
VICI GRANTS FOR TESTERINK AND ETTEMA

Wageningen researchers Thijs Ettema and Christa Testerink have each secured a Vici grant of one and a half million euros from the Dutch Research Council (NWO). The Vici grants let experienced researchers develop innovative lines of research.

Christa Testerink, professor of Plant Physiology, will study how plant growth and development is inhibited when there is a lack of water or only salt water. Plants try to resolve this problem by changing the way the roots grow or when the plant flowers. Testerink wants to know what makes this flexibility possible and how it contributes to crops' stress tolerance.

COMPLEX LIFE

Professor of Microbiology Thijs Ettema studies the origins of complex life on earth. Plants and animals evolved from single-celled microorganisms. Recent research has shown that Asgard archaea, a group of unicellular organisms, are related to complex cell life forms. Ettema will study the physiology and cell biology of these archaea in order to get a better understanding of the origins of complex life.

INNOVATIVE

Testerink and Ettema are relatively new professors in Wageningen. They will be able to use the 1.5 million euro grants to set up their own research groups. The Vici grants are part of NWO's innovation incentive scheme. The funding council also hands out Veni grants to talented young researchers and Vidi grants to experienced postdocs. This time round, NWO gave a total of 32 Vici grants to researchers at Dutch universities and medical research centres. **AS**



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM