



January 2025

The Spore Print (1/27/25): Department of Plant Pathology January 2025 Newsletter



Happy 2025! Please enjoy these updates from our department.

Mary, representing the editorial team: Ko, Megan, Sasha, Koy, Mason, Sheersa, Arild, Bipin, Monique, Maren, Cynthia, and Xianming.

If you have news you would like included in the *next newsletter*, please email mary.steele@wsu.edu.

[Click here to access past newsletters!](#) You will also be able to download the PDF version there.

If you have any feedback, please fill out the [questionnaire](#) for the Spore Print.

Thank you to Ninh Khuu for providing many of the photos seen in newsletter headings.

Updates



2025-2026 PPGSO Officer Nominations

JOIN THE TEAM



Become a **PPGSO Officer** 2025-2026



Help foster community in our department.

Available Positions

PRESIDENT

(currently Itsuhiro Ko)

VICE-PRESIDENT

(currently Megan Nickerson)

SECRETARY

(currently Sasha Zvenigorodsky)

TREASURER

(currently Koy Chandler)

FACULTY LIAISON

(currently Mason Hoskins)

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

(currently Mary Steele)

GPSA PLP SENATOR

(currently Bipin Neupane)

Reach out to any of the officers if you have any questions regarding a position.

SAVE THE DATE

Nomination Period:
NOW to FEBRUARY 28th

Election Period:
MARCH 1st to APRIL 18th

NOMINATE HERE



NOMINATION FORM

Embed://<iframe src="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd-RNV-
ws83R_2bxBsSVJ0pvbuVyJYCrjauyfBrVZS1FFXBtQ/viewform?embedded=true" width="750"
height="500" frameborder="0" marginheight="0" marginwidth="0">Loading...</iframe>

New students for Spring 2025

Dr. Cynthia Gleason welcomed a new graduate student this Spring 2025 semester, Kaitlin Riggan. Kaitlin is a Ph.D. student in the Molecular Plant Sciences program and will be working on the interactions between nematode effectors and target proteins in root cells and the effect of plant sterol content on nematode development. Before coming to WSU, Kaitlin completed a bachelor's degree at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington.

PPGSO bioinformatic consultations available by appointment

Please provide the time you want to meet and your bioinformatic questions to the consultants below.

Ko < itsuhiro.ko@wsu.edu > : Kamiak HPC, Transcriptome and Genome analysis, Sequencing, Python/Linux coding

Megan < megan.nickerson@wsu.edu > : R coding: Statistic and data visualization

Mason < mason.hoskins@wsu.edu > : Kamiak HPC, Gene co-expression network, Transcriptome (Mason is willing to provide help in person at the Prosser IAREC)

Student Spotlight: Taylor McNees



1 - Taylor McNees, Ph.D. student advised by Dr. Jana U'Ren.

Click through the cards below to learn more about Ph.D. student Taylor McNees. Use the arrows in the lower right corner to expand as needed.

Degree: Ph.D. in Plant Pathology

Advisor: Dr. Jana U'Ren

Academic background: B.Sc. in Biomedical Sciences from the University of Washington, Tacoma

Hometown: Spokane, Washington

Expected graduation semester: Spring 2028.

What made you interested in plant pathology?

I became interested in plant pathology after working as a lab tech with Dr. Gary Chastagner, Dr. Joey Hulbert, and Dr. Marianne Elliot in Puyallup as an undergraduate. I was incredibly inspired by these three individuals and developed a passion for the work I was doing that led me to pursue a degree in plant pathology.

What is your favorite plant pathogen?

Definitely *Claviceps purpurea*, the causal agent of ergot. I think it's really interesting how many have hypothesized that ergot may have played a role in several historical events, such as the witch trials and dancing plague!

Hobbies: I love spending time outdoors during the warmer months, whether it be hiking, camping, fishing, or any other outdoor activity! During the colder and wetter months, I tend to spend my time reading and playing video games. At the moment, my favorite video game is Dark Souls.

Pets: I have three cats; Rigby, Ophelia, and Nova.

What would you like to do after graduation? After graduation, I would prefer to stay in academia and do research focused on forest pathology.



2 - Taylor's cat Rigby.



3 - Taylor's cat Ophelia.



4 - Taylor's cat Nova.



5 - Taylor and her partner Tom hiking at Mt. Rainier.

