

## Keynote Speaker



**Dr. Dan Riskin**

### Effective science communication requires listening to what your audience wants

Sunday, July 7th @ 5:30pm

Rozanski Hall, room 104

University of Guelph, ON

There are many incentives for scientists to communicate their work to people outside their own field. It can help new ideas spread across disciplines, help scientists advocate for funding, and help build public trust and support for science itself. Plant scientists do some of the most important work in the world today, connected with basic issues such as food security, sustainability, and human adaptation to climate change. But despite the importance of their fields, plant scientists often have a difficult time wresting public attention away from stories in other scientific disciplines, including zoology, medicine, and space science. In this keynote, I'll talk about my experience working in science communication, and offer some informed suggestions about how to get the attention of news journalists, or people in other popular media. Ultimately, I will argue that audiences are most interested in the big, unsolved questions that scientists go after, and that focusing on those, along with stories of human experience, can make science communication more effective than simply focusing on the discoveries we've most recently made.

**Dan Riskin**, PhD, is a scientist, author, and television personality. He is best known in Canada for his seven-year tenure as the co-host of Discovery's flagship Science Program, *Daily Planet*. In the US and elsewhere, he is recognized as the host of Animal Planet's hugely successful show about parasites, *Monsters Inside Me*. Dan has published more than 20 papers in scientific journals, including *Nature*, mostly about the biomechanics of bats. To make science accessible and interesting to wide audiences, Dan has appeared as a guest on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson*, *The Dr. Oz Show*, *The Doctors*, *CNN Tonight with Don Lemon*, *CBS This Morning*, *The CTV National News with Lisa LaFlamme*, *Global's Morning Show*, *CTV NewsChannel*, and *CP24*. His first popular book, *Mother Nature is Trying to Kill You* was a Canadian bestseller.