

CAWS Student Travel Grant Report

Maia Raymundo

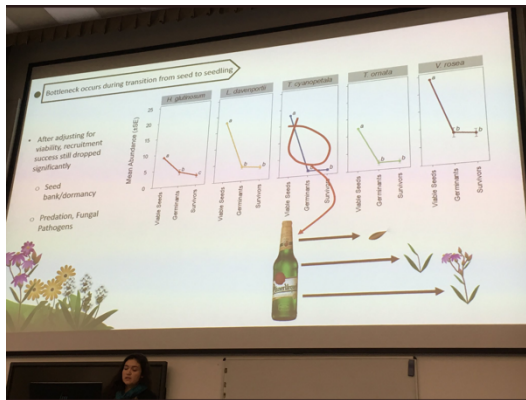
The University of Queensland

The student travel grant awarded to me by CAWS in 2019 supported my travel to Prague, Czech Republic to present at the 15th International Conference on Ecology and Management of Alien Plant Invasions (EMAPi). This conference took place from September 9th to the 13th at the Institute of Botany, Czech University of Life Sciences and had approximately 250 delegates from around the world.

EMAPi was a fantastic opportunity to hear and learn from speakers from a variety of disciplines worldwide. Ecologists, land managers, geneticists, and field technicians each offered unique perspectives on understanding and managing plant species invasions. I particularly enjoyed the keynote talk by Marc Cadotte from the University of Toronto on “Dissecting the success and impact of urban invasions”. His research showed how non-indigenous weeds, specifically looking at *Vincetoxicum rossicum*, benefit from urbanized spaces and subsequently invade natural spaces through unique functional traits not possessed by native species in the area which then allows them to alter niche space. I also learned a lot from talks by Peter Raal (New Zealand Department of Conservation) and Ryan Perroy (University of Hawaii at Hilo) whose research both looked into the use of remote sensing and high-resolution imagery on New Zealand and Hawaii to detect invasive conifers (NZ) and infected native *Metrosideros polymorpha* (Hawaii). A particularly interesting aspect of the work by Dr. Perroy was the use of neural network algorithms applied to high resolution images from drones which could be very useful in detecting the presence of invasive species in very remote areas in Australia and New Zealand.

I presented a flash talk entitled “Mechanisms limiting seed recruitment in an invaded community” under the section “Invaded communities: from species relationships to macroecology”. It was the first time I had presented a flash talk at a conference before and was not sure how much information to put in but in the end, I actually quite enjoyed both giving the talk and listening to other flash talks. My talk was well received, and I had great comments and discussions with people after the session was over.

Overall, this opportunity was fantastic and I learned a lot and was able to explore a bit of Prague during my stay as well. It was not only exciting to share my own research but equally enjoyable to just sit and absorb all this new and exciting research for invasive species management. This wonderful experience would not have been possible without the support from CAWS through the student travel award and I am incredibly honored and grateful to have been given this brilliant opportunity. Thank you very much to Kerry Harrington and to CAWS for all your support.



Left: Me presenting my talk showing the bottleneck of native recruitment in invaded communities. I demonstrated the bottleneck with the local Czech beer!
Bottom: View of presentation room at the Czech University of Life Sciences