Community Corner



In January we celebrated the contributions of Martin Luther King, Jr. to a more just and peaceful society. The King Center continues the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King towards creating a “beloved community where injustice ceases, and love prevails”. The Center

has resources for K12 classrooms along with a glossary of terms used in the practice of nonviolence: <https://thekingcenter.org/about-tkc/glossary-of-nonviolence/>.

February is Black History Month! The theme for 2025 is African Americans and Labor, summarized here: <https://tinyurl.com/cpz8wz67>

This article summarizes the Jubilee Justice Black Farmers' Rice Project which focuses on organic, regenerative, specialty rice production by smallholder Black farmers:

<https://cals.cornell.edu/news/2024/03/black-farmers-are-taking-lead-regenerative-organic-specialty-rice>

Mark your calendar! **On February 28th, our Lunch & Learn will feature Josie Cohen-Rodriguez, LGBTQ+ Student Life & Community Coordinator**, who will offer a training in allyship specifically tailored to our department. This will be accessible by zoom, stay tuned for more details.

Student Soundbites



This month, students (n = 15) shared hobbies, activities, and practices that have been helpful to them this winter in enjoying the darker and colder days. See a summary of responses in the word cloud below.



6 - Hobbies, activities, and practices that have been helpful to students this winter in enjoying the darker and colder days. Created using wordclouds.com.

Statewide Updates



Pullman Updates

The first **PLP Departmental Coffee Hour** will be held next week (1/27) from 3-4pm in Clark 299 ahead of the first seminar.

If you are interested in hosting future coffee hours, please come to Clark 299 at 2:30pm (1/27) for a brief training. Hosting is a great way to foster community within our department and is greatly appreciated!

Feel free to sign up for a date on the following sheet. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1j7l4apPGXrk7x3b_tRJOUsByWe-MHluHz3RDVY6rYg8/edit?usp=sharing

The Plant Pathology and Horticulture Departments put on a joint **New Year's Celebration potluck** to welcome everyone back to a new year and semester on Thursday, January 16. Enjoy photos from the potluck below.



7 - Photo credit: Kaitlin Riggan.



8 - Photo credit: Kaitlin Riggan.



9 - Photo credit: Kaitlin Riggan.



10 - Photo credit: Kaitlin Riggan.

Prosser Updates

Recent retiree and tree fruit pathology expert Dr. Gary Grove recently received an award as the 2025 Cherry King from the Northwest Cherry Institute. Congratulations to Dr. Grove for this well-earned recognition!



11 - Photo credit: Gary Grove.

For those in Prosser, please reach out to Mason (mason.hoskins@wsu.edu) or Ninh (ninh.khuu@wsu.edu) to schedule a time for our coffee hour :)

Wenatchee Updates

Dr. Achour Amiri spoke at the 99th Orchard Pest and Disease Management annual meeting in Portland, OR, about a non-recycling drencher to apply fungicides to improve decay management and food safety in pome fruits.

More information on this event can be found [here](#).

GPSA Updates

GPSA Dissertation Grant (Ph.D. students): applications for the 2024-2025 academic year will be accepted through April 1, 2025, at 11:00 PM, or until funds run out. A maximum of \$500.00 will be awarded for the entire academic year. For more information [Click here](#).

Upcoming GPSA/Professional Development Initiative Programs:

Professional Headshots Photoshoot for Graduate Students: (01/30/2025; 9:00 AM -4:30 PM) at Lighty 180

Python Working Group: An Introduction for Graduate Students: (01/30/2025; 3:00-4:00 PM): [Register here](#)

Three-minute thesis

Free Grammarly if you apply through GPSA

Herbarium Happenings: Shaw Mycological Herbarium



Fall Fungal Foray Finds Go Global

Several fungi found during the 2022 and 2024 Fall Fungal Forays sponsored by the Plant Pathology graduate student organization have just been accessioned into the Shaw Herbarium (WSP) catalog, along with a few other recent local collections. This means that not only are they now physically part of the mycological specimen collections in our Herbarium, but also their associated data can be accessed from anywhere by anyone via our WSP link in the public online database MyCoPortal. Over 135 institutions worldwide, from small private herbaria to national museums, regularly upload their fungal specimen data to this user-friendly portal. In addition about 25 observation-based databases, such as iNaturalist and Mushroom Observer, also contribute data on fungi found worldwide. Here's the link to explore for yourself:

<https://www.mycportal.org/portal/index.php>.

