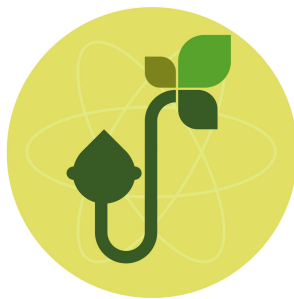
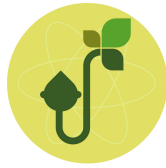


Green Teacher Awards 2017

The EARTH
provides enough to
SATISFY every man's need
but not every man's GREED.

-Mahatma Gandhi-





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<http://www.greenofficewageningen.nl/>





introduction

In the spirit of Wageningen University & Research's ambition to be leader in sustainability, Green Office Wageningen honors teaching staff who distinguish themselves as 'Green Teachers'.

The idea of the Green Teachers award is to recognize teachers working at Wageningen University who inspire students to think and act in a sustainable manner; Some teachers use innovative methods to stimulate students to be actors of change. Others inspire by being an example to follow. There are also teachers who carefully think about the details of the course and contribute to sustainability by preparing superior digital course materials.

All these teachers deserve a recognition for their good work: Last year we selected the teachers ourselves and interviewed them. This year students nominated their own Green Teachers. This year we have 7 Green Teachers!

The Green Teachers 2016 are:

- Ignas Heitkönig
- Nynke Hofstra
- Kris van Koppen
- Edith Lammerts van Bueren
- Tjeerd-Jan Stomph
- Arjen Wals
- Kees van Veluw





ignas heitkönig

Ignas Heitkönig works at the Resource Ecology chair group in the Environmental Sciences Group. He studied biology in Wageningen and did his promotion in South Africa at the non-racial University of the Witwatersrand. In this time (80's-90's) 'apartheid' was still an issue in South Africa. Ignas started to teach biology at the University of Venda in order to help people. It struck him how eager and motivated the local students were to learn and to get their degree.

In 1994 Ignas started working in Wageningen. Right now he is involved in the courses Ecological Methods I and Animal Ecology. Furthermore he tries to motivate students involved with nature conservation by means of the [Future for Nature Academy](#), which he started this year.

“What I try to teach is to see everything in a broader perspective: many of my MSc subjects are not just about ecological processes, but also about people. People need to see the negative effects of actions, but also the possibility to overcome these effects. I try to use a lot of environmentally relevant examples in my work.

As a lecturer I am fully involved in teaching and research. This was different in South Africa, where many colleagues were not 100% involved in their jobs. I co-founded a program: Community Development and Research. This program aimed to bring academic colleagues together to think about regional problems and work towards solutions. An example of this is making land use more sustainable.



Here in Wageningen I recently co-founded a program called 'Future for Nature Academy'. In the Netherlands we have the 'Future for Nature Award': An award of € 50.000 which goes to each of three young nature conservationists. It is a big prize, but still a lot of people (even in Wageningen) don't know about it. With the Future for Nature Academy I want to motivate young people to actively contribute to nature conservation, in any way, and in the spirit of the Future for Nature Award winners. I would also like to get the award winners to Wageningen for a guest lecture in 2017. Right now, we are expanding the Academy to other places in the Netherlands (van Hall - Larenstein in Velp, HAS in Den Bosch and Utrecht University) as well and we are still getting bigger. This initiative is also what I like about Wageningen: So many enthusiastic students wanting to make a change! ”

Sustainability tips

For students:

If your courses lack societal relevance, ask your lecturers why they serve dry bread.

For colleagues:

Green teaching is like serving your favorite dish, so do it with passion.





nynke hofstra

Nynke Hofstra works at the Environmental Systems Analysis group. She studied Environmental Sciences and then continued in Oxford at the school for Geography and the Environment, where she worked on her PhD developing gridded climate datasets to validate regional climate models. Throughout her BSc, MSc and PhD she has been involved in teaching, as study advisor for Aktief Slip, in the OWI Environmental Sciences, and as a tutor. Since 8 years Nynke has been back in Wageningen. She is thesis supervisor and is involved in several courses, such as Introduction to Environmental Systems Analysis and Introduction to Global Change. In addition to her teaching job, she does research on the impacts of global environmental change on waterborne pathogen concentrations in the environment and associated health risk.

