ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC HEALTH CONFERENCE

KEMRI annual scientific health conference(KASH) was launched in 2010 with the mission to: mainstream the scientific and health agenda of KEMRI. The conference is open to research scientists, health professionals and diploma, graduate and post graduate students undertaking scientific and health related courses. And NUMSA was invited by the organizing committee chaired by Dr. Jennifer Orwa and Dr. Matilu Mwau. Dr. Orwa is the director at the Center for Traditional Medicine (KEMRI Nairobi) and Dr. Matilu is the director at the Center for Infectious Tropical Diseases in (KEMRI – Busia).

The objectives for attending KASH conference;

- o To disseminate research findings
- o To strengthen research partnerships and relationships with other stakeholders

Capacity development for enhanced information sharing and continuous professional development.

NUMSA managed to get 51 students among amongst them, 5 masters student from SBS and CE-BIB , 14 fourth years, 16 third years , 11 second years and 5 first years respectively. Most of the participants were undergraduate students undertaking Bsc Microbiology and Biotechnology. The opening ceremony on wed 6th feb 2013 for the KEMRI annual scientific health conference (KASH) was presided by The ambassador of Japan to Kenya His Excellency Toshihisa Takata, The key note speaker prof Stephen Kinoti, The chairperson of KEMRI board of management Prof Ruth Nduati and The Director KEMRI Dr. Solomon Mpoke. Both were excited by the consistency of undergraduate students especially NUMSA with dominance in numbers



School of Biological Sciences
Off Riverside Drive
P.O. Box 30197, GPO 00100,
NAIROBI, KENYA.
Tel: +254204442316
Telegrams: VARSITY NAIROBI
Telex:22095 KE
Telefax: +25424445763
E-mail: sbs-director@uonbi.ac.ke
Website: www.uonbi.ac.ke