LAB GUIDELINES TO KEEP THE LAB CLEAN AND IN ORDER
(Compiled by Aparna Krishnamurthy with additional comments added by Dr Saba)
For all the lab members including OPS and visiting students

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:
- If you are the last person to leave the lab please turn off the light and close all the doors. All users should have their own keys, so it is OK to lock behind you when you leave.
- Do not clutter the sink area.
- Use gloves and lab coat while working with experiments involving harsh chemicals.
- For chemical solutions, please double check they are not toxic before putting it for cleaning. Hazardous chemical wastes are stored in screw-capped bottles in the fumehood for pick up by environmental health and safety office.
- Please remove gloves to use computer/printer/files and other common accessories in the lab.
- Keep the -20, -80 and cold storage areas clean and organized.
- Please use β-mercaptoethanol and other toxic volatiles under the hood (so it will not spread all over the lab)
- Do not put the glass and biological wastes in the dustbins. Glass waste should be put in the glass-waste bin near the washing sink and biological waste should be put in the biological waste bins next to the laminar hoods.

COMMON AREAS:
Sink
- To wash glasswares, use the following steps: Soak the glassware in soap water for about 1 h or longer, scrub with a brush, rinse in tap water at least three times [or until the soap bubbles are gone], rinse it in deionized water once, dry the glassware on the cart next to the sink and place the glassware back in the shelves when dry. As of Fall 2011, we have no OPS student worker to do glassware washing to everyone. This could change in the future. So for now, everyone does their own glassware washing.
- Toxic chemicals/solutions should NOT be discarded in the sink.
- Glass tubes with bacterial/other cultures should be treated with bleach before disposal.
- Be considerate to carefully clean and not to misplace any small glass wares (measuring cylinders) and magnetic stir bars.
- Do not discard soil/planting material/media in the sink.

Weighing balance / pH meter / Centrifuge / Electrophoresis / other instruments
- Please CLEAN the machines you are using and the SURROUNDING AREA every time you use it.
- TURN-OFF the machine after use without fail.
- If you are going to change the settings of any equipment that someone else is already using please check with the person before you change the settings.
Electrophoresis unit needs to be cleaned whenever used and discard the EtBr waste in the appropriate bin kept below the unit. Handle EtBr carefully (it is a hazardous mutagen)!

Laminar hood
- Clean the bench before and after use.
- Turnoff the burner without fail.
- Remove all your stuff after use and in order to do that do not stack your solutions/bottles on the study table next to the laminar hood!
- There are two places where you can discard biological waste next to the two laminar hoods (Petri plates with microbial cultures/seedlings needs to be autoclaved). Please DO NOT discard plates with toxic/radioactive chemicals in the biological waste.

Toxic/radioactive chemical users
- Handle toxic/radioactive chemicals CAREFULLY. They could be carcinogenic and potential mutagens!!
- Use only the SPECIFIED (or your own) bench area to use above chemicals. It is VERY IMPORTANT not to contaminate the common areas with health hazardous chemicals. Take care of yourselves and others in the lab.
- Discard toxic/radioactive waste in appropriate places (You must know where, if you are using one!!)
- Lab radioactivity survey should be done every time you use the radiolabelled chemicals (at least within 2-3 days of use) along with the general swipe survey at the end of the month.

Working area/bench
- All the solutions should be labeled. All the bottles with liquid should be kept in the racks below to your eye level.
- Use hand gloves, facemasks and lab coat whenever required.
- Keep your work area clean after use.
- In order to keep your working bench clean, do not dump your trash on other’s bench!

Greenhouse
- Cleanout containers and old plants whenever your experiment is completed.
- Discard plant material, used potting media and paper waste in appropriate bins.
- Once in a month, help in removing collected waste from the greenhouse to the dumpsters.
- Inform Dr Saba if you notice a failure in the irrigation system.
- The underside of the benches need to be sprayed with Roundup once in two months to keep weeds out.

Notebook and Data management
• Keep a good record of your work in a data entry notebook with dates and page numbers.

• Before a major experiment, write out in a brief format, the steps involved, the number of replicates, the hypothesis to be tested and the technique to be used and key references and e-mail it to Dr. Saba. Discuss it in a lab meeting or via e-mail to get suggestions for improvement. After collecting the data, enter them in an Excel file, saved with the experiment name and date in the file name, and e-mail it to Dr. Saba. You can also draw figures of mean and std error values to fit one column width with the final letter size to be not smaller than 2 mm. This practice will help you in putting together publications or presentations for meetings.

• You can consider yourself not making good enough progress if you do not have enough data to write a complete manuscript for a refereed journal article at the end of one year. Same can be said if you do not attend a major conference each year. With extraordinary competition in the job market, these are really minimum standards and I am sure you will aim for more.

😊 Thanks a lot for keeping the lab clean, in order and productive 😊