“I am surprised to be nominated for the Green Teacher Awards because I don’t consider myself a green teacher. Of course, I teach Environmental Sciences, but I don’t aim to change students’ behavior. I also don’t know if I agree with the whole idea of ‘Green Teachers’: is it the job of teachers to change the behavior of the students? Teachers should provide facts and figures and provide tools to study (and, depending on the specialization, solve) environmental and other sustainability problems and in this way raise awareness. Interested students can then continue to study in this field.



I personally think my greatest strength as a teacher is the one on one contact; explaining to and motivating individual students. This is why I like teaching in small groups. The personal contact is much more convenient and information exchange is more efficient than during lectures. Students' key competences to study sustainability include, for me, system thinking. Linking causes, effects and solutions is required to understand the full problem and work towards solutions.

In my daily life, I implement simple sustainable (mostly environmentally friendly) solutions: cycling to work every day, separating waste, washable nappies, trying to limit electricity use, and we have a solar boiler. Furthermore, I aim to raise my children such that they hopefully become environmentally aware. I am sure I could implement a lot more, though. And it's not just about sustainability. In my courses, for example, I don't use readers. This is not just because of the waste of paper or ink, but mostly because readers are a lot more expensive for the students, with all the copyrights that need to be paid, while they have free online access."

Sustainability tips

For students:

**Challenge yourself to take the initiative and effort to explore your interests.
Endless opportunities exist!**

For colleagues:

Stay true to yourself.





KRIS VAN KOPPEN

Kris van Koppen works at the environmental policy chair group. He studied environmental sciences at Wageningen University. During his study, Kris was already very active with other things than school, for example theatre, music and 'boerengroep'. After teaching at universities of applied sciences in Groningen and Deventer he went back to Wageningen for Western Sociology, which environmental policy originated from. He teaches in Wageningen since 1992 and in 2005-2010 he was also appointed professor for nature and environmental education at Utrecht University. In the meanwhile, Kris is still actively involved in other things: he is engaged in a nature experiencing programme for children ('Het Bewaarde Land'), member of the expert committee of Natuurmonumenten and of the advisory board for nature and environment in Deventer, his hometown.. Additionally he is part of the sustainability group at Leeuwenborch and he occasionally helps Green Office with our policy problems.

'I like the fact that you have a price which puts different people in the spotlights. Being nominated for the Green Teacher Award is nice, but it won't change my course of action. For a long time already, I am interested in teaching and in the environment, so Green Teaching is something that I am involved for most of my life. For me it is important that people have an insight in the social-political dynamics around sustainability.



Additionally, they need to gain trust in their own competences: in their own ability to analyse, to change things and to involve others. This is what I enjoy in Wageningen: people are very involved and enthusiastic, not only about natural sciences but also about politics. However, in universities we not always see these abilities, and the increasing standardization of monitoring and grading systems does not help. Grading is needed, of course, but the more elaborate and standardized it gets, the more it may give the false perception that what is good or bad performance is determined by external experts and norms, and not by people themselves. I therefore encourage students to not always look at these systems, but come up with their own ideas! Of course it is important to value others' opinions and make use of their knowledge and to listen to your teachers, but it is even more important to do things yourself. I also tell my students to listen to my advice and to what can be improved, but in the end always make their own decision instead of just doing as I said.

Sustainability tips

For students:

Be open to advice and criticism, but always do what you yourself think is good (and green). You learn more from own mistakes than from others' recipes.

For colleagues:

There is no blueprint for good (and green) education; motivation and interaction are key.





edith lammerts van bueren

Edith Lammerts van Bueren works at the department of Plant Sciences. She studied plant breeding in Wageningen. However, after some time she switched to plant production in order to see the bigger picture of agricultural production before getting deeper into the genetics. Through this combination, she got into a network of organic agriculture; at that time (1970s) it was called 'Alternative Agriculture'. Wageningen University was then not involved in 'alternative agriculture': it was considered not economical and not scientific, and not many academic jobs were available. That's why Edith started teaching in 1978 at the biodynamic agricultural technical college Warmonderhof (in Dronten), a school for young farmers, teaching green cultivation. In 1984, she switched towards research and worked for the newly started chairgroup Alternative Agriculture at Wageningen University, and in 1986 she joined the Louis Bolk institute, an independent research institute for organic agriculture, health care and nutrition, where she still works.