What makes a particular fungus specimen worth adding to the Herbarium collection? For these recent foray finds, the relevant criteria included: how many specimens we may already have of that taxon, if it's from a location not well represented in our collections, whether the find is an especially attractive specimen (large, clustered, good color, etc.), if it's in much better condition

than our older specimens, etc. Of course any unusual or rare fungus would be of great interest to include as well! All of these recent specimens accessioned are common local fungi, but turned out to be particularly useful examples of their kind, including species of: *Pholiota*, *Chlorophyllum*, *Russula* (Shrimp Mushroom), *Gomphus* (Pig's Ear and Scaly Chanterelle), and *Clitocybe* (Aniseseed Mushroom).

Thank you to enthusiastic Foray foragers each fall, and Ninh Khuu for field identifications of some specimens!



12 - New accessions from Fall Fungal Forays and other local sites - dried, labeled, numbered and ready to be boxed up for the Shaw Herbarium collections.

Publications



Bradshaw, M., Ivors, K., Broome, J. C., Carbone, I., Braun, U., Yang, S., Meng, E., Warres, B., Cline, W. O., Moparthi, S., Llanos, A. K., Apaza, W., Liu, M., Carey, J., El Ghazouani, M., Carvalho, R., **Elliott, M.**, Boufford, D., Coetzee, T., and de Wet, J. 2025. An emerging fungal disease is spreading across the globe and affecting the blueberry industry. *The New Phytologist priority report*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nph.20351>

Das, S., Jarugula, S., Bagewadi, B., Fayad, A., Karasev, A, Karasev, V., and **Naidu, R. A.** 2024. Characterization of bean common mosaic virus isolates infecting three leguminous bean crops from South and Southeast Asia. *Plant Disease* 108:3453-3462. <https://doi.org/10.1094/PDIS-05-24-1113-SR>

Franco, M. E. E., Singer, E., Roux, S., Meredith, L. K., and **U'Ren, J. M.** 2025. Genomic and metagenomic survey of microbial carbonic anhydrase genes reveals novel clades, high diversity, and biome-specificity. *bioRxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.01.09.631809>

Graebner, R. C., Harrison, K., Hunt, M., Wood, D., and **Hagerty, C. H.** 2024. Winter wheat cultivar post-harvest effects: Varieties differ in residue management requirements and effect on yield of next crop. *Agrosystems, Geosciences & Environment* 7:e70016. <https://doi.org/10.1002/agg2.70016>

Hagerty, C. H., Shrestha, G., Wen, N., Kroese, D. R., Namdar, G. F., **Paulitz, T.**, and Wysocki, D. J. 2024. Hemp cover cropping and disease suppression in winter wheat of the dryland Pacific Northwest. *Agronomy* 14:2978. <https://doi.org/10.3390/agronomy14122978>

Joshi, P. and **Vandemark, G.** 2025. AMMI and GGE biplot analysis of seed protein concentration, yield, and 100-seed weight for chickpea cultivars and breeding lines in the US Pacific Northwest. *Crop Science* 65:e21417. <https://doi.org/10.1002/csc2.21417>

Ma, M., Jin, Y., **Chen, X.**, Wang, J., Liu, X., Geng, L., Zheng, W., Huang, L., Kang, Z., and Zhan, G. 2025. Virulence characterization and population structure of *Puccinia striiformis* f. sp. *tritici* in Henan Province, China. *Plant Disease first look*. <https://doi.org/10.1094/PDIS-11-24-2352-RE>

Moyer, M. M. and Mireles, M. 2025. Efficacy of fungicide treatments for the management of grape powdery mildew in Washington, 2024. *Plant Health Progress first look*. <https://doi.org/10.1094/PHP-11-24-0119-PDMR>

Pandey, M., Haskell, C. L., Cowell, J. D., and **Amiri, A.** 2025. Sensitivity to the demethylation inhibitor difenoconazole among baseline populations of various *Penicillium* spp. causing blue mold of apples and pears. *Journal of Fungi* 11:61. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jof11010061>

Puri, P., Elcan, A., DeVetter, L., and **Mattupalli, C.** 2025. Screening blueberry genotypes for susceptibility to mummy berry in Mount Vernon, WA, 2024. *Plant Health Progress first look*. <https://doi.org/10.1094/PHP-11-24-0113-PDMR>

