

Tennessee Entomological Society 53rd Annual Conference

October 5 - 6, 2026

Ed Jones Auditorium

Ellington Agricultural Center, Nashville



Monday, October 5, 2026

Registration 1:00 pm- 2:00 pm (all times are Central Time)

2:00 pm: **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Presiding: Cindy Bilbrey, President, Tennessee Entomological Society and State Entomologist, Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Jay Hayek, Assistant State Forester - Grants, Forest Management, Reforestation, Tennessee Department of Agriculture

2:15 pm: **Keynote Address**

“Emerging Issues in Ornamental Production: Biology and Management of Two-Spot Cotton Leafhopper”

Dr. Shimat Joseph, Associate Professor, Department of Entomology, University of Georgia

Undergraduate Student Paper Competition

Presiding: Dr. Midhula Gireesh, President-Elect, Tennessee Entomological Society and Assistant Professor, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, University of Tennessee

3:15 pm: **“Recovery of the Invasive Two-Spot Cotton Leafhopper in Tennessee’s Retail Centers”**

Sidra Levenhagen¹, Leslie Tidwell¹, Cheyenne Morales¹, Paul O’Neal¹, Karla Addesso¹. ¹Otis L. Floyd Nursery Research Center, Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN

3:30 pm: **“The Scent of Danger: Substrate-borne chemical signals affect the defensive behaviors of the Southern Devil Scorpion (*Vaejovis carolinianus*)”**

Cambria Herbert¹, Abby Tching¹, David Nelsen¹. ¹Department of Biology and Allied Health, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, TN

3:45 pm: **“Too Hot to Handle- What drives variation in aquatic insect thermal tolerance”**

Eric Aldrich¹, Jamieson Botsch¹. ¹Department of Biology, Austin Peay State University

4:00 pm: **"Strepsiptera Diversity in Sewanee and Throughout Tennessee"**

Samantha Moore¹, Kirk Zigler¹. ¹Biology Department, The University of the South.

4:15 pm: **"Induced Physical Stress on Red Maples Changes Tree Volatile Emissions"**

William Presley¹, Karla Adesso², and Paul O' Neal². ¹Department of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, TN; ²Department of Entomology and Chemical Ecology, Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN

4:30 pm – 4:45 pm: **Break**

Graduate M.S. Student Paper Competition

4:45 pm: **"Assessing the effects of prescribed fire seasonality on tick density in the Southeast (Preliminary Results)"**

Silas G. Pickhardt¹, Jennifer G. Chandler¹, Lena L. Craft¹, Rebecca A. Butler¹, Craig A. Harper², Rebecca T. Trout Fryxell¹. ¹Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, 2505, 370 E J. Chapman Dr, Plant Biotechnology Building, Knoxville, TN 37996; ²School of Natural Resources, Agriculture and Natural Resources Building, 2431 Joe Johnson Dr, Suite 401, Knoxville, TN 37996

5:00 pm: **"Do bumble bees differ in their sensitivity to dry conditions?"**

Samantha Underhill¹, Jamieson Botsch¹, Katie Davis¹. ¹Department of Biology, Austin Peay State University, TN.

5:15 pm: **"A Matter of Time: Diel and Seasonal Patterns in Bumble Bee Foraging"**

Katie Davis¹, Jamieson Botsch¹, Samantha Underhill¹. ¹Department of Biology, Austin Peay State University, TN

5:30 pm: **"Evaluation of Flowering Plants for Conservation Biological Control"**

Akriti Adhikari¹, Kaushalya Amarasekare¹, and Manju Yogi¹. ¹Department of Agricultural Science and Engineering, College of Agriculture, Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN 37209

5:45 pm: **"Evaluation of EPNs as a Management Tool for Hybrid Imported Fire Ants"**

Sam L. Fann¹, Jason B. Oliver¹, Nadeer Youssef¹, Gabrielle Magness¹, Hank Whittemore¹, Paul O'Neal¹, and Karla M. Adesso¹. ¹Tennessee State University, Otis L. Floyd Nursery Research Center, McMinnville, TN

6:00 pm: **"Evaluation of an artificial adult diet for predatory green lacewing, *Chrysopa oculata* (Neuroptera: Chrysopidae)"**

Manju Yogi¹, Kaushalya Amarasekare¹. ¹Department of Agricultural Sciences and Engineering, Tennessee State University, Nashville, TN

6:15 pm: **"Collection and Survey of the Ants at Reflection Riding, Chattanooga, Tennessee"**

Kaitlin Raye Simpson¹. ¹Department of Environmental Science, University of Tennessee Chattanooga, Chattanooga, TN.

Graduate PhD Student Paper Competition

6:30 pm: **"Mite-Host-Virus Interactions in Roses: Genotype Susceptibility, Seasonal Abundance Patterns, and Breeding Implications"**

Alina Pokhrel¹, Denita Hadziabdic¹, and Nar Ranabhat¹. ¹Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN

6:45 pm: **Wrap-up and dinner at Chuy's Tex-Mex – 100 E Park Dr, Brentwood.**

BASF will sponsor the presenting students' dinner.

Tuesday, October 6, 2026

Registration 8:00 am – 8:30 am (all times are in Central Time)

8:30 am: TES Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony

Presiding: Cindy Bilbrey

Reading of the Proclamation: **Dr. Steve Murphree**

Announcement of Awards: **Dr. Jennifer Tsuruda**

Annual Business Meeting and Committee Reports

Non-Student Papers

9:45 am: **“Gce-dependent modulation of developmental dynamics in *Drosophila melanogaster* via CA-LP neuron perturbation”**

Aaron Baumann¹, Jack Etheredge², Rebecca Spokony³. ¹College of Math, Science & Health Professions, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, TN. ²Weissman School of Arts and Sciences, CUNY Baruch, New York, NY. ³Twosense, Brooklyn, NY.

10:00 am: **“3D Printed Models for Entomology Education”**

Henry Whittemore¹, Karla Addesso¹, and Jason Oliver¹. ¹Department of Agricultural Science and Engineering, Otis L. Floyd Nursery Research Center, Tennessee State University, McMinnville, TN

10:15 am: **How stressful is foraging? Linking environmental exposure and physiology in the common eastern bumble bee (*Bombus impatiens*)**

Jamie Botsch¹, Katie Davis¹, and Samantha Undherill¹. ¹Department of Biology, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

10:30 am: **“Wood Boring Beetle Funnel Trap Survey in Middle Tennessee Woodlot”**

Wren Lawson¹, Nadeer Youssef¹, Jason B. Oliver¹, Karla M. Addesso¹. ¹Otis L. Floyd Nursery Research Center, Tennessee State University, McMinnville, TN

10:45 am: **“From Analog to AI – Science Communication to Engage and Educate in Entomology”**

Jennifer Tsuruda¹. ¹Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN.

11:00 am: Closing Remarks and TES New Board Meeting

12:00 pm: Insect Festival Set-up

1:00 pm: Insect Festival

Thank you! To Our Sponsor



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