



BEEES (Behavior, Ecology, Environment and Evolution Seminar)

Tree of life—the importance of biodiversity in Conservation, Medicine, Agriculture, and Ecology

Speaker: **Prof. Doug Soltis**
Florida Museum, University of Florida, USA
<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/museum-voices/soltis-lab/doug-soltis/>

Date: Tuesday, 2018-05-29
Time: 12:15 to 13:00
Place: Y03-G-85/UZH Irchel
Winterthurerstr. 190;8057 Zürich

Access: only intern

Host: Prof. Dr. Kentaro Shimizu

Abstract: Much of our current work involves building the green plant tree of life, a group of about 500,000 species—knowledge of these relationships is crucial for ecology, agriculture, medical science, and conservation. In addition, we have worked to build the first tree of all named life (2.3 million species). The Tree of Life has emerged as a grand symbol and organizing principle for biodiversity, and deftly threads scientific and cultural meaning, providing a unique connector to the public. The Tree of Life is a crucial metaphor for relating the complexity of biology to the public in a simple format—that relationships have predictive value and that biodiversity matters, with downstream practical benefits that include the discovery of medicines and improving crops. We are working on several methods of engaging the public to the importance of biodiversity via the tree of life metaphor: 1) large-scale outdoor projection of the tree of life to the public; 2) indoor digital multimedia. We are modifying current Tree of Life depiction software to be used as a tool for conveying in more compelling ways stories in biology, as well as promoting novel research in its own right. No matter what scale and medium, the storytelling will convey why knowledge of the Tree of Life is important for human well-being and survival.

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