Shires, M. K., **Molnar, C., Cowell, S. J.,** Bishop, G., Voelker, J., Thompson, A. A., Nikolaeva, E., Copp, C., Flandermeyer, L., Melton, T., Northfield, T. D., Marshall, A. T., Cooper, W. R., and **Harper, S.** 2025. Alternative hosts of '*Candidatus* Phytoplasma pruni' identified through surveys and vector gut content analysis. *Plant Health Progress first look*. <https://doi.org/10.1094/PHP-09-24-0089-RS>

Please let us know if we missed your publication so it can be included next month.

Funding & Opportunities



2025 Meeting of APS Pacific Division and 70th Annual Conference on Soilborne Plant Pathogens

This year this will occur March 25-27, 2025, in Davis, California. There are \$750 student travel scholarships available for the Conference on Soilborne Plant Pathogens:

<https://soilfungus.wsu.edu> and various awards and scholarships available through APS Pacific Division: <https://www.apsnet.org/members/community/divisions/pac/Pages/Awards.aspx>.

APS Foundation funding opportunities

The APS Foundation has various funding opportunities available; many applications are due February 28. See all opportunities [here](#).

SoilCon 2025

The Washington Soil Health Initiative, organizer of the 2025 Virtual SoilCon, has opened submissions for lightning talks. Titles are due by January 28, 2025. Submissions can be made [here](#).

WSU General Scholarship Application

The priority date to submit a 2025-2026 WSU General Scholarship application is January 31, 2025. More information can be found [here](#). Email Britta Nitcy at nitcy@wsu.edu with your name, the scholarship(s) you fit, and a sentence or two on how you fit the criteria.

Oregon Mycological Society

The Oregon Mycological Society (OMS) has shared three scholarship opportunities: The OMS Scholarship for students pursuing mycology-related Master's or Ph.D. degrees (up to \$2500), The Judy Roger Memorial Scholarship for students pursuing mycology-related Master's or Ph.D. degrees with priority to women (up to \$2500), and the Maggie Rogers Memorial Scholarship for educators / citizen scientists / and individuals pursuing a mycology-related activity or question (amount TBD). More information can be found at: <https://www.wildmushrooms.org/get-involved/oms-scholarships/>

GPSA Travel Grant

GPSA travel grants are available all year round and are awarded as reimbursements post travel for out-of-pocket travel costs. Pullman Service and Activity fee-paying students are eligible to apply. Please see all the information on the GPSA grants website [here](#). Contact gpsa.granst@wsu.edu if you have questions.

GPSA Excellence Awards

The GPSA is accepting nominations for GPSA Excellence Awards from now until February 28, 2025. More information can be found [here](#).

[Here](#) is a list of all available funding worldwide. Log in using your WSU account and refine the search.

Seminars



Dr. Kiwamu Tanaka is leading seminar this Spring 2025, most Mondays from 4-5 pm.

Zoom ID: 935 5851 3144

Zoom Password: 1824

Monday, January 27th: Dr. Huiting Zhang (Guest Speaker)

Monday, February 3rd: Dr. Fangming Xiao (Guest Speaker)

Monday, February 10th: Dr. Jeff Miller (Student Invited Speaker)

Monday, February 17th: No Seminar; President's Day

Monday, February 24th: Dr. Marcella Teixeira (Guest Speaker)

Monday, March 3rd: Dr. Kai Battenberg (Guest Speaker)

Monday, March 10th: No seminar; Spring Break

Monday, March 17th: Bipin Neupane & Sudeep Poudel (Student Speakers)

Monday, March 24th: Dr. Dmitri Mavrodi (Guest Speaker)

Monday, March 31st: Anita Paneru & Sasha Zvenigorodsky (Student Speakers)

Monday, April 7th: Dr. David Crowder (Guest Speaker)

Monday, April 14th: Sheersa Manna & Jessica Schallon (Student Speakers)

Monday, April 21st: Dr. Hira Kamal (Guest Speaker)

WSU Plant Pathology Seminar Series – Spring 2025
Mondays 4:10 pm, Clark Hall 149, Pullman campus (Zoom ID: 935 5851 3144 | Pass: 1824)

