

Dr. Astri Wayadande

Department of Plant Pathology

Dr. Astri Wayadande was born and raised in central California, eventually graduating from UC Davis with a degree in entomology in 1983. After working for the California Cooperative Extension for a short time, she went to the University of Missouri and obtained a master's degree in entomology. She traveled further east to study leafhopper vectors of plant viruses at The Ohio State University, obtaining her Ph.D. in entomology in 1991. Shortly after that, she joined the laboratory of Dr. Jacqueline Fletcher in the department of plant pathology at Oklahoma State University to work on leafhopper vectors of plant pathogenic spiroplasmas. The relationship with Dr. Fletcher was a long and fruitful one. Together, they teamed up with Dr. Ulrich Melcher in biochemistry and molecular biology to study the cellular and molecular characteristics of leafhopper, spiroplasma, and plant host relationships and later, to study a new plant disease threat, Cucurbit yellow vine decline.

Dr. Wayadande was hired as an assistant professor in entomology and plant pathology in 2007. Her interests continue to be in the areas of plant disease pathogen transmission by insects, feeding behavior of hemipterans, and functional anatomy of insect vectors. However, her work took an interesting twist recently when she became an active researcher in the food safety arena. Dr. Wayadande's current research focuses on filth fly transmission of *E. coli* O157:H7 and *Salmonella* to leafy greens, leafhopper feeding behavior, and forensic analysis of insect vector populations.



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