In 2005 Edith became appointed as an endowed professor for Organic Plant Breeding for one day/week. In this role she set up an MSc course 'Organic Plant Breeding and Seed Production', started research in this subject by supervising PhD students. Due to an overwhelming number of phd students and master students looking for a thesis or internship in this topic of Organic Plant Breeding the task grew beyond her capacity of one day/week. Also with retirement in sight(December 2017), she decided in 2016 to more focus on her phd students and to write review papers on the achievements from research so far to set a new research agenda.

"I'm very honored to be nominated as Green Teacher. It is a recognition for my attempt to broaden the scope of the options to contribute to sustainable agriculture through various breeding approaches. I focus not only on technical aspects, but also on the social-economic and legal aspects of breeding; both in the MSc topics and PhD projects.



I think my greatest strength as a teacher is the fact that I work both with breeders and farmers, and that I have a lot of practical examples about how research can have an impact in practice. By working for the organic sector I can see what is required for research and apply this knowledge in my teaching. I can use it as an example to courses departing from problems in practise and how research and breeding can solve such problems in practice.

In my course, I tried to broaden the perspective of plant breeding: it is not always about organic agriculture as such, but it can also be used for low-input conventional agriculture. With plant breeding, we can develop varieties which need no chemicals and less nitrogen, for example by selecting plants that have an extended root system that can explore nutrients in deeper soil layers.. This is called 'Breeding for below-ground traits' and plant breeders did not yet do much research into this because these are complex traits.

From my experience, I would say that *systems thinking* is the most important student key competence. Sustainability cannot be solved by single issues. In modern plant breeding research we tend to zoom in too much at the molecular level, while sometimes forgetting that in the end the outcome (a variety) should fit in a bigger system. Additionally *transdisciplinarity* is very important for me: I have various projects dealing with participatory plant breeding including the knowledge of farmers about their farm system and their ability to select and that requires more than merely technical breeding skills. This is something I can use in my teaching: Plant breeding is not only a technical activity, but requires also new concepts for the social-economic and legal aspects of breeding; so, for instance, if we do not want to rely on patents we need to develop other business models for breeding. In many of my PhD research next to technical expertise also social science experts are involved, requiring a so-called beta-gamma approach. I am glad that Wageningen University supports such approach but it is not yet practiced on a large scale."

Sustainability tips

For students:

Systems thinking or the ability to think integrative is the most important student key competence to be able to tackle the complexity of sustainability.

For colleagues:

Issues related to food security and sustainability are complex as they are not only require technical solutions or innovations but the solutions depend very much on the various values at stake in society. So it is important that students get the opportunity to experience how researchers from different sciences (social and natural sciences) approach such issues.





tjeerd-jan
stamph

Tjeerd-Jan works at the centre for crop systems analysis. He studied biology in Wageningen and did his internship and on of his master theses in the tropics. He then worked in West-Africa and based on that work finished his PhD in Reading, England. When he came back to the Netherlands he did one year of consultancy before coming to Wageningen University as a teacher. He changed the setup of ACT in Wageningen into a more multidisciplinary course and was involved the development of ACT inspired courses in South-Africa and Middle-Europe.

Courses Tjeerd-Jan is involved in are soil-plant interactions (CSA20306) and research methods in crop science (CSA30806). Until last August, Tjeerd-Jan was also coordinating the ACT (Academic Consultancy Training) course. Next to his 'usual' teaching duties, he helps during introductions and open days. Soon he will also start guest teaching at primary schools.

"I was very honored and surprised with the nomination for the Green Teacher Award: My courses have no direct link to sustainability. Yet, coming to think about it, it may be through the role I play in the Academic Consultancy Training) ACT course. During ACT proposal writing, I encourage students to think about the bigger picture on their projects: which system are we analyzing? Are there more systems involved? And is the solution which seems most sustainable also truly the most sustainable solution?"



