More than a century after the first classroom tents were pitched at the foothills of Mt. Makiling, UPLB’s dedication to education, research, and development remains strong. On its 113th founding anniversary, UPLB will be holding activities that will serve as groundwork for more robust and relevant initiatives that address societal needs.

With the theme, “Fortifying collaborations with industry and communities,” this year’s foundation day celebration will have UPLB building linkages and strengthening its partnerships to achieve common goals for development.

Small businesses and industries usher in the celebration at the Foundation Trade Fair from Feb. 28 to Mar. 11 at the College of Development Communication parking lot. Mar. 4 marks the day of the festivities, beginning with the inauguration of the new University Health Service Emergency Facility, a product of combined efforts of UPLB and UP Alumni.

Another event that will be held is the opening of the Accelerating Growth through One Research and Extension in Action (AGORA) Hub and Exhibit, which will be highlighting its four thematic areas of food security and sovereignty, resilience and sustainability, future communities and institutions, and One Health.

This will be followed by the Awarding Ceremonies for the Retirees and the 2022 UPLB Outstanding Personnel at the Charles Fuller Baker Hall where UPLB will be honoring 12 individuals and a research and an extension team.

In the afternoon, UPLB will honor Her Excellency Saskia de Lang, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands in the Philippines, with a new Hibiscus rosa-sinensis hybrid developed at the Institute of Plant Breeding under the new Women in Diplomacy gumamela series.

Afterwards, further improvements in campus connectivity and linkages will be marked with the groundbreaking ceremony of the UPLB Fiber Optic Network (Phase 3) and a tour of the Agro-Industrial and Information Technology Park at the UPLB Special Economic Zone.

Mar. 5 opens with a new partnership opportunity with the Department of Agriculture (DA), through a signing of a memorandum of understanding with Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar.

UPLB will be celebrating the exact date of its foundation with a short virtual program on Mar. 6, which will be live streamed through the UPLB and College of Agriculture and Food Science Facebook Pages and YouTube Channels.

The whole celebration will be concluded on Mar. 7 with the Virtual Grand Launch of UPLB AGORA. Audiences may watch the launch through the Facebook Pages and YouTube Channels of UPLB and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Extension. (Jessa Jael S. Arana)

Serving as the guest speaker for UPLB’s 113th Foundation Day is the ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Philippines, Her Excellency Saskia de Lang.

Ambassador de Lang is currently serving as the ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Philippines, Micronesia, Palau and the Marshall Islands, a position she has held since 2019. Prior to that, she served as ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Congo and head of delegation in Brazzaville.

Under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, she has also done missions to Tunisia, Qatar, Rwanda, and Luxembourg, and served as Special Envoy for Energy and Energy Security, and Interim and Restructuring Manager.

She has also served as ambassador of her country to Mali and Uganda.

Ambassador de Lang lent her support and participation in various online activities with local partners aimed at promoting gender equality and addressing various related themes as the 2021 EU Gender Champion in the Philippines.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Philippines have enjoyed 70 years of diplomatic relations and over 150 years of consular relations, with the former being an important trading partner and one of the consistent top sources of foreign direct investments in the Philippines.

UPLB officials visited the Dutch embassy on Feb. 14 to explore collaborations in instruction, research, and campus development.

A new Hibiscus rosa-sinensis hybrid will be named in honor of Ambassador de Lang. The flower belongs to the new Women in Diplomacy hibiscus hybrids series. (Albert Geoffred B. Paraisa)
Nicanor Balahadia, an agroforestry champion
Outstanding Extension Personnel

For: Nicasio M. Balahadia, University Extension Associate II, has been serving UPLB for 38 years. He has been involved in various extension projects within and outside the Mount Makiling Forest Reserve ASEAN Heritage Park (MMFR AHP).

Balahadia is acknowledged by the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural Research (DA-BAR) as one of UPLB's experts on rubber production. DA-BAR asked him to become part of the committee that drafted the IRRI of the Republic Act 10089 known as the Philippine Rubber Research Institute (PRR) Act of 2010.

