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Laurier workshop features industry partners and research on maximizing soil health for crop growth

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University research on agricultural practices that maximize soil health for crop growth will be featured at a one-day workshop for academic and industry partners. The workshop, devoted to the scientific, technological and economic outlook for sustainable fertilization technologies, will be held Feb. 17 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Senate and Board Chamber on Laurier’s Waterloo campus. It is hosted in partnership with Pedro M. Antunes of Algoma University and Boreal Agrominerals Inc.

Laurier biology professor Frédérique Guinel has developed software that digitally represents a plant’s root system. The software allows different plant varieties to be compared with precise measurements of the root structure to determine which plants will grow better.

“My lab has done a lot of work to understand how legume root nodules and soil bacteria interact,” said Guinel. “Our goal is to enhance plant nutrition and crop growth utilizing processes already available in nature.”

Guinel and master’s student James Jones will share this research at the workshop, alongside presentations about beneficial soil microorganisms, composting, and natural mineral soil additives.

“This workshop allows industry and researchers to come together to share innovative practices and products,” said Donna Kotsopoulos, acting associate vice-president: Research. “It is a great opportunity to showcase Laurier’s strength in building partnerships to move research into action.”

The workshop will feature presentations by researchers from Laurier, the University of Guelph, Algoma University and Trent University, as well as Boreal Agrominerals Inc., the Ontario Genomics Institute, Char Technologies, Mikro-Tek Inc. and the Day Group. In addition to attending the presentations, participants will be able to speak with companies working directly in the field.

The event is sponsored by the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Ontario Agri-food Technologies, Ontario Genomics Institute, Boreal Agrominerals Inc. and Pfenning’s Organic Vegetables Inc. The workshop is free and open to the public. Advanced registration is recommended: LaurierSoilWorkshop.eventbrite.ca

For more information about Guinel’s research and root-mapping software, visit <http://scholars.wlu.ca/clearlanguage/4/>