

Throughout 2025, I had the privilege of serving as an Ambassador for the American Society of Plant Biologists (ASPB). This role allowed me to actively engage with the plant science community through conference participation, student mentoring, scholarly writing, outreach, and collaborative program development. Below, I summarize my activities and contributions over the past year, along with my plans for continued involvement.

Activity 1: Participation in Plant Biology 2025

I attended the ASPB Plant Biology 2025 Annual Meeting held from July 26–30, 2025, where I actively participated in the scientific program. I attended nearly all sessions and workshops, excluding overlapping events, which allowed me to engage with a broad range of topics across plant biology and connect with researchers at different career stages.

During the meeting, I presented a research poster titled “Biochemical and Functional Analysis on Carotenoid Biosynthetic Enzyme Complexes in Tomato Fruits.” Presenting my work provided valuable opportunities for scientific discussion, constructive feedback, and professional networking within the ASPB community.



Activity 2: Supporting Undergraduate Researchers at Plant Biology 2025

In addition to presenting my own research, I volunteered during the undergraduate poster session at Plant Biology 2025. I assisted undergraduate presenters with poster setup and hang-up and helped them navigate the poster session environment. I also engaged with students in discussions about their research, academic pathways, and future goals, offering encouragement and helping facilitate networking opportunities.

This experience was particularly meaningful, as it supported ASPB’s mission to foster inclusive and welcoming spaces for early-career scientists and provided direct mentorship to undergraduate researchers.

Activity 3: Writing and Content Development for ASPB

As part of my ambassador responsibilities, I contributed written content aimed at community engagement and professional reflection.

In October 2025, I submitted a blog titled “From Chromoplasts to Conversations: Why I’m an Ambassador,” which reflects on my journey as a plant scientist and my motivation for serving as an ASPB Ambassador. Additionally, I contributed to the collaborative ambassador blog “What I Wish I Had Known Before Graduate School,” which was submitted on January 2, 2026 and is currently pending publication.

These writing efforts allowed me to share personal insights, highlight the value of the Ambassador Program, and contribute resources that support students and early-career researchers.

Rooted in Resilience: Why Plant Science and ASPB Ambassadors Matter Now More Than Ever

October 9, 2025 by Shoshana Krenfield

ASPB Ambassadors builds community. Just like a healthy ecosystem, a strong scientific community depends on diverse connections, mutual support, and shared purpose. Building the community of ASPB, we lift each other up through outreach, support, and collaboration. We have come together after the 101st meeting of ASPB to share our stories of what being an Ambassador means to us. Whether it's building programs to engage the public, or forming lasting friendships with fellow ambassadors, being part of this community has helped us all grow.



From Chromoplasts to Conversations: Why I'm an Ambassador

Bushrana Siddique

Most days, I'm in the lab messing with tomatoes— not cooking them, unfortunately, but breaking them apart to study the pigments inside. I work with carotenoids, the colorful compounds that make tomatoes red and help our bodies stay healthy. It's a lot of spinning tubes, isolating chromoplasts, and figuring out why plants do what they do. But here's the thing: outside the lab, most people have no idea what any of this means or why it matters. One day, I was explaining my research to a friend, and they just blinked and asked, "Tomatoes have what inside?" That's when it hit me: doing the science is only half the job. The other half is being able to explain it in a way that actually connects with people. That's why being an Ambassador matters, especially now. There's so much noise out there: misinformation, confusion, scientific jargon. We need people who can make science clear, human, and a little less intimidating. Being an Ambassador gives me a space to do that. To share. To listen. To learn how to talk with people, not just at them. So yeah, I work with tomatoes. But more than that, I'm learning how to tell their story—and in the process, helping science feel a bit more real for everyone.

Activity 4: Ambassador Collaboration Initiatives – Rolodex and SURF Project

I participated in two ambassador collaboration initiatives designed to strengthen ASPB's community resources.

First, I completed and submitted the ASPB Ambassador Rolodex, providing detailed information about my research expertise and professional interests. This resource is intended to support collaboration and networking among ASPB members and ambassadors.

Second, I contributed to the SURF "Where Are They Now?" project, which aimed to reconnect with former SURF participants and assess long-term program impact. As part of this initiative, I contacted assigned participants and mentors via email, collected updated contact and career information, encouraged survey participation, and documented responses. This effort supports ASPB's evaluation of student outcomes and program success.

Activity 5: Program Development and Committee Collaboration

I am currently organizing a professional development session titled "F-1 Futures: Careers and Hiring Pathways for International Students," with the support and guidance of Jayson Padilla and C.C. Fischbeck, in collaboration with the ECPS Section and the International Committee.

This ASPB Ambassador-led initiative focuses on career pathways, hiring considerations, and immigration-related challenges faced by international students pursuing plant science careers. With guidance from ASPB staff and collaborators, the session aims to provide practical and accurate information on topics such as F-1 status, OPT/CPT, and long-term career planning in the United States.

This initiative reflects my commitment to collaborative programming, inclusive professional development, and addressing topics that are highly relevant yet often underrepresented in scientific career discussions.

Activity 6: Outreach and Social Media Engagement

Throughout the year, I shared my ASPB Ambassador experiences on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, highlighting conference participation, ambassador activities, and professional development opportunities. These efforts contributed to increasing visibility for ASPB programs and promoting engagement within the broader plant science community.

Continuing and Future Activities

1. Contribute additional blog posts and written resources for ASPB and ambassador initiatives.
2. Remain actively involved in ambassador-led outreach, mentoring, and collaboration projects.
3. Continue promoting ASPB programs and opportunities through professional and social media platforms.