An advocate of agroforestry and rubber plantation production, Balahadia was involved in the establishment of the Southern Tagalog Agroforestry Development and Cooperative until it became a sustainable business enterprise.

His involvement in the establishment of the Organic Cacao and High-Value Crops Planter Association (OCPHA) in 2017 was instrumental in making farmers adopt the practice of agroforestry, which resulted in better farm productivity.

Balahadia helped generate about PHP11 million worth of approved extension projects for the University from 2019 to 2020. He is deeply involved in the conservation and development of the MMFR AHP through the introduction of alternative livelihood activities of informal settlers in the area.

He handled the Environmental Education Program for communities and helped them in creating school mini-forest parks.

He also conducted health and safety measures activities during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic to lessen the impact of the pandemic on the community. (Kristine E. Araguas)
Integrated research and extension

The Edible Landscaping Program leads hungry. The vision that “No Filipino should be
throughout the decades in pursuit of Agriculture, the project has persisted
Science Cluster of the College of
Pioneered in 1999 by the late Dr.
Sugarcane Crop Improvement Program (SCIP) of the Institute of Plant
Industry Development Act project.

The Sugarcane Crop Improvement Program (SCIP) is addressing food security,
the College of Agriculture and Food Science has accomplished much to
address this problem, earning for
SCIP is truly ahead in doing its part to elevate the sugar industry in the country. (Josephine M. Bo)

As of April 2021, statistica.com ranked sugar and sugar confectionery as the
10th top agricultural export, earning almost 100 million USD for the
country. This, despite challenges the industry is facing, among which is low
productivity, itself caused by many factors such as the use of low yielding
varieties, pests and diseases, and
climate change.

The Sugarcane Crop Improvement Program (SCIP) at the Institute of Crop Science under
the College of Agriculture and Food Science is addressing food security,
the College of Agriculture and Food Science has accomplished much to
tackle this problem, earning for
them the 2022 UPLB Outstanding
Research Program Award.

SCIP works on multiple fronts—
plant breeding, plant pathology,
plant physiology, and plant
genetic conservation—to produce
sugarcane cultivars that are high
yielding and have high resistance and
tolerance to biotic and abiotic
crises. It took a tedious and long process
for the plant breeding group under
Dr. Antonio G. Lalusin of ICropS,
to develop advanced sugarcane hybrids that are now under field
trial with support from the Sugar
Regulatory Administration-Sugar Industry Development Act project.

The team of Dr. Fe dela Cueva,
plant pathologist and director of
IPB, identified the causes of some
sugarcane diseases and screened sugarcane varieties and genotypes to
investigate how they react to diseases. They also developed a standard
protocol for acquiring foreign sugarcane varieties and trained their
counterparts from seven countries in using the protocol.

SCIP plant physiologist Dr. Evelyn
Delfin led her team in using cutting-
edge digital imaging and Near-
infrared spectroscopy to identify promising high-yielding, drought-
resistant, and waterlogging-tolerant sugarcane genotypes. This will pave
the way for developing varieties with
these traits.

SCIP produced planting materials of promising sugarcane varieties and
hybrids applying a micropropagation
protocol developed by the sugarcane in vitro protocol by the National Genetic
Resources Laboratory (NPGRL) of IPB.

The team developed and optimized in vitro techniques for an efficient and
cost-effective strategy to conserve and produce disease-free planting
materials. The NPGRL team led by
Dr. Olivia Damasco maintains around
200 sugarcane accessions as part of
sugarcane breeding and conservation efforts.

SCIP has also helped sugarcane
producers through rapid production and
distribution of disease-free quality seed/
planting materials.

SCIP is truly ahead in doing its part to elevate the sugar industry in the country. (Josephine M. Bo)

Helping communities produce their own food

Edible Landscaping Team of UPLB

The Outstanding Extension Team

The Edible Landscaping Program based at the Institute of Crop Science under
the College of Agriculture and Food Science is addressing food security,
starting with the garden spaces in
Filipino households. Pioneered in 1999 by the late Dr.
Leonido R. Naranja of the then Crop Science Cluster of the College of
Agriculture, the project has persisted throughout the decades in pursuit of
the vision that “No Filipino should be hungry.”

