



2018 Gifford Arboretum Lecture

We are very pleased to announce that our 2018 John C. Gifford Arboretum Lecture will be given by **Drs. Douglas E. Soltis and Pamela S. Soltis**, professors at the University of Florida and world-renowned experts on floral genomics and development; big-picture plant phylogeny; and phylogenomics, as well as next generation sequencing of plants. Dr. Doug Soltis is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Biology and the Florida Museum of Natural History. He has given TED talks and was elected to the National Academy of Sciences on May 8, 2017. Dr. Pam Soltis is a Distinguished Professor and the Curator of the Florida Museum of Natural History. This husband and wife team are the Principal Investigators of the Laboratory of Molecular Systematics & Evolutionary Genetics, commonly known as the “Soltis Lab,” and together they are increasing our understanding of plant and general evolution in significant ways.

While Dr. Doug Soltis focuses mainly on systematics, Dr. Pam Soltis works more on polyploidy and plant phylogenetics. Polyploidy is the ability of genomes to double and have 2 or more sets of homologous chromosomes, something that plants generally do more readily than members of the animal kingdom. This ability in plants has played a big part in improving food plants and, with mutations, can sometimes lead to new species. Both of these scientists are also to be congratulated for being elected on April 12, 2017 to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

For the Lecture, they will present "**Building and Exploring the Tree of Life - Mobilizing and Integrating Big Data in Analyses of Biodiversity.**" This promises to be a very interesting and informative presentation that you will not want to miss. It will also be another great chapter in the series of wonderful presentations that have constituted the Gifford Arboretum Lectures over the years. Please mark your calendar and make plans to attend this event on **Thursday, April 5, 2018 at 7:00 PM.**