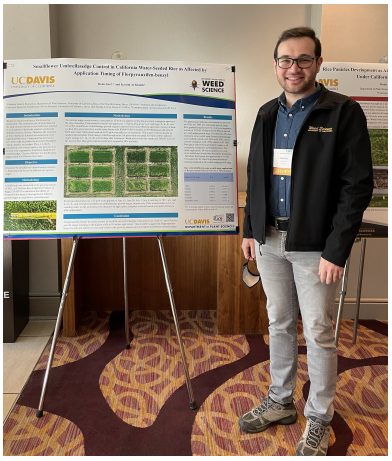
CWSS 2022 Scholarship Awards

CWSS Student Liaison Director Tom Getts and committee awarded $1000 and $1500 scholarships to eight deserving graduate and undergraduate students.



Deniz Inci - University of California, Davis

Deniz Inci is currently a Ph.D. candidate at UC Davis, working with Dr. Kassim Al-Khatib. He is studying chemical weed management, intending to develop an integrated weed management program with florpyrauxifen-benzyl for California rice. He is also exploring the off-target rice herbicides' drift impacts on California's high-value vine and orchard crops. After graduation, Deniz hopes to work in an applied research career that will allow him to work on herbicide discovery and development.

Matthew Fatino – University of California, Davis

Matt Fatino is a Ph.D. student in the Weed Science group at UC Davis. He studied Crop and Fruit Science at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo before beginning his Master's degree in Weed Science at UC Davis with Dr. Brad Hanson. He began researching and validating the PICKIT decision support system for branched broomrape management in processing tomatoes during his master's degree, and is continuing to study various management strategies for this invasive parasitic plant. He hopes to pursue a career extending knowledge in California agriculture.

Wenzhuo Wu - University of California, Davis

Wenzhuo Wu is a PhD candidate working with Dr. Mohsen Mesgaran in the Horticulture and Agronomy graduate group at University of California, Davis. She is conducting research to test the viability of a novel approach for managing weeds by pollinating with irradiated and sterile pollen in unisexual breeding systems. Currently, she is exploring an optimal dose of ionizing radiation which can significantly reduce seed production and seed/flower ratio in Palmer Amaranth.

Tong Zhen – University of California, Davis

Tong Zhen is a Ph.D. student in the Horticulture and Agronomy Graduate Group at UC Davis, working with Dr. Brad Hanson. His current research focuses on electric weed control and traditional non-chemical control in organic orchards. He hopes to provide more non-chemical options to California growers and other novel weed control methods to make our farming system more resilient.

Paola Vidales Villicana - California State University, Fresno

I am a first generation college student from the Salinas Valley and a student at California State University Fresno studying Plant Science. Growing up I formed part of the farm worker labor force in one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world, also known as “the Salad Bowl of the World”. Soon I will be joining the growing community of first generation Hispanics who are pursuing higher education. Most recently, I began working on weed science research to determine common chickweed resistance to ALS inhibitors within the Central Valley. Initially, I worked for Dr. Anil Shrestha as a volunteer, assisting graduate students with research projects. My willingness to help and learn prompted Dr. Shrestha to offer me this herbicide resistance study. As part of my graduate study, I would like to continue expanding my research and knowledge of common chickweed in order to assist grain growers in California with alternative weed management methods for this particular pest. As a result, I am committed to pursuing a Masters of Science in hopes to improve the agroeconomic sustainability of production systems in need of assistance with current local issues. It is my goal to earn a role in advising in the central valley or coast and eventually provide assistance with water and soil conservation, nutrient management, and stewardship for struggling Californian farmers.

Kiera Searcy - California State University, Fresno

My name is Kiera Searcy and I am an undergraduate student at California State University, Fresno majoring in Plant Science. Currently, I work on campus at the ornamental horticulture unit and as an intern at Bayer Crop Science. Additionally, I am currently working on researching weed control methods in a container lathe house setting; moreover, evaluating control and cost differences with each method. Upon graduation in December of 2022, I hope to join the graduate program and study weed science.

Made Roger - Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

Made Roger is an undergraduate student studying Agricultural and Environmental Plant Science at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. In addition to agriculture, Made pursues ecological concepts within her studies. She is currently working on sustainability projects on campus, as well as doing two internships: one in agricultural extension and another one conducting environmental review for capital improvement projects. Made is passionate about environmental problem solving and the technical components that go along with it. Currently, Made is working with native plants at school. She is experimenting with farmscaping concepts that facilitate biological control of crop pests and enhance the habitat. Made also conducts habitat restoration efforts at work and gets to support a dozen different restoration sites at all stages– from seedlings that are popping up in the greenhouse to 20-foot tall trees that no longer need much help from her. Her favorite part of this work is seeing established plants in the wild that she has known since they were sprouting in a seed flat. Made hopes to join the environmental workforce to contribute to solving some of today's challenges, such as managing invasive weeds to protect agricultural productivity and native ecosystems, as well as support the environmentally safe and effective use of pesticides and IPM.

Jaime Soria - Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo

My name is Jaime Soria, I am a current Cal Poly San Luis Obispo undergraduateMy name is Kiera Searcy and I am an undergraduate student at California State University, Fresno majoring in Plant Science. Currently, I work on campus at the ornamental horticulture unit and as an intern at Bayer Crop Science. Additionally, I am currently working on researching weed control methods in a container lathe house setting; moreover, evaluating control and cost differences with each method. Upon graduation in December of 2022, I hope to join the graduate program and study weed science. , majoring in Plant Sciences with a concentration in Plant Protection. My interest in agriculture came from my family, both of my grandfather's migrated to the United States from Mexico with the Bracero Program. While my mother worked in the strawberry fields and my father in the celery fields and landscape, they taught me the value of agriculture. During the summer's they took me to work with them, being outdoors and watching crops grow inspired me to pursue a career in agriculture. I currently work full-time at Mission Produce, it was there that a coworker motivated me to return to college since I had dropped out of community college. After graduation, I plan to continue working in the avocado industry and get my PCA and CCA licenses.