The Edible Landscaping Program leads integrated research and extension
activities, and trains and encourages people to grow vegetables, fruits,
herbs, and medicinal plants in place of
ornamental plants.

The team brought the technology
to schools, barangays, partner
government agencies, and even
abroad, creating communities that
have access to safe and nutritious
food. These benefits are beautifully
displayed in their demo-gardens in
multiple locations, including the
Ornamental Crops Nursery in UPLB,
The Valley Cathedral Christian Church
in Surigao del Norte, the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agriculture
Research (DA-BAR) Office and the DA
Central Office in Quezon City, among
other locations.

The Edible Landscaping Team has also
exhibited their edible designs in public
events inside and outside the university.

To encourage more people to try edible
landscaping, they created the EL starter
kit which contains information materials,
sample seeds, and basic gardening
tools. Beginners who might be new to
gardening can start their own edible
landscape garden using the EL kit.

When the pandemic began in 2020,
the team distributed 20,000 EL kits to
communities in urban areas and city
outskirts amidst rising food security
dictates during the lockdowns.

Aside from training sessions, the Edible Landscaping Team disseminated knowledge about edible landscaping by publishing their
findings and progress in reputable
journals so that it can be formally
studied and be adopted by more
communities.

Now led by Dr. Fernando C.
Sanchez, Jr. as project leader, the
Program continues to propagate
edible landscaping technology to
communities and are empowering
more individuals to grow their own
food while brightening up their
environment.

Part of the team are co-project
leaders, Maria Chaito E. Balladares
and Asst. Prof. Rowena P. de Guzman,
and their research and technical staff
Asst. Prof. Norma G. Madina, Asst.
Prof. Ryan Rodrigo P. Tayabong, Asst.
Prof. Bryan V. Apaciano, Renuel O.
Torres, Malania C. Burgos-Illang, John
Bryan E. Lawas, and Alessandro Alfred
E. Perez. (Jessa Jael S. Arana)
Research is one of the most important work being done in UPLB and its researchers and scientists are among its valued resources. Giving UPLB researchers the recognition they deserve is a time-honored tradition done every time UPLB commemorates its Foundation Day. Five scientists, one to be awarded posthumously, are the latest to be added to our gallery of honorees.

Dr. Brillo Baltazar C. Brillo is a professor of political science and development studies at the Institute for Governance and Rural Development of the College of Public Affairs and Development. Dr. Brillo has written 41 journal articles of which 27 are published in ISI/Scopus-indexed journals, 12 in refereed journals, and 2 under review by ISI/Scopus journals. Of this, he is sole author of 31 and co-author of 10 with 9 having him as lead author. He has published with the likes of Springer, Taylor & Francis, Elsevier, Wiley, Inderscience Publisher, and IOS Press.

Dr. Buot’s research outputs are novel contributions to social sciences studies on small lakes, lake governance, small-scale tourism in lower-class municipalities, and the closed fishing season policy. He is clearly among the most productive in research work and has securely led scholarship in lake governance and development in the country.

Dr. Brillo’s abiding dedication to research has consistently earned him the UP Scientist Award since 2015, the UP International Publication Award since 2014, and other grants and awards from UP and other reputable R&D institutions. His most recent recognition given to Dr. Brillo is the 2022 UPLB Outstanding Researcher Award, senior faculty/social sciences category.

Dr. Inocencio E. Buot Jr., recipient of the Outstanding Researcher Award for senior faculty/natural sciences category, is a botanist who specializes in ecology and taxonomy. His work in biodiversity science—eliciting floristics and dynamics of vegetation in disturbed landscapes—led to the crafting of the Conservation Priority Index or CPI.

CPI is a localized biodiversity conservation strategy, which is recognized by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic, and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD). Dr. Buot is currently conducting a PCARRD-funded project to conserve threatened indigenous plant species in forests over limestone in Samar Island using CPI.

Dr. Buot has collaboratively written with his colleagues and graduate students more than 200 papers from his nine projects on ecology, taxonomy, and conservation biology, 65 of which were published in the last three years. These projects address the UN Sustainable Development Goals on clean water, climate action, and partnership, among others.

