
KIRBY L. HAYS MEMORIAL AWARD –

2004

Outstanding M.S. Student



Amy Kovach earned her Bachelors of Science Degree from Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania where she was selected as the recipient of the President's Award for Mathematics and Sciences for her academics, research, and roles in student organizations. Some of her undergraduate activities included tutoring General Biology students, interning with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and chartering the college's Environmental Club. Her undergraduate research focused on the return and establishment of endangered, rare, and threatened flora following the mechanical and biological control of exotic, invasive flora in wetland habitats.

Amy pursued her Masters Degree in biological control at the University of Tennessee (UT) in the laboratory of Dr. Jerome F. Grant. Her research focused on the insects, in particular *Urophora quadrifasciata* and its parasitoids, associated with spotted knapweed, an exotic invasive plant. Her major research findings included the first report of *U. quadrifasciata* and *Megalanotus sabulicola* in the southeastern United States, along with the first account of three hymenopteran parasitoids of *U. quadrifasciata* found concurrently in the Nearctic. Amy's research interests also included the impact of weevils on musk thistle and the use of big-eyed bugs as predators of the greenhouse whitefly. She received her M.S. degree in August 2004.

Amy has presented results of her research at numerous state, regional, and national meetings including the Invasive Plants in Natural and Managed Systems/Ecology and Management of Alien Plant Invasions national meeting, the Tennessee Entomological Society Annual Meeting, the SEB-ESA Annual Meeting, and most recently the ESA Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. In 2003, Amy was the recipient of the Student Award for the Best M.S. Presentation at the SEB-ESA Annual Meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, the Best Student Paper at the Tennessee Entomological Society, and second place in the Sigma Xi Research Paper Competition for graduate students at UT.

As a graduate student at UT, Amy assumed many leadership

and service roles. She was elected vice-president of the Entomology Graduate Student Association and served as the Department of Entomology representative for the Graduate Student Senate. Amy participated in numerous outreach programs to educate local school children about insects and coordinated programs to inform adults about the importance of entomology and plant pathology in their lives. She also coordinated the department's annual participation in the UT Open House, where students, teachers, and families learn about agriculture and the environment. Amy's volunteered for the Discover Life in America-All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory Beetle Blitz in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and a local nature center's annual Bug Night. Amy also completed courses not offered in the traditional classroom setting, such as the Bee-Master Hobbyist Level Program and UT Distance Diagnostic Laboratory short-course.

Amy has been an active participant in the SEB-ESA. She has served as a student representative on the Student Affairs Committee, contributing to the revision of the rules and requirements for the Photo Salon. Amy also has been the captain of the UT Linnaean Games Team for two years.