



**2020 C.D. Nelson Award**  
**Dr. Mark Belmonte**  
**University of Manitoba**

As an independent researcher, Dr. Mark Belmonte has been highly successful in making outstanding research contributions to two different fields: seed development and plant-fungal interactions. Since joining the University of Manitoba as a faculty member in 2010, Dr. Mark Belmonte has developed a well-funded research program supported by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, the Canola Council of Canada, CFI, Mitacs, NSERC, and his own province and university. A sustained and ambitious program of research is evident in over 40 peer-reviewed articles, many in high impact journals, in addition to reviews and book chapters. Belmonte lab members have worked to elucidate cellular and molecular interactions in seed development, and in harmful plant-fungal interactions in key Canadian crop plants, notably Canola. From this research has come the development of innovative crop protection methods with the potential to reduce or replace the use of potentially harmful broad-spectrum fungicides, with two patents filed in 2016 and 2019. Dr. Belmonte's expertise has been recognized by many invitations to speak at regional, national, and international meetings and institutions, and through interviews and media profiles. In the Belmonte laboratory, over 45 undergraduate and graduate students and a dozen postdoctoral fellows, research associates and technicians have received high quality training in classic and contemporary plant biology methods including laser microdissection to track patterns of gene expression in specific plant cell types, and the use of RNA interference to modulate plant-fungal interactions. This quality training is evident in the awards and funding granted to his students, as well as in the multiple institutional awards made to Dr. Belmonte in the last five years for mentorship, outreach, scholarship, research and service. The CSPB/SCBV is delighted to honour Dr. Mark Belmonte as the recipient of the 2020 C.D. Nelson Award.