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Streptomycin [strep”to-mi’sin]

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In the late 1930s, Selman Waksman, a soil microbiologist working at the New Jersey Agricultural Station of Rutgers University, began a large-scale program to screen soil bacteria for antimicrobial activity. By 1943, Albert Schatz, a PhD student working in Waksman’s laboratory, had isolated streptomycin from Streptomyces griseus (from the Greek strepto- [“twisted”] + mykēs [“fungus”] and the Latin griseus, “gray”).

In 1944, William H. Feldman and H. Corwin Hinshaw at the Mayo Clinic showed its efficacy against Mycobacterium tuberculosis. Waksman was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1952 for his discovery of streptomycin, although much of the credit for the discovery has since been ascribed to Schatz. Schatz later successfully sued to be legally recognized as a co-discoverer of streptomycin.

Sources


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