



# American Society of Plant Biologists

*Cultivating a better future through plant biology research*

## **Silence Suffocates Us All**

We deplore the pervasive institutional racism that allows systemic injustice, inequality, suffering, and violence to fester. We understand the love, fear, and anger of those protesting the most recent murders of unarmed Black people going about their lives, and we implore governments and their agents to act with restraint and compassion.

We stand with other communities and organizations to condemn racism and those practices that run counter to ASPB's mission of promoting and sustaining equity, diversity, and inclusion. And we reaffirm our commitment to treat each person with dignity, decency, and respect. However, words are not enough. We must all work diligently and tirelessly toward dismantling the structures and practices on which systemic biases are built, whether within ASPB's own governance and operations, our respective workplaces, or wherever else we encounter racism and its impacts. We understand that this need for action is especially strong for those of us in positions of privilege and who hold perceived or actual power over others. We commit to develop new – and improve upon existing – programs, relationships, and tools that bring together our diverse membership. Silence and inaction are not options when our colleagues, friends, and community members are marginalized, targeted, or harmed.

A diverse community is stronger, smarter, and more resilient: these qualities are needed to tackle the most pressing problems facing humanity, including climate change, agronomic productivity, food security, and preservation of biological diversity, among others. But it is hard to stay focused on these missions when people of color senselessly lose their lives. And these goals will remain unachievable unless and until every one of us acknowledges, accepts, and appreciates the value of our diversity, and recommits to breaking down the barriers that limit human potential.

Because silence suffocates us all, we each make that commitment and urge you to do the same.

Judy Callis, President ASPB  
Robert Last, Past President ASPB  
Maureen McCann, President-elect ASPB  
Crispin Taylor, CEO ASPB