

Dr. Linda E. Watson

Department of Botany

Dr. Linda E. Watson is a plant molecular systematist and serves as professor and head of botany at Oklahoma State University. She received her bachelor's degree in biological sciences from Louisiana State University-Shreveport and her doctorate in botany from the University of Oklahoma. She was the rare plant botanist with the Oklahoma Biological Survey from 1988 through 1995, where she was also program coordinator for the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Program. She accepted a position at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio in 1995. She then served as chair of botany at Miami from 2003 through 2008, before accepting the position at OSU in 2008.

She has co-authored 53 peer-reviewed journal papers and invited book chapters, and has published 21 taxonomic treatments for the Flora of North America, Jepson Flora of California and Flora of Oklahoma. She has made 18 invited presentations at national and international conferences and has contributed more than 100 presentations at state, regional and national conferences. She has mentored 13 graduate students, five postdoctoral associates and hosted six visiting scientists. She has conducted fieldwork in Spain, Morocco, South Africa, the Caribbean and throughout North America. She has served on many committees for professional societies, including the Botanical Society of America, and has served on nine panels for the National Science Foundation. She is presently the president of the American Society of Plant Taxonomists. She also serves on the executive board and editorial committee of the Flora of Oklahoma, Inc.

Dr. Watson's research is focused on constructing molecular phylogenies to address systematic and evolutionary questions in plants, particularly for the Asteraceae – the Sunflower Family. She and her team seek to understand patterns of biogeography and species diversifications, with a focus on how climatic changes during the Tertiary affected diversification in Mediterranean climates on all five continents. Her lab has studied a diversity of plant groups. The thread that ties these studies together is the utilization of molecular phylogenies as independent frameworks with which to address systematic and evolutionary questions.



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