Next to teaching on proposal writing for sustainability projects in ACT, I also try to implement sustainability myself in the classroom: during the courses which do not involve sustainability by definition, I try to use sustainability-related examples; I think about the course material: printing double-sided, providing a choice to buy a reader or read it on blackboard and making a printable handouts for slides, with more slides on 1 page, next to the ne slide version for use onscreen. Also discussing ‘what is more sustainable’ with my students is one of my ways to show the challenges we are facing regarding sustainability.

I heard that one of my strengths as a teacher is my patience and encouraging attitude: I try to listen to students, to think with them in a creative way about what they need to add and in this way I always try to give feedback. I think this has to do with my attitude as a teacher in general: I really want to help students. This is why I prefer working with small groups: working on an individual level as much as possible. During teaching I hope to improve the following three student-key competences: systems analysis, cross-disciplinary thinking and interpersonal skills.”

Sustainability tips

For students:

“Green” or “sustainable” may seem something related to specific projects, studies or courses. The challenge as student is to seek the link to sustainability or transition towards sustainability for every course or projects you engage. Most of what you learn is related to options for innovation and change, you can therefore always consider: does this change make the globe a better place both for current and for future generations.

For colleagues:

As a teacher I was surprised with my nomination. I am not involved in any course specifically dedicated to sustainability. It was therefore interesting to realise that for students you can be an inspiration also as a teacher because of the examples you use, because of the approach you show that one has to look at every innovation from multiple perspectives and by showing that an urge to make the world sustainable does not mean you should not critically assess whether your dream project is feasible and well grounded.





KEES VAN VELUW

Kees van Veluw works at the Plant Sciences chair group. He teaches the courses: Organic Animal Production and Ecological Design and Permaculture. He studied Tropical Livestock Husbandry at WUR; not so much because of the tropical aspect, but because this direction was more about farming systems instead of production. In 1990 he was course director of 'Ecologische Landbouw', which is now the Master of Organic Agriculture. After working in Ghana for Unicef and working at a consultancy he came back to Wageningen and started teaching again. He began with 'Organic Animal Production and after that also implemented his 'favorite' subject for teaching: 'Permaculture'.

“I was much honored to hear that I was nominated for the Green Teacher Award. It is nice to see that my way of teaching inspires students. I'd like to teach students to be critical, to think different. This is what I also did in my Resource column: thinking critical. This was however not appreciated by everybody. Furthermore I'd like to teach students to think different than we are taught outside university: the head-heart-hands approach. University courses emphasize the 'head', the logical thinking, while the heart and hands are also important. Science should start in practice. I experienced this myself while working with farmers; this tells us so much more than just talking about models. Therefore from the student key competences I would value system thinking as most important.



Using the same head-heart-hands approach, I encourage out of the box thinking while teaching. We are taught to think in one way, but new and creative solutions are usually coming from a whole different way of thinking. Therefore I tell my students that sometimes we need a real different approach: go outside, have a walk, meditate, think about different things. In this way, the most creative solutions come to your mind. This may not be a regular way of teaching and students usually don't know what to do at first, but in the end they get inspired by it and they do it! The saying of Albert Einstein: 'Problems cannot be solved with the same mind set that created them' is often in my mind when I teach. I am always really interested in student's new, creative ideas and I try to encourage them to think some more about it: how to do it, what are the challenges? It may sound a bit weird, but this way of teaching can be implemented much more at our university."

Sustainability tips

For Students:

Try to give you feelings and emotions also a place in the scientific debate and scientific work at WUR otherwise you miss the link to life

For Colleagues:

Try to teach outside the classroom and in real situations in stead of only classroom work





arjen wals

Arjen Wals works at the chair group Education and Competence Studies as a Professor in Transformative Learning for Socio-ecological Sustainability. He studied Environmental Sciences in Wageningen between 1982 and 1987. After this rather technical basis, he discovered that sustaina-

bility is more psychological: “Sustainability problems are not somewhere between the North and the South pole, they are between our ears” he states in his short video pitch about his new professorship. He therefore did his thesis on environmental education (EE). He did his PhD-research in inner-city Detroit in Michigan with African-American youth. His teacher there, Bill Stapp - who was the founding father of the field of EE - was very inspiring: he gave everybody the feeling that he or she was special, capable and an expert in something.

