



Plant-Insect Ecosystems Section

AUGUST 2021 NEWSLETTER

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P-IE Governing Council

David Onstad

President,
dwonstad@gmail.com

Rebecca Schmidt-Jeffris

Vice President,
rebecca.schmidt@usda.gov

Surendra Dara

Vice President-Elect,
skdara@ucanr.edu

Anjel Helms

Secretary,
anjel.helms@gmail.com

Lina Bernaola

Treasurer,
linabernaola@gmail.com

Jeff Bradshaw

Past President,
jbradshaw2@unl.edu

Melissa Willrich Siebert

ESA Governing Board Representative,
melissa.siebert@corteva.com

Michelle Boone

Student Representative,
boon0086@umn.edu

Nicholas Larson

Early-Career Professional Representative,
nicholas.larson@ars.usda.gov



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Submit Proposals for 2023-2024 Science Policy Events

It's not too early to think about organizing a science policy field tour, workshop, or other activity for 2023 or 2024. These can be collaborative events that promote learning and engagement on timely topics that challenge the plant-insect ecosystem science arena. **The deadline for proposals is August 31, 2021.** The P-IE Tour Oversight Committee composed of Johanna Elsensohn and Cheri Abraham are excited to assist with event ideas and proposals. Contact Johanna and Cheri with questions and for feedback on event ideas (johanna.elsensohn@usda.gov, cherimabraham@gmail.com). Science policy activity guidelines as well as example budgets and stakeholder invitation letters are posted on the [P-IE Tour Resources webpage](#). In September 2023, there will be a P-IE sponsored tour focused on invasive species, but a second event occurring in another part of the year can be supported. In 2022, we will sponsor a biocontrol field tour. Start brainstorming ideas now for novel and engaging science policy educational events for 2023 or 2024. Submit your proposals to David Onstad, dwonstad@gmail.com.

P-IE Section Award Winners

Undergraduate Student Achievement in Entomology

Mason Ward, University of Missouri (mentor Deborah Finke)
Yahel Ben-Zvi, Rutgers University (mentor Chloe Hawkings)

Professional Awards

P-IE Lifetime Achievement Award in Entomology
Galen Dively, University of Maryland

P-IE Recognition Award in Entomology (sponsored by Syngenta)
Surendra Dara, University of California, Riverside

IPM Team Award (sponsored by Corteva Agriscience)
Team Project: Arizona Pink Bollworm Project

**Bruce Tabashnik, Leighton Liesner,
Timothy Dennehy, Jeff Fabrick, Steven Naranjo, Yves
Carriere, Peter Ellsworth, Xianchun Li, Goplan Unnithan,
Alexander Yelich**

Congratulations student and professional award winners for 2021!

P-IE Needs a Representative to the ESA Science Policy Committee

We need a member who is interested in and has experience in science policy. The Science Policy Committee oversees the ESA's efforts to engage with policy makers and the Science Policy Fellows program. The Committee also guides the development of ESA position statements concerning important issues. The deadline for applications is September 17. The P-IE Governing Council will appoint a candidate in October. Please submit applications to <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/6486ffb16a7644dab8df8911e75554d5>

P-IE 3rd Annual Speed-Networking Event

The P-IE section will be hosting its third annual speed-networking event where ESA registered students and ECPs can meet one on one with several P-IE veteran members. This event will be held virtually the week prior to the national meeting and will be open to those who register for this event. As with the previous speed-networking events this will be limited in the number of participants. If you are a student/ECP that would like to participate, or if you are a veteran member of ESA and would like to be one of the members that the students and ECPs meet with please contact **Nick Larson** (nicholas.larson@usda.gov).

2021 Hot Topics Announced, Volunteers Needed

At the P-IE Section Networking Session in Denver on **November 1**, we will hold eight, concurrent, in-person discussions on hot topics related to the old ESA sub-sections: arthropod behavior, biocontrol, insect vectors of plant disease, insect pathology, quantitative ecology, forest entomology, and host plant resistance. We need additional volunteers to lead each of these round-table discussions. We have also added apiculture and social insects as a hot topic for those of you interested in ants, termites, bees etc. If you would like to help members discuss the future of these sub-disciplines and identify actions that our Section and Society can make to support members in these areas, please contact David Onstad (dwonstad@gmail.com).

