



EU-LIFE Woman Postdoc Mentoring Programme

Short bios of mentors



Hilde Nelissen

Group leader

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Hilde Nelissen is group leader at the Center for Plant Systems Biology at the VIB and Ghent University. Her research career has focused on the central biological question: How do growth processes determine final plant organ size? Initially, she approached this using molecular biology studying Arabidopsis leaf development. As her interest shifted towards applied research, Hilde redirected her focus to maize. What started as translational research to bring knowledge from Arabidopsis to crops and from the lab to the field, gradually developed into a research line with the goal to decipher the instructor networks that govern leaf size, organ growth and ultimately yield in maize. Because plant organ size control is an important yield component that is also severely impacted by climate change, the teams ultimate goal is to deepen our understanding of the growth regulatory networks to achieve climate resilient crops. To address these biological questions, the team implements a range of molecular and phenotyping technologies, including single cell and spatial transcriptomics. Hilde is currently the co-chair of the spatial omics committee of the Plant Cell Atlas initiative. At Ghent University, Hilde is a lecturer for the courses 'Academic Storytelling', 'Plant Research Technologies' and 'Plant Yield'. Our team aims to create an inclusive atmosphere that stimulates critical thinking, creativity, team work, personal development, job satisfaction, personal fulfillment, mutual respect, scientific transparency and research ethics, while leaving room for serendipity.