Next to his ‘usual’ teaching duties at Wageningen UR, Arjen does a lot of teaching and educating elsewhere to enhance sustainable education: He works together with other schools in order to educate sustainability and he is a guest professor at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden) to enhance education for sustainable development. Arjen is also involved in many other projects: he is UNESCO chair in Social Learning and Sustainable Development, he is part of the board of Natuurwijs and he is a member of the think-tank of the Bildung Academie. He recently contributed to the UN’s Global Education Monitor Report (GEM2016) on ‘Education for People and Planet: Creating sustainable futures for all’.

“For sustainability, I think it is important to feel involved not only with yourself, but also with others; other students, other people, other countries, other species and other thing. This requires empathy, mindfulness and an ethic of care. This is why I made the shift from a more mechanical view to the more social and relational view of the world. The kinds of global systemic problems we are dealing with right now cannot be solved using old ways of reductionist and positivist thinking. We need to deal with uncertainty, ambiguity, complexity, confusion, conflict and diversity. We don’t know what sustainability is, in fact we never will as we won’t live long enough to know, but we have a moral responsibility to continuously look for ways to live more lightly and equitably on the Earth. What we might think is sustainable today, might be unsustainable tomorrow. But also, what we might think is sustainable in Wageningen, might turn out to be unsustainable in Kampala, Uganda.

This makes it hard to communicate, but also hard to educate sustainability. Finally, sustainability requires that we become connected, not to the Internet, but to people, places and the non-human world. Current forces of digitalization and economic globalization tend to disconnect, homogenize and lead to psychic numbing – a permanent state of being distracted. Critical education needs to question this and disrupt the systems, values and patterns that make unsustainability easy and sustainability hard.

For teaching these complicated problems and relations, we need to dare to ask the hard question, making the common less common, but also, we need a hands-on approach: We go outside with our students: experiencing what's there and what needs to be solved. But we also need to teach that change is possible, that it doesn't stop at raising awareness and critiquing. What is important for students is 'learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to make change'.

An example we advocate in high schools: students bring old mobile phones to class and take them apart. Then we ask: What's in the phone? Where does every part come from? How does the phone affect your life? How about the lives of others far away? But also, how can we use the phone to re-connect people and planet and to live more meaningful and equitable lives? Engaging with these questions help students realize that the whole sustainability puzzle is in their pocket; they discover how their lives are intricately connected to ecological, environmental, social, economic and ethical challenges.

“The goal of sustainable education for me is to make sustainability the default, not unsustainability as currently is the case ”

Sustainability tips

For students:

Mind-the-gap: focus on the mismatch between what you think and what you do or between the university's visions and actions, even when it leads to discomfort and friction. Thinking and questioning yourself as well as others, including your teachers, should be the norm, not the exception.

For colleagues:

When dealing with wicked complexity – as we all seem to – try not just to focus on knowledge, understanding and awareness of how complex and messy things are – but also engage students in or expose them to activities and examples that show that things can change, or better yet, create spaces for students to become active in such activities and examples. When education about wicked problems stops with knowledge, understanding and awareness, it invites feelings of powerlessness and apathy, which will do more harm than good in our quest for a world that is more sustainable than the one in prospect.





closing words

We as Green Office are very enthusiastic about our Green Teachers and their effort to contribute to sustainability on our university! We would like to thank all of them for contributing to our university and to the Green Teacher Awards 2016: They are the ones setting an example! We therefore hope they will continue to work this way and to inspire others.

It was good to see that not only sustainability related courses have Green Teachers and therefore that it is possible for everyone to teach in a green way. We therefore want to ask all different readers of this booklet (students, teachers and other employees) to spread the word and in this way inspire all of Wageningen UR. Together we can make our university and the world a lot greener!

If you would like to know more about the Green Teacher Awards or our other projects, please visit our website www.greenofficewageningen.nl



Sustainability's goal
is to CREATE
POSSIBILITIES
not to LIMIT
OPTIONS.