Calling all artists and artistic entomologists: Logo Design Contest

The Plant-Insect Ecosystems Section of the Entomological Society of America is holding a design contest! The first place winner will receive \$200 and their design will be used on the items. Second place will receive \$100. The deadline is 12 pm ET on September 25th. Please email Rebecca Schmidt-Jeffris (rebecca.schmidt@usda.gov) with your final design or any questions. Files too large to attach can be sent as Google Drive links.

Contest criteria are:

- Anyone, regardless of membership status in ESA or the Section is eligible to participate
- The design must be suitable for baseball caps, t-shirts, and tote bags
- Limit the design to up to 5 colors
- Design must include the words "Plant-Insect Ecosystems" or "P-IE" and "ESA"
- Design should incorporate topics relevant to the section (e.g., biological control, herbivores, pollinators, crop pests, insect ecology and behavior)
- A short 3-6 sentence blurb should be included with the design to explain the logo



P-IE Policies and Procedures Have Been Updated!

Are you interested to learn more about P-IE Section roles and their responsibilities? Or committee responsibilities? Be sure to check out our *Policies and Procedures* document. Recently, the P-IE Governing Council approved mostly minor changes and added a new nominations subsection based on ESA staff proposal approved at our April GC meeting. Visit https://www.entsoc.org/sites/default/files/files/Sections/PIE/Resources/PIE_GC_Policies_Procedures_2021.pdf to view these updates.

Get to Know a P-IE Member



Dr. Hongmei Li-Byarlay is a Professor of Entomology at Central State University (CSU) in Wilberforce, Ohio. Her lab studies the behavior and genetics of honey bees. Their big question is what are the novel and unique molecular and genetic mechanisms underlying different social behaviors? Her lab tests innovative hypotheses of behavioral genetics using functional and evolutionary genomics, epigenomics, and physiology. The current research focuses of the lab are 1) Genomic and epigenomic bases of aggression and defensive behavior, 2) Oxidative stress and ageing of honey bees, 3) Grooming and biting behavior against parasitic mites and behavioral resistance, and, 4) Queen development and quality.

CSU is the only historically black university (HBCU) in Ohio and is a primarily an undergraduate institution. As a faculty member at the institution, Dr. Li-Byarlay described a couple of talented students currently working in the lab and their projects. “This summer I hosted several talented undergraduate students to work on different topics. Rising senior student, Mataio Gibson, is an international student from The Bahamas. He is interested in testing whether the size of parasitic mites is associated with honey bee grooming or biting behavior of honey bees against mites. Junior student, Lavano Sands, is studying the flight ability of worker bees between feral and commercial using a cool toy called the flight mill.

Dr. Li-Byarlay received her training at traditional 1862 land-grant institutions. She obtained her PhD from Purdue University and did postdoctoral research at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and North Carolina State University. CSU is an 1890 land grant institution and recently received this designation in 2014. This makes CSU the second land-grant institution in Ohio and a university where agricultural research and extension is relatively new. Dr. Li-Byarlay described the experience as follows, “Traditional land-grant institutions have had more than 100 years of growth in research resources, infrastructure, and support. Agricultural research here at CSU started only a few years before I started in Fall 2017. This was a very exciting and rare opportunity to start my own research program and set up my lab with sufficient funds to purchase equipment. I am passionate about doing research in both basic and applied topics of pollinators and social insects. I feel very honored to work with a lot of excellent students here.”

We wanted to know something positive that Dr. Ly-Byarlay has learned or done as a result of the pandemic. “The pandemic is definitely giving everyone a tough year to go through. I am so glad that my research students were able to complete their projects in the lab and their course and graduate on time in May this year. We had a lot of lab meetings, holiday party gatherings, and reading papers together on Zoom. Even though we cannot be in person, I was still happy to be able to spend significant amount of time with my students throughout the year. What I learned from the last 14 months is to be optimistic and embrace a slower life!”

If you want to learn more about Dr. Ly-Byarlay, her lab, or their research you can find them [here](#).

*Every other month we would like to showcase a PI-E members. **All members** are welcome to nominate themselves or others to be featured. If you would like to be featured please contact **Kacie Athey** kathey@illinois.edu.*



Member news– in memoriam

Dr. Jon Tollefson (emeritus, Iowa State University) passed away earlier this month. Well known as a leader in corn rootworm IPM, he was also a beloved mentor and colleague. His research focused broadly on the development of effective management practices for the North American corn belt. While at Iowa State University, he mentored numerous graduate students and led courses in pest management. He will be greatly missed.

