



## Prof Julie Gray

### Bio

**Julie Gray is the Professor of Plant Cell Signalling at the University of Sheffield.** Her group study stomatal development and function. Recently, they have created barley, wheat and rice varieties with fewer stomata that have improved drought tolerance and reduced water requirement. Her research group's work on rice has been highly commended by UNESCO and recently featured in a BBC World documentary, and their work on Mexican beans won a Newton Prize. They also study the molecular pathways that allow stomata to open and close and have shown that these pathways evolved soon after the appearance of stomata in the fossil record over 400 million years ago.

**Julie studied Biochemistry at Liverpool University, and was a PhD student at Nottingham University where she** researched genes that control fruit ripening and was part of the team who created slow ripening tomatoes. She won Royal Society funding to carry out postdoctoral work at the University of Melbourne where she investigated how flowers prevent self-pollination.