He has earned six recognitions from his research work since 2019, including among others, the 2021 CAS Outstanding Senior Researcher. Earlier he was honored with a plant named after him, the Hoja buotii Kloppepen. He was awarded the 2020 UPLB Outstanding Junior Researcher Award.

Sapin, a chemistry and biotechnology expert, with BIOTEC colleague Teresita Ramirez, harnessed bioactive components of agricultural wastes and turned these into products that are beneficial to health and well-being.

One of these is registered under the trade name Phenofera, a phenolic powder from mango peel and seed wastes. Phenofera can be used in personal care products to help prevent skin damage and as a skin and anti-aging ingredient. It can put up a defense against Gram-positive and -negative common skin pathogens and dandruff-causing fungus.

She recently discovered phenolic powder from mango branches to have anti-diabetic properties comparable to commercial anti-diabetic products. Aside from their nutraceutical and cosmeceutical values, these products help reduce agricultural waste and could augment farmers’ livelihoods.

Setting her sights on another agricultural research, waste, cacao pod husk, Sapin produced a pectin and co-developed a dietary fiber for which she has an on-going patent application. She is also one of the inventors of the Salmonella DASTM kit that is used for rapid detection of Salmonella in animal feed and food products.

Sapin, a well-published author and a multi-awarded researcher, is pushing the frontiers of science for the environment and to help improve farmers’ incomes.

Dr. Maria Luz J. Sison was an expert in plant resistance to major insect pests of various economically important crops like fruits, cereals, vegetables and vegetable legumes, plantain, ornamentals, and coconut. She also worked extensively on other crops like wheat, upi-upi, and cotton, and contributed to insect transmission studies of pathogens like ‘namamarako’ in ampalaya, banana bunchy top virus disease, and banana streak virus.

Dr. Sison was a homegrown researcher who finished BS Agriculture (Entomology), MS Entomology (minor in Plant Breeding), and PhD in Entomology (minor in Genetics). In 2021, she was awarded the IPB Outstanding Senior Researcher Award due to her excellent research outputs as shown by her high-impact publications, developed technologies, and project outputs.

She was also recognized as Leopoldo Uichanco Awardee by the Philippine Association of Entomologists during the Annual Scientific Conference of the Past Management Council of the Philippines in July 2021.

Just recently, she was given the title of Scientist 1 under the Scientific Career System of the Civil Service Commission and Department of Science and Technology.

The University posthumously recognizes her as one of the recipients of the 2022 UPLB Outstanding Researcher Award as a senior researcher in the natural sciences.

Dr. Sison who passed away last Dec. 31 is a great loss to the Institute of Plant Breeding, UPLB, and most of all, to agriculture research.

John Marty C. Mateo, university researcher at the Institute of Plant Breeding of the College of Agriculture and Food Science (CAFS), provides an invaluable contribution to the University through the chemical and nutritional characterization of different crop germplasm.

For this, he is going to receive the 2022 UPLB Outstanding Junior Researcher Award.

His research work involves the selection of plant genotypes with superior nutritional qualities that can be developed as functional foods. He also studies the role of chemicals in addressing crop resistance to pests and diseases.

These have been instrumental for plant breeders to select superior genotypes used in varietal development.

This resulted in 22 varieties and genetic stocks registered with the Germplasm and Technology Registration and Release Office and two varieties with the National Seed Industry Council for which Mateo is one of the inventors.

In addition, two of his publications earned the UP International Publication Award and one publication was recognized as Outstanding Scientific Paper by the National Academy of Science and Technology of the Philippines.

Since 2016, he has published seven ISI/Scopus indexed journals and co-authored a monograph that translated his work in the chemical characterization of various crop germplasm.

Mateo is involved in 12 IPB interdisciplinary projects, some as project or as study leader.

He has headed the Analytical Services Laboratory Section since 2018. He was also elected as business manager of the UPREPPS from 2019 to 2021 and currently serves as a board member of the Crop Science Society of the Philippines.

A chemist by profession, Mateo is an advocate of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, and progressive agriculture.

(Kristine E. Araguis and Juan Paolo A. Aquino)