

January 2019 Student Spotlight

Angie Macias is a PhD student at West Virginia University (Davis College) and is originally from Naples, Florida. She is currently working in the lab of Dr. Matt Kasson. Her current project focuses on identifying the key players in the fungal community associated with the adorably photogenic feather millipedes, *Brachycybe lecontii*. These millipedes eat a diet of only fungi, and she wants to know what they are eating and why.



Angie is a recipient of WVU's Ruby Fellowship. After completing her PhD, Angie is interested in academia, but due to the crowded job market she is keeping her eyes open for opportunities in industry and the government as well.

What is your favorite fungus and why?

Mortierella! Makes beautiful rosettes in culture, produces lipids used in industry, good at degrading chitin, easy to isolate from soil.

What is your favorite fact/thing about fungi?

Mycorrhizal fungi are the reason why forests can exist and why we can grow enough food to feed ourselves. They are hugely important and under-appreciated!

Who is your mycology role model?

My advisor! He manages to study fungus-arthropod interactions, classic forest diseases like chestnut blight and beech bark disease, and new diseases like *Diplodia* cankers

on oak, all in a single research program.

Any great stories from field work?

In 2016, our lab rented a minivan and drove from WV to Oklahoma to look for millipedes. One of my favorite memories from the trip was telling Matt to slow down so I could stick my bug net out of the window to catch some bugs! (Bad news, even at 20 mph they all splat at the back of your net)

What do you like to do in your free time? What are your hobbies?

Jigsaw puzzles, video games, long rambles in the woods, watching Golden Girls

Anything else we should know about you?

Check me (@herebespiders11) and my advisor (@kasson_wvu) out on Twitter!