

MSA STUDENT AND POSTDOC SECTION



[Erynia curvispora on a caddisfly.](#)

Photo by Alex Lando & Kathie Hodge
Want to see your photo here? [Submit one!](#)

OCTOBER 2025
NEWSLETTER



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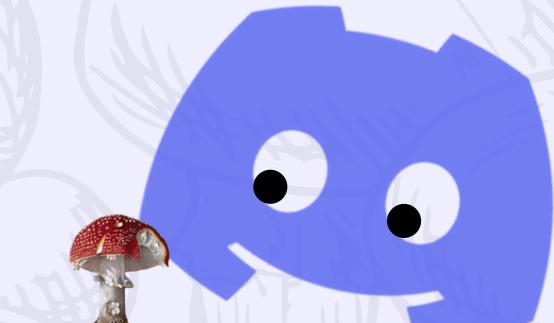
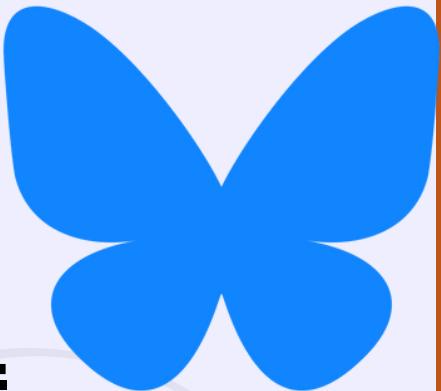
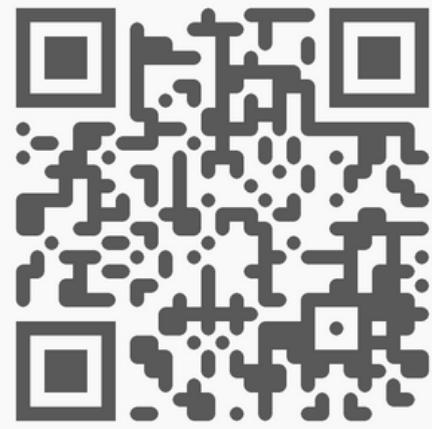
General Announcements

Follow us on social media to keep up to date!!!



@msastudentsection

@MSASTUDENTS.BSKY.SOCIAL



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DISCORD

02



MSA DEI

2026 NOMINATIONS



SELF AND PEER NOMINATIONS
ENCOURAGED

PLEASE FOLLOW AND FILL OUT
THIS LINK BY NOV 1, 2025 TO BE
CONSIDERED
REVIEW AND VOTING
PROCESSES WILL TAKE PLACE
EARLY 2026

Now accepting submissions!

Nov. 1, 2025 - Jan 31, 2026

MSA Student & Postdoc Section Presents:
**Pacific Northwest
Mycology Art Contest**

Get your art featured
on SPS merchandise
for the 2026 conference
in Portland, OR

From rugged coastlines to temperate rainforests, the Pacific Northwest is known for its extensive fungal diversity. Find creative ways to incorporate aspects of mycology that remind you of this region, appreciation for the beautiful landscapes, and (maybe) Bigfoot too!

Prizes!

1st place for
each category: \$50

2nd place for
each category: \$25

Categories:

1. Full color Pacific Northwest (PNW) poster & postcard designs
2. 4 colors (or less) PNW – future tote bag & t-shirt designs
3. Full color mini open mycology- future sticker designs

Student Spotlight:

Tawny Bolinas

This month we're highlighting Tawny Bolinas, who recently earned her Master's degree in Biological Sciences from California State University, Chico, with a focus on microbial ecology.

Tawny's passion for understanding the role of endophytic fungi is matched by her dedication to her community, where she serves as a peer mentor and regular volunteer.

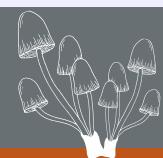
We spoke with Tawny about how she started in mycology, how her varied lab experiences shaped her as a scientist, and what's coming next in her academic journey.

Thanks for taking time to chat with us! First off: how did you get into mycology?

During my undergraduate years, I had the chance to work on a wide range of projects. Each experience was different, but it was the fungal work that truly captured my curiosity. I was amazed by how incredibly diverse fungal endophytes are and how something so small can shape entire ecosystems. Studying these hidden communities helped me see the deep connections between microbes and their environments, and it's what ultimately sparked my passion to keep exploring fungal ecology in graduate school.



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Having worked in private, public, and university labs, how have these settings differed and what's your advice to students exploring research?

Each research environment has offered a unique perspective on how science operates. In academic labs, I learned to design and troubleshoot experiments independently while exploring fundamental biological questions. Public-sector research, taught me how data can directly inform public-health decisions, while private-sector work in clinical trial support introduced me to the precision and pace of regulated research.



Together, these experiences have strengthened my ability to adapt in diverse settings and helped refine my long-term research interests in microbial ecology. For anyone interested in research, I recommend seeking out diverse experiences; they not only build technical skills but also help you discover what kind of scientist you want to be!

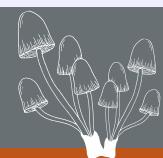
Peer mentorship has played a role in the lives of many. As a peer mentor, how has mentorship influenced your academic trajectory?



Mentorship has been central to my academic growth, both as mentee and mentor. The guidance of Dr. Gerald M. Cobián was transformative; his mentorship not only strengthened my scientific training but also modeled the value of patience, curiosity, and collaboration in research.



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His support encouraged me to think critically and develop independence as a scientist. In turn, mentoring other students through their first research experiences reinforced my own understanding of core concepts and taught me how to communicate science effectively. These experiences have shown me that science thrives through mentorship and inclusivity, and they continue to shape how I approach teamwork, teaching, and leadership in research environments.

What's next in your academic journey?

I'm applying to Ph.D. programs this cycle to further my research in fungal ecology, focusing on how fungi interact with other microbes and plants to shape communities and ecosystem function.



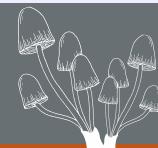
November Student Spotlight



Big or small tell us by clicking here!!!

We want to hear your story!!! Whether you want to tell all or just found a cool fungus. You could be featured in future spotlights!

Submit for yourself or on behalf of a peer!



Resources

Mycological Society of America

[MSA membership portal and renewal](#)

[MSA awards](#)

Student and Postdoc Section

[Student spotlight signup form](#)

[Photo submission form](#)

[MSA SPS swag](#)

Check out our merch here!



MSA SPS Social Media

