Canadian Society for Horticultural Science (CSHS)

2026 National Annual Conference

June 17-20, 2026

Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia

Inclusive Canadian Horticulture from Coast to Coast to Coast

The places we will gather are the **unceded, un-surrendered ancestral and present-day lands of the Mi'kmaw nation called Mi'kma'ki**. Acadia University is located within the district of **Sɨpekne'katik, the area of wild turnip and potato**, in the place they called **Esoqwatik, "where the water stops"**. It is a place that is rich with the stories of Kluscap and home to the Mi'kmaw creation story. It is a place that as settlers and newcomers we co-exist in the spirit of Peace and Friendship. We pay respect to this land, its people, the L'nu, and show gratitude for their hospitality and teachings. Weliolaq. Thank-you.

Indigenous Protocols Handbook, Acadia University

The 2026 CSHS National Annual Conference will celebrate Canadian horticultural innovations and collaborations from Coast to Coast to Coast. We are thrilled to welcome our regional Indigenous partners from Glooscap First Nation and the Annapolis Valley First Nation, as well as our peers in horticultural science and technology from across Canada. We expect up to one hundred delegates, including experts in horticultural crop genetics, physiology, pest and disease management, Indigenous and Northern horticulture, horticulture technology, and more. Among these will be the next generation of science leaders, presenting rich opportunities for knowledge exchange and future collaboration. We will award exceptional students with cash prizes to recognize their research achievements.

The conference will begin on **Wednesday, June 17th**, with a **Local Tour** of the Nova Scotia Annapolis Valley, including a showcase of the AAFC Kentville Research and Development Centre, lunch at a local winery, and a visit to Webster Farms owned by the Annapolis Valley First Nation. **Conference badge pickup, poster and display setup, and onsite-registration will begin at 3:00 PM on in Fountain Commons.** In the evening, we will convene in the Acadia University KC Irving Centre Garden Room for a Welcome Reception and Mixer with all conference delegates.

Our first day of conference proceedings, **Thursday, June 18th**, will focus on **Indigenous-led horticulture** projects and community food initiatives. We will begin with an opening ceremony from Elder Dr. Lorraine Whitman, followed by talks from Keynote Speaker Dr. Kyle Bobiwash, Assistant Professor and Indigenous Scholar at the University of Manitoba, Indigenous Chair Mrs. Heather Berry, and many other inspiring speakers. The CSHS Annual General Meeting, Chaired by Dr. Lord Abbey, will take place over lunch. The afternoon will close with an **Indigenous Talking Circle** during which time our speakers will reflect on their experiences as Indigenous community members and allies, and consider how each of us can, in our own way, contribute to inclusive and secure food systems. In the evening, our Student Chair, Ms. Sarah Drury, will host a Paint, Pub, and Bonfire event for student delegates to get to know each other and enjoy the small-town nightlife in Wolfville.

Our second day of proceedings, **Friday June 19th**, will expand the scope of discussion to address critical topics in the areas of **horticultural innovation and adaptation**. We will begin with a Keynote Address from Dr. Shahpour Alirezaee, Assistant Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Windsor, who will examine the applications and prospects of artificial intelligence in horticulture. We will then hear regional perspectives on climate adaptation and resiliency from Dr. Harrison Wright, AAFC Plant Physiologist, and Dr. Vicky Levesque, AAFC Soil Health Scientist. The day will continue with breakout sessions for focused presentations on crop improvement, fruits, horticulture technology, and vegetables, featuring a suite of invited speakers, oral presenters, and graduate student oral presenters.

In the afternoon, we will have an **Open Poster Session** featuring graduate and undergraduate student presenters as well as snacks and refreshments for visiting members of the community. In the evening, we will celebrate science excellence with a **Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony** in the Fountain Commons Great Hall. CSHS Lifetime Member Dr. Shahrokh Khanizadeh will share a personal reflection on the history and importance of the society and CSHS Communications Officer Dr. Raphael Ofoe will speak about his experiences as an early career academic in horticultural science. CSHS Awards Chair Dr. Vasantha Rupasinghe will present awards to graduate and undergraduate students for their outstanding oral and poster presentations at the conference.

Our final day of proceedings, **Saturday, June 20th**, will begin with plenary lectures by Dr. Gurpreet Singh Selopal, Assistant Professor of Engineering at Dalhousie University and Dr. Jayasankar Subramanian, Professor of Plant Agriculture at the University of Guelph. Their invited lectures will cover the themes of **nanotechnology and contemporary plant breeding**, providing a future-focused outlook and inspiration for continued conversation as we close our formal program. After coffee, we are pleased to offer free technical workshops in Data Science and Grant Writing for our delegates.

- The **R Data Science Skills Workshop**, hosted by Acadia Faculty and Research Associates Dr. Danielle Quinn, Ms. Paige Levangie and Mr. Terrell Roulston, will cover the basics of data manipulation and plotting, along with a simple introduction to GIS and modeling in R. The focus will be on keeping things practical and low-pressure so participants leave feeling more confident using R. This hands-on R workshop is open to all skill levels, whether you've never touched R or just want to get more comfortable using it.

- The **Grant Writing Workshop**, hosted by Acadia Professor Dr. Kirk Hillier, will feature a panel of academic and government scientists with extensive experience in grant writing and review. The panelists are Dr. Lord Abbey, Dalhousie University; Dr. Bourlaye Fofana, AAFC; Dr. Simone Castellarin, The University of British Columbia; and Dr. Marco Todesco, The University of British Columbia. The workshop will cover the funding landscape in Canada, the anatomy of a strong proposal, common pitfalls, strategic grant development, and practical tools for grant writing in the natural sciences. Dr. Kirk Hillier will have copies of his new book, Rebel Researcher: The Unconventional Path to Discovery, available for sale.

The conference will end at 12:30 PM on Saturday, June 20th.

The Conference Chair is Dr. Béatrice Amyotte who leads the national small fruit germplasm development program for Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC); she is an ally and collaborator for Indigenous-led berry research. The Local Chair is Dr. Zoë Migicovsky, Canada Research Chair in Agri-Food and Sustainable Agriculture at Acadia University; her laboratory studies the diversity of perennial fruit plants and their crop wild relatives from genomic and phenomic perspectives. The Indigenous Chair is Mrs. Heather Berry, a proud member of the Mohawks of Kahnawake and the Deputy Director of Indigenous Science at AAFC. Our Society President is Dr. Lord Abbey, Professor of Horticulture at Dalhousie University; his laboratory studies the technological development and valorization of health-based sustainable food systems and food security. On behalf of the CSHS and our brilliant conference committee, we are pleased to welcome you all from near and far to our home in Mi'kma'ki and to share in this wonderful opportunity for science and learning.