

Sarah O'Connor received her degrees in chemistry from the University of Chicago (BSc) and MIT (PhD), and performed her post-doctoral work at Harvard Medical School. She was a Professor and Project Leader in Biological Chemistry at the John Innes Centre from 2011 to 2019. She has been the Director of the Department of Natural Product Biosynthesis at the Max Planck Institute of Chemical Ecology since summer 2019. Her research interests focus on plants' natural products, with a particular interest in the iridoids and alkaloids. Her research group takes a broad approach to understand plant biosynthetic pathways, ranging from gene discovery, mechanistic enzymology, and metabolic engineering. Her research was recently featured in Science, Nature and Journal of the American Chemical Society. Dr. O'Connor has received various awards throughout her career, including Royal Society of Chemistry Perkin Prize for Organic Chemistry (2019); European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant (2018); Elected to European Molecular Biology Organization (2017), Wain Medal (2013), to name a few.