

## Press release

29.09.2022

### **Prof. Dr. Nicole van Dam - New Director of Research of the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ)**

Prof. Dr. Nicole van Dam will take over as the new director of research of the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ) from 1 October 2022. The renowned researcher is a professor at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, Institute of Biodiversity and has headed the "Molecular Interaction Ecology" research group at the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv) Halle-Jena-Leipzig since 2014. She is an expert in the field of chemical plant ecology and studies the interaction between plants and other organisms above ground and in the root zone.

Nicole van Dam will start her work at the IGZ on 1 October 2022 and will be welcomed to the IGZ in Großbeeren with a ceremony on 10 October 2022. She will thus succeed Prof. Dr. Eckhard George, who has been the director of research of the IGZ since 2000 and is retiring.

In addition to her work as a research group leader at iDiv, Nicole van Dam was also a member of the Speaker Board and the Science Strategy Board at iDiv, an iDiv Council member and Chair of the Female Scientist Career Fund. She is, among other positions, Chair of the International Society of Chemical Ecology (ISCE) and a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Subtropical and Mediterranean Horticulture Institute (IHSM) in Malaga, Spain.

"It is with great enthusiasm that I take up my new position at the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ). The knowledge generated by the scientists at the IGZ makes an important contribution to global food security and the preservation of biodiversity, and of course also to the preservation and improvement of human health. I see it as a positive challenge to continue and further develop the IGZ's mission to create scientific foundations for sustainable and healthy horticultural production." Nicole van Dam, Director of Research of the IGZ from 01 October 2022.

"With Prof. Nicole van Dam, the IGZ is gaining a highly competent director of research who will provide new impulses for the institute's research," says Monika Schreiner, deputy director of research of the IGZ.

Nicole van Dam will head the new IGZ research group "Plants Biotic Interactions". Their research mission is to decipher molecular and chemical mechanisms that control the interactions between plants and their biotic environment. To this end, results from studies of plant genes and the constituents formed in plants are combined with measurements of plant and insect performance. The plant samples needed will be collected from experiments in greenhouses and gardens, as well as from natural and agricultural ecosystems. The ultimate goal is to understand the role of mechanisms in the plant that enhance its performance. These include chemical diversity and plant resistance coping with insect pests. The knowledge gained forms the scientific basis for sustainable crop production and the reduction of pesticide use, one of the main goals of the European Union's "From Farm-to-Fork Strategy".

### **Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops**

The Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops is a research institute of the Leibniz Association and contributes to solving current global challenges - such as preserving biodiversity and combating climate change and the unfortunately still widespread malnutrition - with scientifically sound findings from basic and applied research in horticulture. The Institute is jointly funded by the Ministry of Science, Research and Culture of the State of Brandenburg (MWFK) and the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL). The IGZ is located in Großbeeren.

### **Leibniz Association**

The Leibniz Association brings together 97 independent research institutions. Their focus ranges from the natural sciences, engineering and environmental sciences to economics, spatial sciences, social sciences and the humanities. Leibniz institutes are dedicated to socially, economically and ecologically relevant issues. They conduct knowledge- and application-oriented research, also in the overarching Leibniz Research Associations, are or maintain scientific infrastructures and offer research-based services. The Leibniz Association focuses on knowledge transfer, especially with the Leibniz Research Museums. It advises and informs politics, science, industry and the public.

## Social Media Tags

- [@igz\\_leibniz \(IGZ\)](#)
- [@idiv \(iDiv Biodiv Research\)](#)
- [@UniJena \(Universität Jena\)](#)

## Further Links:

- [Leibniz-Institut für Gemüse- und Zierpflanzenbau](#)
- [Deutsches Zentrum für integrative Biodiversitätsforschung \(iDiv\)](#)
- [Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena](#)

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## Press photos:



Photo 1: Prof. Dr. Nicole van Dam



Photo 2:  
Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops  
(IGZ), Großbeeren

**Note on the festive event to welcome Nicole van Dam on 10 October 2022:** The event is open to journalists and members of the press, registrations are compulsory and can be made by email to [wissenschaftsmanagement@igzev.de](mailto:wissenschaftsmanagement@igzev.de)