

GCREC Student Spotlight—Meet John Roberts, PhD Student with Dr. Andrew Koeser’s Program

What degree you are working towards—PhD in Environmental Horticulture

What you are working on in the Koeser’s Lab right now—I primarily work with 3D mapping along roadways to perform measurements on street trees. From these datasets (we call the them ‘point clouds’) we try to update existing tree inventories and develop algorithms to identify trees that might be considered potentially hazardous (i.e., trees that are heavily leaning, codominant stems, etc.). Dr. Koeser has us perform field inventories in Tampa from time to time as well.

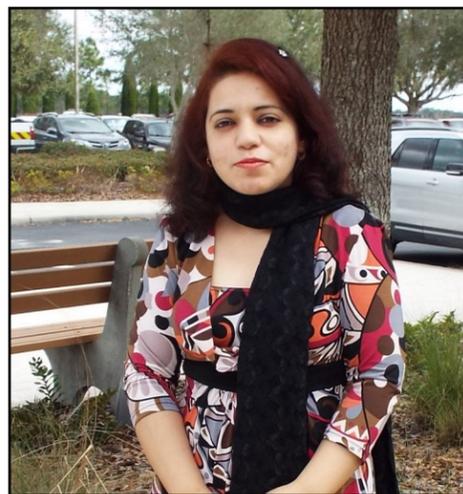
Where you are from originally—Montverde, FL, - 40 mins. west of Orlando.



Personal details about John - I ran cross country and track during undergrad, but I’ve added some mountain biking since Balm seems to be the Florida Alps for mountain biking.

What led you into this field—I grew up with a forest behind my house that had previously been the town dump. It was the greatest place ever. Being able to work outside with trees seems to be bit of an outgrowth from this appreciation.

What your goals are when you graduate –When I graduated from undergrad, it was 2009. There were not many jobs, but I was fortunate to get a position collecting ticks for wildlife disease research through UGA. Upon graduation, I will likely get an industry position mapping roadways and utility corridors for vegetation management. I can’t overstate how great it feels to say that instead of “counting diseased ticks.”



Welcome to Our New Gators!



We have a few new faces here at the center. First on the left is Sana Shahzad. She will be working with Dr. Agehara’s program as a short-term scholar and is here from Pakistan. Sana is a student at the Univ. of Agriculture in Faisalabad. We would also like to welcome Franklin Dubon, from El Salvador working in Justin Renkema’s lab. Franklin is also a short-term scholar and is a student at Zamorano University.

Employee Evaluation Time is Approaching

With the beginning of a new year, comes the reflection of the past year. So get ready for the annual Employee Evaluation period. All employee evaluations are due to the GCREC HR office on or before **Friday, March 23rd**. **STAFF MEMBERS**—don’t wait, start thinking about your accomplishments during 2017; and for **FACULTY**, make sure you start scheduling meetings with your staff as soon as possible to discuss their progress. Most employees don’t think these reports mean anything, but they do, especially when Gainesville awards merit increases.

Peres Lab Works the Night Shift with a UV Application for Strawberries



The UV apparatus is used to suppress powdery mildew of strawberry in open field production systems. The equipment consisted of a dense reflectorized hemicylindrical array of multiple UV fluorescent lamps. For more information, stop by the Peres Lab and just ask!



David Moreira has returned. This familiar face was formerly an intern with Dr. Johan Desaeger’s lab. Now back from Honduras, he will be working on his masters degree. Welcome back David!



Shaping Our Water Future

The 6th biennial UF Water Institute Symposium brings together individuals from a broad range of disciplines and organizations to explore water issues from multiple perspectives. Student poster authors are eligible to compete for "Best Poster" awards based on the quality of the abstract, poster and discussion. **Three posters were awarded prizes of \$1,000 each to be used as funding to support future participation at a national conference, including one to our own Jariana Jani! You go girl!**



It's Happening! Florida Artichokes!
 Pictures left to right—Lukas Vallad, Bill Wang, Anthony Ellis, Evangleon James, and Tia Silvasy with Dr. Agehara's program proudly display the first harvest of Florida artichokes. Yes, that delicious vegetable found in your favorite artichoke dip can now be grown in Florida. To overcome the chilling requirements for this crop, the tea, treated young plants with gibberellic acid, a plant hormone that can induce the expression of the same genes activated by cold weather. This treatment artificially induced bud formation and produced beautiful artichoke buds in early spring. The lab is going to continue to study this hormone treatment and other management practices to improve the productivity of artichokes this winter.



Future Scientists Invade GCREC

Throughout the year we are frequently visited by school groups, and the last group from Dawson Elementary came to the center on what happened to be Florida's Arbor Day. After visiting the Diagnostic Lab with Dr. Jim Mertely, the greenhouses and strawberry taste test, student were put to work planting four cypress trees in honor of the holiday. National Arbor Day is in April, but each state has their own date which is schedule during the best planting time in that area. In addition to having groups come to the center, Christine Cooley often makes the trip to Family Science Nights at school. Recently taking the ever popular owl pellets to Morgan Fitzgerald Middle school only to discover there were actual owls in attendance as well! (Top Photos by K. Bhattarai)



GCREC Employee News

February 2018

February Birthdays

- 1.....Amr Abd-Elrahman
- 1.....Zhen Guan
- 4.... David Moreira Calix
- 6.... Youngjae Oh
- 9....Carol Rebello
- 10...Cheol-min Yoo
- 12...Hugh Smith
- 15...Kazuyo Ueda
- 19...Hua (Margaret) Zou
- 20...Nathan Boyd
- 21...Tim Davis
- 27...Jack Rechcigl
- 29...Nicole Brown

Research Matter Seminar Series is Back

If you have been wondering what ever happened to our Research Matters Seminar Series, well have no fear, it returns this month.



Friday February 16, 12 noon in the auditorium, lunch will be provided. This month's presentation will be:

It's All About the Genes: The Perfect Strawberry
 Presented by Dr. Seonghee Lee, Strawberry Molecular Genetics & Genomics

Dr. Seonghee Lee joined the UF strawberry breeding program at GCREC in 2015, and a year later the strawberry molecular genetics and genomics lab was established. Now his program is supported by nine lab members for multiple research projects: a high-throughput genotyping system for marker-assisted seedling selection, gene discovery for disease resistance and fruit quality, and CRISPR gene-editing in strawberry. Lee's research and extension efforts/collaborations aim to develop new strawberry varieties that are healthy, delicious, and disease resistant. He will discuss how this basic science research using cutting-edge molecular tools enhances conventional breeding approaches and facilitates the search for the perfect strawberry.

Valentine's Day Party
Wednesday 2/14 3:30 p.m. in the auditorium. Cookies, chocolate and a fun game to win even more chocolate! Don't miss out on some mid-week fun.



Welcome our New Faculty Member—Dr. Mary Lusk



From grad student to GCREC faculty member, Dr. Mary Lusk is the newest addition to our faculty team. Dr. Lusk is replacing Dr. Toor as our Soil and Water Scientist. Her program will include work on urbanization and soil nutrient cycling and nutrient stewardship for waterfront residential properties. Best wishes for a long career with GCREC!