

Graduate position in biological control of lily leaf beetles

The Szucs lab at Michigan State University in the Department of Entomology is looking for an M.S. or Ph.D. student, depending on funding and prior experience, to work on biological control of invasive lily leaf beetles. The position starts in May 2024. The project will involve the release of three parasitoid wasps that had been successful at controlling lily beetles in New England. The research will focus on establishing baseline levels of damage by lily beetles prior to the implementation of biocontrol, the development of mass rearing methods for the parasitoids, the identification of suitable release sites and assessment of ecological factors that may affect establishment success and impact of the biocontrol agents.

The work will involve sustained interactions with the public given that the core of lily beetle infestations is in the Detroit area on lilies used for landscaping around homes. The Ph.D. level project will involve a Citizen Science objective with active public engagement and education, and the management of data submitted by the public. Ph.D. candidates should possess an M.S. in entomology, ecology, or a related field. A strong research background as an undergraduate or as a technician can substitute for an M.S. degree. Insect rearing experience is a desired qualification for both M.S. and Ph.D. level applicants.

Applicants should send a CV, cover letter describing their experience and interest in the position, unofficial transcripts, and contact information for three references to Dr. Marianna Szucs (szucsmar@msu.edu). Review of applications will begin on 15 Feb 2024 and continue until the position is filled. Ph.D. applicants will have the opportunity to graduate with a dual degree in Entomology and EEB (Ecology, Evolution and Behavior: <https://eeb.msu.edu/>).

