

Prague gets hold of modern genetics founder Mendel's papers

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Germany has handed to the Czech Republic a manuscript of Johann Gregor Mendel, founder of modern genetics, on his plant hybridization experiments, the Czech foreign minister said Thursday.

"This is a scientific work of immense value," Karel Schwarzenberg told a news conference on Mendel, who lived from 1822 to 1884, and demonstrated that the inheritance traits of certain pea plants followed patterns.

"Mendel was one of the greatest scholars of his era, a precursor of today's scientists who study DNA," he said.

The manuscript entitled 'Experiments on Plant Hybridization' was presented by Mendel at two natural history society meetings in 1865, when he was an Augustinian friar in Brno.

The return of the papers is the "result of sustained diplomatic efforts," the Czech minister said. It will be displayed at the museum of the Augustinian abbey in Brno where Mendel died in 1884.

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