

Entomological Society of America Plant-Insect Ecosystems Section *December 2019 Newsletter*



<http://www.entsoc.org/pie>

In this issue

- Meet our new P-IE Governing Council members: Rebecca Schmidt-Jeffris and Anjel Helms
- Highlights from the 2020 P-IE Networking Session in St. Louis
- 2020 ESA Annual Meeting P-IE Section Symposium Selection Criteria
- P-IE Committee Open Positions
- Announcing the 2020 P-IE Science Policy Tour
- ***NEW*** -- Requesting member news!!

New P-IE Governing Council Members

P-IE Section Vice-President Elect:



Rebecca Schmidt-Jeffris

Dr. Rebecca Schmidt-Jeffris has been an ESA member since 2010. She is currently

a Research Entomologist for USDA-ARS in Wapato, WA; her position focuses on biological control in tree fruit. Rebecca received her Ph.D. in 2015 from Washington State University, where she investigated biological control of mites in apples. Her postdoctoral research at Cornell University examined the landscape ecology and management of European corn borer. Rebecca became involved in ESA leadership early in her career and has always enjoyed serving society members. Her leadership roles within ESA have included the ESA Student Affairs Committee (2013-2015, Chair in 2015), student liaison to the national Program Committee (2015), ICE SAC United States co-Chair (2014-2016), Early Career Professionals Committee (2015-2017), Publications Task Force (2018), and Southeastern Branch Program Chair (2018). Rebecca has organized nine symposia, three workshops, and four Student Debate competitions. The society has recognized her effective leadership and scholarship with the national Student Activity and Early Career Professional Extension awards, and the Pacific Branch Comstock and Student Leadership awards. She is currently finishing her three-year term as P-IE Governing Council Secretary. Rebecca is eager to continue serving our P-IE members in the role of VP-Elect. In particular, she wants to create new opportunities for more members to get involved in section activities, regardless of career stage or previous involvement. She is excited to implement ideas from the membership to increase section inclusiveness and relevance in response to changing member needs.

P-IE Section Secretary:



Anjel Helms

Anjel Helms is an Assistant Professor of chemical ecology in the Department of Entomology at Texas A&M University. She received bachelor's degrees in biology and biochemistry from Pepperdine University. Prior to her graduate training, she spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Germany, performing chemical and molecular analyses of transgenic spruce trees to investigate defensive traits against bark beetles. She completed a Ph.D. in ecology from Penn State, where her dissertation research examined the role of insect pheromones in enhancing plant anti-herbivore defenses. She was a USDA NIFA Postdoctoral Fellow in the Penn State Entomology Department, investigating plant and insect responses to chemical cues from entomopathogenic nematodes (EPN). At Texas A&M, her lab is expanding on this research to investigate the chemical ecology

of belowground interactions involving EPN, plants, insect herbivores, and plant-associated microbes. Some of her current research interests include chemical communication, plant and insect defense strategies, multi-trophic interactions, and belowground chemical ecology. Anjel has been a member of ESA and the PI-E section since attending her first ESA meeting in 2012.

Highlights from the 2020 P-IE Networking Session in St. Louis

We had a fantastic 2020 Networking Session at the ESA Annual Meeting in St. Louis, MO! Following a brief P-IE business report and comments from ESA President Bob Peterson, we had many honors and awards to share with our members. We

I like the open discussion format that allow the participants to take the conversation wherever they wanted within the chosen topic. – Hot Topic Participant

It was a great opportunity to know more about the everyday on academia/industry. – Speed Networking Participant

also watched the second and first place winners of the P-IE Pollinator Video Contest and heard from Clint Pilcher about the 2019 Science Policy Event concerning pest resistance management that took place in Iowa. Lastly, we added some new activities to the 2019 Networking

Session: “Speed Networking” and “Hot Topics”. Both events were very well received and our participant survey feedback from both events will ensure that both events will be planned again for 2020 in Orlando with improvements! Thank you to all of our volunteers who helped contribute to a successful 2019 ESA Annual Meeting from P-



Keyla Pruett, Taylor Van Winkle, and Marco Ponce (left to right) receiving the Undergraduate Achievement in Entomology Awards.

IE symposia moderation and judging to Hot Topic facilitators! Below are some photo highlights from the P-IE Networking Session.



Hilary Fischer— Kenneth and Barbara Starks Plant Resistance to Insects Graduate Student Award

Rachel Wilkins — Master's Student Achievement in Entomology Award



James Walgenback being presented with the P-IE Recognition Award in Entomology.



