

Division of Sciences
Public Lecture



Seeds without sex: Revisiting Mendel's nemesis

Dr Ross Bicknell

Plant and Food Research
Lincoln University



In the middle of the 1800's Gregor Mendel was unraveling the mystery of genetic inheritance. His experiments on the garden pea are now well known and he is rightly cited as the father of modern genetics. Mendel turned to Carl Nägeli, a leading Swiss botanist of the day, who appears to have suggested that Mendel use another species to confirm the universality of his findings. The plant he suggested was *Hieracium*, a genus of daisies common throughout Europe. What neither Nägeli nor Mendel could have known is that *Hieracium* forms seeds without sex (apomixis). Try as he might Mendel could never get this plant to act like pea! This lecture will follow Mendel's efforts, then explore our current understanding of the reproductive uniqueness of *Hieracium*. In a grand irony, Mendel's nemesis has become a model for a process that specifically departs from the normal pattern of inheritance.

WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2013 | 6.00PM
ARCHWAY 1 LECTURE THEATRE
UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

ALL WELCOME