Science Societies

Member News

April 5, 2024



Peppers Receives 2024 Musser Award of Excellence

The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation has selected Society member Dr. John Peppers as its 2024 Award of Excellence recipient.

The award is given to outstanding Ph.D. candidates who, in the final phase of their graduate studies, demonstrated overall excellence throughout their doctoral program in turfgrass research.



John Peppers.

Peppers received his B.S. in Turfgrass Science and M.S. degree in Turfgrass Weed Science at Auburn University under Dr. Scott McElroy. His research at Auburn focused around potential turfgrass uses with pinoxaden (Manuscript herbicide). He went on to earn a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology, Physiology, and Weed Science with a concentration in turfgrass weed science from Virginia Tech under Dr. Shawn Askew. While at Virginia Tech, he worked as a graduate research assistant as well as the field trial manager for Dr. Askew's lab. His dissertation was titled, "Evaluation of Novel Techniques to Control Annual Grasses in Intensively Managed Turfgrass Systems." His Ph.D. research centered around the implementation of herbicidal programs and application technologies for annual bluegrass, crabgrass, and goosegrass control on and around golf course putting greens.

He plans to focus his career on providing practical, research-based solutions for turfgrass managers.

Roberts and Vieira Recognized for Conservation Work

Society members Trent Roberts and Caio Vieira, faculty members with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, were recognized for their conservation work in rice and soybeans at the National Conservation Systems Cotton & Rice Conference in January 2024 in Jonesboro, AR.

Roberts, Interim Head of the Department of Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences as well as the Endowed Chair of Soil Fertility Research, was awarded Rice Researcher of the Year. Vieira, Assistant Professor of Soybean Breeding, was honored as Soybean Researcher of the Year.

Roberts was honored for his work in rice fertility. Among other roles, he's director of the NSTaR program, short for Nitrogen Soil Test for Rice, established to help growers in the nation's top rice-growing state. NSTaR enables growers to test for organic nitrogen, a more usable nutrient for rice. He has also had a hand in developing management recommendations for furrow-irrigated rice; examining the benefits of using the Greenseeker handheld for nitrogen management in rice; and investigating use of cover crops in Mid-South rice rotations.

Vieira was recognized for his contributions to soybean breeding in the Mid-South. His work includes the identification of natural tolerance to off-target dicamba exposure, breeding for resistance to stressors including southern root-knot nematode, and breeding for tolerance to stressors such as flood and drought. The award also recognized contributions based on the implementation of data analytics in breeding decisions, such as genomic prediction models.



Trent Roberts (left) and Caio Vieira (right) were recognized for their conservation work in rice and soybeans at the National Conservation Systems Cotton & Rice Conference in January 2024 in Jonesboro, AR.

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