

## **Employing roots effectively for societal well-being**

**Peter J Gregory**

Human societies in different places have used roots for a variety of purposes including food, medicines, controlling weeds and engineering. In the context of this symposium with its focus on societal responses to climate change, biodiversity loss, and food security, I will draw on research that demonstrates how improved knowledge of root growth and activity permits more sustainable agricultural practices and land use for diverse purposes. Our better understanding of the interactions at the root-soil interface has opened exciting prospects for responding to current societal concerns and for the development of new root-based industries bringing economic and environmental benefits. Finally, roots provide artistic expression of humanity's links to each other and the natural world.