

Meet a New ASP Member

This issue, we meet new ASP member, Ms. Kelsey Gustafson, a Nutrition Scientist specializing in botanicals at NBTY Inc., a vitamin and supplement company in Ronkonkoma, New York. Ms. Gustafson studied at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, and discusses her involvement in researching a new therapy for sickle cell disease, her passion for botanical medicine, and her enthusiasm for ginseng. We welcome Ms. Gustafson to the ASP and look forward to meeting her in person.

By Dr. Dan Kulakowski

How did you hear about the ASP?

I presented a poster at International Congress of Natural Products Research (ICNPR 2012) in New York City, and was impressed by the passionate, high energy people in attendance and the quality of research being conducted by ASP members.

Why did you join ASP?

I recently joined NBTY Inc. as a Nutrition Scientist to support the safety and efficacy of our botanical products and want to keep informed about research and conferences in this field.

Do you belong to any other scientific societies?

I am a member of the Society for Economic Botany and United Plant Savers.

What are your current research interests in pharmacognosy?

I am interested in translational research on botanicals and partnerships that can bridge the gap between academia and industry, development of evidence-based botanical products, traditional medicine, synergistic and antagonistic interactions in botanical formulations, and fingerprinting and standardization of botanical dietary supplements using chemical and biological methods.

What is your scientific background?

I studied medicinal chemistry and food science at Rutgers, under the guidance of Drs. Jim Simon and Qing-Li Wu. My areas of focus were natural products research, analytical chemistry, and botanical quality control. I received my MS in Medicinal Chemistry for work on characterization and standardization of a sorghum leaf extract traditionally used in the treatment of sickle cell disease in Nigeria, which was funded by a National Institutes of Health Small Business Innovation Research grant. This extract was well tolerated and reduced pain and fatigue in sickle cell patients in a recent Phase IB clinical trial. A randomized, placebo-controlled Phase II study is planned in up to 100 sickle cell patients, pending available funding.



Ms. Kelsey Gustafson

What would you like to achieve through your membership?

I would like to explore opportunities for collaborative partnerships between academia and industry to improve the authenticity, safety, and efficacy of botanical dietary supplements.

What do you like doing in your spare time?

I enjoy traveling, camping and being outdoors, practicing ashtanga yoga, experimenting in the kitchen and trying new foods, meditating, reading, and writing.

What are you currently reading?

Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm by Stephen Harrod Buhner. Thought-provoking and poetic, he has a beautiful way of synthesizing natural philosophy, herbalism, ecology, and art, while maintaining a wry sense of humor.

What is your favorite organism (to study, or for general interest)?

I love ginseng (*Panax ginseng* and *P. quinquefolius*) depending on the occasion. I prefer whole roots and small batch extracts, so it is a dream of mine to visit Changbai Mountain and the botanical markets of China. ■

I am interested in translational research on botanicals and partnerships that can bridge the gap between academia and industry, development of evidence-based botanical products, traditional medicine, synergistic and antagonistic interactions in botanical formulations, and fingerprinting and standardization of botanical dietary supplements using chemical and biological methods.