

Dilantha Fernando - Bio



Dr. Dilantha Fernando holds dual positions: Dean of Studies at St. Paul's College at the University of Manitoba and a full professor and plant pathologist in the Department of Plant Science at the University of Manitoba. Dilantha is named in the top 2% of researchers worldwide for career impact by Stanford University rankings (out of 8 million researchers). Dilantha is an internationally renowned host-pathogen interaction (canola-blackleg, canola-*Verticillium*, canola-*Sclerotinia*, wheat-fusarium head blight, wheat-bacterial leaf streak (BLS), barley-FHB, and barley-BLS) researcher (11,082 citations; 56 H-Index; 168 i-10-Index; and 222 peer-reviewed publications). Prof. Fernando's core research area is sustainable agricultural systems and climate resilience through environmentally friendly disease management practices, including resistance breeding with genetic traits, understanding R-gene/avirulence gene interactions, biological control, microbiomes, AI, and PGPR research. Dilantha studies host-pathogen interactions at the field and molecular levels using traditional and advanced (omics) methods. Dilantha has been associated with identifying R-genes in canola in Canada, introducing a new disease management strategy in Canada. Dilantha has trained 16 PhD and 17 Master's students who have graduated and found excellent employment in academia, industry, and government research institutions. Dilantha is a frequent keynote and plenary speaker at conferences and grower meetings, and sits on several boards, both nationally and internationally. In 2024, Dilantha was named a Fellow of the Canadian Phytopathological Society (CPS) and received the Lifetime Research Excellence Award from the Asian PGPR Society. In 2023, Dilantha received the highest honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Agricultural and Environmental Sustainability. In 2022, Dilantha was named a Fellow of the Asian PGPR Society. In 2021, Dilantha received the Merit Award for Excellence in Research and Service from the University of Manitoba. In 2020, Dilantha received the highest award for research excellence, the 2020 CPS Outstanding Research Scientist Award. In 2019, Dilantha was named a Fellow of the American Phytopathological Society (APS), USA. Also, in 2019, Dilantha received the highest award for excellence in research on plant growth-promoting rhizobacteria (PGPR). Dilantha is the founding editor-in-chief of *Plants* (MDPI) and sits on several other editorial boards worldwide. In January 2023, Dilantha was appointed as Editor-in-Chief of *Plant Pathology*, the flagship journal of the British Society of Plant Pathology (BSPP). Dilantha has successfully secured research funding from various groups. The total research funding he has received is \$ 47 million. Dilantha has co-developed 37 canola/HEAR cultivars, bringing prestige and royalty funds to the University of Manitoba.