

WSSA Announces 2024 National Weed Science Contest Award Winners

WSSA and three regional affiliates honor more than 100 students for exceptional weed science acumen

Posted on September 10, 2024



WESTMINSTER, Colorado – 10 September 2024 – The Northeastern, North Central and Southern affiliates of the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) tested 214 students in their weed science skills and expertise this summer. Undergraduate and graduate students from 25 U.S. and Canadian Universities competed in four categories: sprayer calibration; herbicide symptom identification; weed and seed identification; and “farmer problems” where students had to identify and provide solutions for weed control issues that farmers and other weed management practitioners might encounter in the field.

“These competitions test both individual and team weed science talents,” says Greg Dahl, WSSA president. “We are proud both of the knowledge and problem-solving skills that the students demonstrated and of the time, talents and guidance from dedicated volunteers and university weed scientists who made this contest possible.”

Below are the winners from each participating region:

Northeastern Weed Science Society

Graduate Student Winners, Team

- **First Place:** Virginia Tech, with team members Eli Russell, Navdeep Godara, Juan Romero, and Wyatt Stutzman
- **Second Place:** Pennsylvania State University with team members Laurel Wellman, Noelle Conners, and Grant Hoffer
- **Third Place:** Virginia Tech with team members Elisabeth Kitchin, Aaron Tucker, Ava Veith, and Caleb Henderson

Graduate Student Winners, Individual

- **First Place:** Eli Russel, Virginia Tech
- **Second Place:** Navdeep Godara, Virginia Tech
- **Third Place:** Laurel Wellman, Pennsylvania State University

Undergraduate Student Winners, Team

- **First Place:** University of Guelph with team members Lauren Hoonard, Jillian Hamm, Natalie Medland, and Danielle Vogels
- **Second Place:** University of Guelph with team members Maggie Durnin, Ben Fluttert, Marissa Jeens, and Sophie Van Den Borre
- **Third Place:** University of Guelph with team members Colby Older, Karen Reymer, Jillian Ohm, and Max Van Den Borre

Undergraduate Student Winners, Individual

- **First Place:** Marissa Jeens of the University of Guelph
- **Second Place:** Ben Fluttert of the University of Guelph
- **Third Place:** Karen Reymer of the University of Guelph

North Central Weed Science Society

Graduate Student Winners, Team

- **First Place:** University of Illinois with team members Yudai Takenaka, Alex Lopez, Isabel Werle, and Travis Wilke
- **Second Place:** Purdue University with team members Jada Davis, Alex Mueth, Hunter Medenwald, and Abigail Norsworthy
- **Third Place:** University of Minnesota with team members Eric Yu, Navjot Singh, Datta Chiruvelli, and Sithin Mathew

Graduate Student Winners, Team Calibration

- University of Illinois with team members Yudai Takenaka, Travis Wilke, Alex Lopez, and Isabel Werle

Graduate Student Winners, Individual

- **First Place:** Vipin Kumar, University of Nebraska
- **Second Place:** Isabel Werle, University of Illinois
- **Third Place:** Alex Mueth, Purdue University

Graduate Student Winner, Individual Weed ID

- Sithin Mathew, University of Minnesota

Graduate Student Winner, Individual Herbicide Symptomology ID

- Alex Mueth, Purdue University

Graduate Student Winner, Individual Farmer Problem

- Mark Kendall, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Graduate Student Winner, Individual Written Calibration

- Courtney Harle, Iowa State University

Undergraduate Student Winners, Team

- **First Place:** University of Wisconsin-Madison with team members Sabeel Abuhakmeh, Jacob Roden, Daniel Zhu, and Rianne Wagner
- **Second Place:** Kansas State University with team members Ashlynn Hartman, Leno Caldieraro, Quinten Bina, and Joaquin Enrria
- **Third Place:** Iowa State University with team members Alex Coughlin, Emma Davidson, Ephraim Van Zante, and Abe Dieleman

Undergraduate Student Winners, Team Calibration

- North Dakota State University with team members Ethan Mewes, Jenna Larson, and Grace Dinius

Undergraduate Student Winners, Individual

- **First Place:** Alex Coughlin, Iowa State University
- **Second Place:** Daniel Zhu, University of Wisconsin-Madison
- **Third Place:** Rianne Wagner, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Undergraduate Student Winner, Individual Weed ID & Herbicide Symptomology ID

- Alex Coughlin, Iowa State University

Undergraduate Student Winner, Individual Farmer Problem

- Jacob Roden, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Undergraduate Student Winner, Individual Written Calibration

- Daniel Zhu, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Southern Society of Weed Science

Graduate Student Winners, Team

- **First Place:** University of Arkansas with team members Jared Smith, Maria Souza, Michael Dodde, and Cory Ketchum
- **Second Place:** Mississippi State University with team members Tanner King, Alex Mangialardi, Jacob Dodd, and Amy Wilber
- **Third Place:** Texas A&M University with team members Gustavo Camargo-Silva, Sarah Chu, Purushottam Gyawali, and Kapil Chobbe

Graduate Student Winners, Team Calibration

- Mississippi State University with team members Dalton Whitt, Kayla Broster, Ncomiwe Maphalala, and Alaina Richardson

Graduate Student Winners, Individual

- **First Place:** Tristen Avent, University of Arkansas
- **Second Place:** Maria Souza, University of Arkansas
- **Third Place:** Tanner King, Mississippi State University

Graduate Student Winner, Individual Weed ID

- Gustavo Camargo-Silva – Texas A&M University

Graduate Student Winner, Individual Herbicide Symptomology ID

- Maria Souza, University of Arkansas

Graduate Student Winner, Individual Farmer Problem

- Josh Lee - University of Georgia

Graduate Student Winner, Individual Written Calibration

- Tristen Avent, University of Arkansas

Undergraduate Student Winners, Team

- **First Place:** University of Tennessee-Martin with team members Maddie Douglas, David Cartwright, Katie Witbeck, and Courtney Higham
- **Second Place:** Texas A&M with team members Paige Patel, Aliyah Abdur-Razzaquq, and Ainsley Graham

Undergraduate Student Winners, Team Calibration

- University of Tennessee-Martin with team members Maddie Douglas, David Cartwright, Katie Witbeck, and Courtney Higham

Undergraduate Student Winners, Individual

- **First Place:** Aidan Ross, University of Arkansas
- **Second Place:** Rhet Baxley, University of Arkansas
- **Third Place:** Eve Williams, Louisiana State University

Undergraduate Student Winner, Individual Weed ID

- Rhet Baxley, University of Arkansas

Undergraduate Student Winner, Individual Herbicide Symptomology ID

- Aidan Ross, University of Arkansas

Undergraduate Student Winner, Individual Farmer Problem

- Aliyah Abdur-Razzaquq, Texas A&M University

Undergraduate Student Winner, Individual Written Calibration

- Aidan Ross, University of Arkansas

“Congratulations to all the 2024 winners and best wishes to those preparing for the 2025 competitions,” says Dahl. “All those who compete learn to broaden their applied skills in weed science, test and measure their capabilities, and benefit from the opportunity to socialize with and learn from other students and with university and industry weed scientists.”

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About the Weed Science Society of America

The Weed Science Society of America, a nonprofit scientific society, was founded in 1956 to encourage and promote the development of knowledge concerning weeds and their impact on the environment. The Society promotes research, education and extension outreach activities related to weeds, provides science-based information to the public and policy makers, fosters awareness of weeds and their impact on managed and natural ecosystems, and promotes cooperation among weed science organizations across the nation and around the world. For more information, visit www.wssa.net.

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