Fred Gould being presented with the P-IE Lifetime Achievement Award in Entomology.



The **Sugarcane Aphid IPM Team** receiving the 2019 Plant-Insect Ecosystem Integrated Pest Management Team Award.



P-IE section members engaged in a **Hot Topic** discussion about insect sampling methods and whether or not they are behind the times.

P-IE section members participating in a **Speed Networking** session where ESA Early Career Professional members discuss various career tracts with ESA Regular Members.

P-IE Section Symposia Selection Criteria for 2020 ESA Annual Meeting, Orlando, FL

Theme: Entomology for All

The Plant-Insect Ecosystems Section encourages all members to consider submission of a Section Symposium proposal. Due to program constraints, there will be a limit on the number of proposals accepted. The P-IE Governing Council will use the following guidelines to evaluate the submissions. High-ranking symposia not selected as Section Symposia may be recommended as Member Symposia.

- At least one of the organizers must be a P-IE member at the time of submission.
- Successful symposia submissions should relate to the meeting's theme, "*Entomology for All*" Example topics include communication, policy, societal benefits from entomology, and others.
- We encourage organizers to be innovative, wildly creative, and thoughtful in proposing sessions that are engaging and visionary. Proposals that cover a diversity of topics, such as concepts, disciplines, ecosystems, taxa and others, are highly encouraged.
- Proposals are strongly encouraged that include collaborations and feature speakers from a variety of backgrounds and geographic regions (including gender, ethnicity, career stage, and organization/affiliation), reflecting the diversity of our members. Submitters should indicate how they have made an effort to ensure their proposal is inclusive and representative of the diverse P-IE membership.
- Clearly define symposia objective(s), statement of purpose, speakers, and presentation topics.
- Symposia proposals must provide an indication of speaker confirmation, and not just an 'idea list.'

[Online Section Symposia Application](#)

Section and Member Symposia applications are due February 28, 2020. For questions about the application process, contact Becky Anthony (banthony@entsoc.org). Find previous section symposia from [Entomology 2019](#).

Volunteer to Serve on a P-IE Committee

Volunteer to Serve on a P-IE Committee

Member volunteers are needed to fill five P-IE committee openings (all are 3-year terms):

- 1) **Government representative** on the P-IE Awards Committee
- 2) **Southeastern Branch representative** on the P-IE Nominations Committee

Please submit a brief statement of your interest and experience for one of these volunteer committee positions to David Onstad (dwonstad@gmail.com). Thank you!

P-IE Science Policy Tour

Following the success of the 2018 Invasive Species Science Policy Tour in Pennsylvania, Drs. Lauren Diepenbrock (University of Florida) and David Coyle (Clemson University) are organizing an invasive species science policy tour to be held immediately following the 2020 National ESA meeting in Orlando, FL. This tour will include stops to learn



Citrus mealybug, *Planococcus citri*, photo by Lauren Diepenbrock



Redbay ambrosia beetle, *Xyleborus glabratus*, photo by Jiri Hulcr

about laurel wilt, a devastating disease in natural and managed avocado systems; HLB/citrus greening, a bacterial disease recently covered in the [Washington Post](#) that has fundamentally changed citrus production in Florida and other citrus-producing regions; fire ants and some non-chemical control tactics; and other invasive insects in citrus systems. Participants from academia, various

branches of government, industry, and NGOs are expected to attend. Check out future newsletters for more details!

Member News

We want to hear from you!! If you would like something shared – promotion, thesis successfully defended, honorary appointment, etc. ... We want to celebrate your achievement with you and the rest of the P-IE section membership! Contact Diane Alston (diane.alston@usu.edu) or Anh Tran (aktran@umn.edu) to have your news shared in the next newsletter.

P-IE Governing Council

Jeff Bradshaw, President, jbradshaw2@unl.edu

David Onstad, Vice President, dwonstad@gmail.com

Rebecca Schmidt-Jeffris, Vice President-Elect, rebecca.schmidt@usda.gov

Anjel Helms, Secretary, anjel.helms@gmail.com

Lily Calderwood, Treasurer, lily.calderwood@maine.edu

Diane Alston, Past President, diane.alston@usu.edu

Melissa Willrich Siebert, ESA Governing Board Representative, melissa.siebert@corteva.com

Anh Tran, Student Representative, aktran@umn.edu

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