



BIOGRAPHY

Professor Khidir W. Hilu, Ph.D.

Professor of Biology and Director of the Massey Herbarium, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech),
Dept. of Biological Sciences; Molecular Plant Science Program; and the Program of Genetics, Bioinformatics, and Computational Biology

Department of Biological Sciences
Virginia Tech
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061, USA
Tel: + 1-540-231-5407
E-mail: hilukw@vt.edu

Khidir Hilu is born in 1946 in Baghdad, Iraq and has resided in the USA since 1977. He speaks English, and Arabic languages fluently and understands Italian. He is married to Kieran Hilu, an instructor of English as a Second Language at the English Language Institute of Virginia Tech, the parents of their two children Yasamine and Enmar. After finishing secondary school in Baghdad, Iraq, he did undergraduate degree at the College of Science-University of Baghdad (1962-1966), as top graduate in his class he was employed as a teaching assistant at the Department of Botany and taught at University of Mustansria (1966-1972), meanwhile he worked on his master degree (awarded 1971). He received his PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA (1972-1976). After finishing his PhD studies he taught at Oklahoma City University (1977-1978), worked as a Research Associate at the University of California-Riverside (1978-1979) and the University of Illinois (1979-1982). In 1982, he was offered an Assistant Professor position at Virginia Tech and was then promoted to Full Professor. His research has focused on the genetic diversity of agricultural crops with emphasis on rice, wheat, peanuts, cowpea, and semiarid millet crops. He also worked on molecular biology of genes relating to food crops such as protein genes in cereals and allergy genes in peanuts. He has been involved in germplasm resources collections and assessment of their potential use in the traditional breeding and biotechnology for introduction of useful agricultural traits into the crops, and has conducted trips to Algeria as a consultant to the Food and Agricultural Organization and to Kenya for such studies. He has a major program in understanding plant biodiversity using molecular biology and bioinformatics tools. Currently, he has been involved in an over two million dollar funded research program to update the supercomputer at Virginia Tech. He served as member of the review panel for the U. S. Agency for International development (USAID) and the subcommittee on Agriculture and Forestry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Committee of Agenda 2000." He established a molecular biology laboratory at Egerton College in Kenya as part of a 7-year USAID-funded program and a similar lab in Morocco as part of a Fulbright scholarship program. In 2009, he was part of a group of scientists from US universities that met with officials in Iraq for the reconstruction of education and technology and also was part of the NISA conference in Baghdad. He reviewed research projects for the National Science Foundation, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Agricultural Organization, United Nations Development Program, British Natural Environment Research Council, German Research Foundation, Scientific Research Flanders of Belgium, and the Austrian Science Foundation. He is a member of several national and international professional organizations (BSA, ASPT, SSE and SB, IAPT, IPG) as well as member of several other professional networks and service organizations (NISA, IAAPC - Biology Committee, GPWG), and co-organize four symposia. He has over 100 publications in scientific journals, over 140 proceedings abstracts and is an editor of a book.