Date	Speaker
January 27 Guest Speaker	 Dr. Huiting Zhang Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Horticulture, WSU (Ficklin lab)
February 3 Guest Speaker	 Dr. Fangming Xiao Professor, Department of Plant Sciences, University of Idaho
February 10 Student Invited Speaker	 Dr. Jeff Miller President and CEO / Principal Field Investigator, Miller Research LLC, Acequia, ID
February 17	President's Day No Seminar
February 24 Guest Speaker	 Dr. Marcella Teixeira Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Plant Pathology, WSU (Gleason lab)
March 3 Guest Speaker	 Dr. Kai Battenberg Collections Manager, Stillingher Herbarium University of Idaho
March 10	Spring Break No Seminar
March 17 PLP 515 Seminar	 Bipin Neupane Ph.D. student, Department of Plant Pathology, WSU (Sec lab)  Sudeep Poudel Ph.D. student, Department of Plant Pathology, WSU (Zhao lab)
March 24 Guest Speaker	 Dr. Dmitri Mavrodi USDA-ARS, Wheat Health, Genetics, and Quality Research Unit
March 31 PLP 515 Seminar	 Anita Paneru Ph.D. student, Department of Plant Pathology, WSU (Friesen lab)  Sasha Zvenigorodsky MS student, Department of Plant Pathology, WSU (W. Chen lab)
April 7 Guest Speaker	 Dr. David Crowder Professor, Department of Entomology, WSU
April 14 PLP 515 Seminar	 Sheersa Manna Ph.D. student, Department of Plant Pathology, WSU (W. Zhao lab)  Jessica Schallon Ph.D. student, Department of Plant Pathology, WSU (W. Chen lab)
April 21 Guest Speaker	 Dr. Hira Kamal Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Plant Pathology, WSU (Tanaka lab)

For more information, please visit our website at plantpath.wsu.edu/seminar-series-2/

13 - Seminar schedule for Spring 2025 put together by Dr. Kiwamu Tanaka.

Jobs



CAHNRS 2025 Involvement and Networking Night

On Monday, February 10 from 5-7 pm at Ensminger Pavilion on the Pullman campus, CAHNRS is hosting an Involvement and Networking Night for all students, graduate and undergraduate. More information can be found [here](#).

Graduate Research Positions

Postdoctoral Positions

- USDA-ARS in Champaign, Illinois is hiring a postdoc to work on genetic diversity and virulence determinants in soybean pathogen *Calonectria ilicicola*. More information can be found [here](#).

Technician, Industry, and Other Non-Academic Positions

- **Kansas State University's Disease Diagnostic Lab** is looking to hire a new member to the Great Plains Diagnostic Network. More information can be found [here](#).

- **WSDA** is hiring a Fruit Tree Certification Molecular Lab Supervisor in Prosser, Washington. More information can be found [here](#).

Faculty Positions

- **Kansas State University** is hiring a tenure track plant bacteriologist with 90% research / 10% teaching responsibilities. More information can be found [here](#). Screening will begin February 7, 2025.
- The **University of Idaho** is also hiring for the Saad Hafez Presidential Endowed Chair for the Department of Entomology, Plant Pathology and Nematology. Applications received by February 2, 2025 will receive first consideration. More information can be found [here](#).
- **University of Georgia** seeks to hire an assistant or associate professor and extension specialist in Ornamental Plant Pathology with Extension (80%), teaching (15%), and service (5%) assignments in the Department of Plant Pathology, Athens Campus. The position will be filled at the Assistant or Associate Professor level on 9-month academic-year appointment with a guarantee of 2 months of summer salary. More information can be found [here](#). Application review will begin February 3.
- **Iowa State University** is hiring an assistant professor in Diagnostics and Bioinformatics in the Department of Plant Pathology, Entomology, and Microbiology in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. More information can be found [here](#). Application review will begin February 28.
- **University of Georgia** is hiring an Assistant or Associate Professor and Extension Specialist in Ornamental Plant Pathology in the Department of Plant Pathology. More information can be found [here](#). Application review begins February 3.
- **Cornell University** is hiring an Assistant or Associate Professor, tenure track with a focus on seed biology and technology. More information can be found [here](#).
- **Texas A&M** is hiring an Assistant Professor in Environmental Microbiology. More information can be found [here](#).
- **Texas A&M** is hiring an Assistant or Associate Professor in Microbial Forensics and Biosecurity. More information can be found [here](#).