

ESA Awards

Recipients of the 2012 Ecological Society of America Awards



MURRAY F. BUELL AWARD

Murray F. Buell ascribed great importance to the participation of students at meetings and to excellence in the presentation of papers. To honor his dedication to the Ecological Society of America and to the younger generation of ecologists, this award is presented to a student for the outstanding oral paper presented at the Society's Annual Meeting.

The winner of the Murray F. Buell award in 2012 is Ebony Murrell, for her presentation "Do trade-offs among colonization ability, competitive ability, and predation govern succession in an aquatic insect community?" which was based on her work at Illinois State University with Steven Juliano. Ebony studied the oft-cited competitive ability–colonization ability trade-off in succession by using elegant manipulative experiments in aquatic mesocosms. Ebony's novel idea was to investigate whether predation could alter the competitive ability/colonization ability trade-off in simple communities. She found that predation may indeed decrease the competitive abilities of late-colonizing species, leading to a quadratic relationship between colonization time and competitive ability in these systems.



The judges were impressed by Ebony’s clear presentation of her research and the connections she made between current theory and her empirical work. The judges appreciated her novel questions and the way in which she presented both her hypotheses and alternative explanations for what she observed. Several judges even commented that Ebony’s talk was one of the best student presentations that they had seen at ESA.