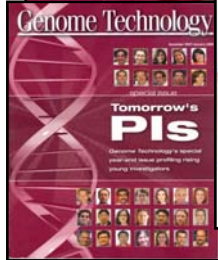


GII member coveted as “Rising Young Investigator” by Genome Technology Magazine



Dr. Madhugiri Nageswara Rao, a Post-doctoral Research Associate in Dr. Fred G. Gmitter Jr's lab at the University of Florida's (UFL) Citrus Research and Education Center (CREC), and GII member was honored as one of the "**Tomorrow's PIs: Rising Young Investigators**" around the world in the special issue of Genome Technology (GT) magazine (January 2008, No.77:8), New York. Dr. Rao has also been featured on their cover page. He is the only one from Florida who has been honored and will be receiving a commemorative plaque and a travel grant.

At CREC, Dr. Rao is working on various citrus genetic improvement projects to develop genetic maps that support citrus genomics and breeding for effective resistance to various pandemic citrus diseases and other environmental stresses. His work is focused on the functional gene transcript expression analysis for apomixis (asexual reproduction) within citrus. He also works extensively on citrus rootstock which is a major contributor to citrus tree performance, longevity and

influences tree size, yield, fruit quality and the tolerance of scions to various stresses. These efforts offer methods to facilitate the selection of elite citrus germplasms possessing economically important genes that are desirable for improving the efficiency of the breeding processes as well as production and management strategies.

Dr. Rao did his BS, MS and PhD from India, and his work at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bangalore, India had contributed significantly to the areas of population, evolutionary, conservation and forest genetics in the country. Among the major issues that he had addressed are: a) the impacts of human disturbance on the genetic diversity of medicinal non-timber forest products species, b) identification of 'hot-spots' of genetic variability of economically important forest plants such as sandal, bamboo, rattans etc., c) effect of fragmentation on the population genetics of forest plants, d) the role of protected areas in conserving the genetic diversity of forest plants, e) identification and characterization of bioactive compounds in forest plants. These studies have important implications for the formulation of effective conservation strategies, not only in India but globally, for the rapidly declining genetic resources of many medicinal plant species. He has taught labs in Molecular markers, Conservation Genetics, Molecular Ecology and Population Genetics at the UAS, Bangalore.