Southern Integrated Pest Management Center
Call for Nominations

Friends of IPM Awards 2027
Graduate Student Awards

Submission Deadline:
6:00 PM Eastern Time on Friday, October 16, 2026

The Southern IPM Center (SIPMC) is pleased to release this call for nominations for the 2027 Friends of IPM Awards.

The mission of the SIPMC is to expand the region's capacity to develop, coordinate, communicate, and implement effective IPM programs. Since 2003, SIPMC has worked with USDA, Land Grant universities, Extension, and many other partners in promoting and facilitating the development and implementation of IPM across the South. SIPMC also engages broadly with stakeholders to identify and address regional pest priorities.

Since 2008, the Southern IPM Center has honored individuals and teams who demonstrate outstanding leadership, innovation, or promise in advancing integrated pest management across the Southern region. The Friends of IPM awards program recognizes those who make exceptional contributions to IPM research, extension, education, or implementation. Awardees are celebrated for their dedication, impact, and commitment to strengthening IPM in the Southern region.

This specific RFA is for graduate students. For outstanding IPM practitioners and professionals, we have separate award categories: the Friends of IPM Professional Awards. We also have a travel grant award for those bringing IPM Awareness to new audiences: the IPM Ambassador Travel Grant. These RFAs can be found on the Friends of IPM Awards page within the Grant Management System.

Friends of IPM Awards 2027
Graduate Student Awards

The Prize:

- This award program will recognize **two** students: one in a Master's program and one in a Ph.D. (or equivalent doctoral degree) program.
- The winners will receive a plaque to be presented at an appropriate venue mutually agreed upon by each winner and SIPMC staff.
- The winners will have an article written about their work published on the SIPMC website.
- After the Friends of IPM article is completed by SIPMC, the winning Master's student will receive a $2,000 honorarium, and the winning Ph.D. student will receive a $3,000 honorarium.

Eligibility:

Only Master's and Ph.D. (or equivalent doctoral degree) students are eligible for this award program category. The nominated student must be enrolled in a graduate program within the Southern region at the time of the submission deadline (October 16, 2026).

Nominees should have demonstrably strong potential for providing leadership in IPM as shown through research, teaching, outreach, grants writing, or other support for research, extension, and/or educational IPM projects. To be most competitive, students should be in the later stages of their degree program.

Graduate students must be enrolled at a college or university located within the Southern region of the United States and working in IPM and related disciplines (including but not limited to entomology, plant pathology, nematology, and weed science) to be eligible for the award program. The Southern region is defined by USDA-NIFA and includes 13 states and two territories as follows: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, the U. S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia.

Nomination Information and Evaluation Criteria:
Each department may nominate students who are enrolled in a Master's program or a Ph.D. (or equivalent doctoral degree) program. The nomination can be written by anyone, but the department head or a designee should screen multiple nominations and select up to six per department (three Master's and three Ph.D.) to submit to SIPMC.

Students will be evaluated based on the answers to the questions in the nomination form in the Grants Management System (see below). Nominations must be submitted in the Grants Management System and require completing the following sections:

1. **General information:**
    - What is the name, affiliation and contact information (email, phone, mailing address) for the nominee?
    - What is the name, title, affiliation, and contact information (email, phone) for the nominator?
    - What state is the nominee from/affiliated with?
    - What is the nominee's field or area of specialization? (Please list specific crops or settings, pests, or diseases that the nominee works with).
    - What is the nominee's thesis or dissertation title, if known?
    - Has this nomination been approved by the department head or appropriate designee?

2. **Nomination Questions:**
   These questions are to be completed by the nominee's faculty advisor, department head, or other faculty member who works closely with them. There may be additional guidance for each question within the Grant Management System. Please note that **there is no need to submit a nomination letter**, but you may upload additional supporting documentation under the 'Additional Information' question.

   Nominees will be evaluated based on answers to the following questions:
    1. Provide a brief summary statement about the nominee.
        - In a paragraph, please provide a concise summary statement about the nominee. This statement isn't scored as part of the review process, but should provide reviewers with an overview of why this student is being nominated and highlight major accomplishments.

    2. How is the nominee engaged in innovative and impactful IPM research? (20%)
        - In one or two paragraphs, please describe what is innovative about the nominee's research. How is their research impactful or potentially impactful? Be specific.

    3. How is the nominee involved in IPM communication or delivery to

stakeholders (i.e., Extension)? (20%)
    - Has the nominee led workshops, field days, or given presentations to stakeholders (e.g., growers, extension agents, commodity organizations, the public)? Has the nominee communicated about IPM to stakeholders in informal ways (e.g., videos, social media posts, podcasts, etc.)?
    - Briefly synthesize any specific evidence that would be helpful for reviewers.

4. Has the nominee authored any Extension IPM articles such as pest alerts, brochures, fact sheets, or other timely information articles? (20%)
    - If so, please include the number of articles and/or highlight any specific publication achievements. Please make sure that relevant article details are in the nominee's CV.

5. Has the nominee authored any peer-reviewed research publications? (20%)
    - If so, please include the number of publications and/or highlight any specific publication achievements (e.g., first author, prestigious journal, etc.). Please make sure that relevant publication details are in the nominee's CV.

6. Has the nominee given any scientific presentations on their work? (10%)
    - This includes posters, oral presentations, and abstracts. If so, please provide the number of presentations and highlight any specific presentation achievements (e.g., keynote speaker, won student presentation award, speaker at prestigious conference, etc.).

7. Has the nominee engaged in service or leadership related to IPM? (10%)
    - This includes volunteer work, formal or informal leadership roles, and leadership in the form of grantsmanship. Highlight any specific achievements or impacts.

8. Additional Information (Optional)
    - Supporting materials may be submitted as a single, combined PDF attachment. These might include letters of support or illustrative examples of the nominee's work. This is optional.

3. **Nominee's CV**

This will help reviewers address information requested in the evaluation questions. Note: Please only list articles that are already published, in press, or submitted; do not list manuscripts that are in preparation.

Submission of Nominations:
All proposals must be submitted in electronic format through the online Grants Management System by **6:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, October 16, 2026.**

To submit a nomination, see the following instructions:

1. Visit the Friends of IPM Awards page within the Grants Management System (GMS). There you will find links to each awards category as well as the Professional and Student RFA.
2. Click on the appropriate award category to begin a nomination submission.
3. Follow the prompt to login or create an account.
4. Confirm that the nomination form title lists the correct award category and click "Begin a new proposal".
5. Click "Edit title". **Use the name of the nominee as the project title**. Click "Save".
6. Complete each nomination section, located at the bottom left side of your screen. Note that there are 3 required sections of the nomination, namely General Information, Nomination Questions, and CV Upload.
7. To answer a question within a section, choose "edit answer" and enter the information. As you finish each question, please click save before moving on.
8. Once you have successfully finished a section, a check mark will appear.

   Note: You may leave the nomination form at any time and return to it later by logging into GMS.
9. After completing all the required questions in all sections in the online GMS, you will then have the option to submit your application. (If there is an asterisk next to a section, there is a required question that is missing information.)
10. Click "Submit Application" by the deadline for your nominee to be considered for a Friends of IPM Award.
11. Once you submit your nomination, an email acknowledgement of receipt will be sent.

    Note: If you do not receive an email submission receipt, then an error may have occurred. Please reach out to the Program Manager to check the status of your submission.

Video tutorials are also available on how to create an account, edit your account information, and create and submit your proposal.

Selection Process:
Nominations will be reviewed and recommendations for awards will be made by a review panel. The SIPMC Steering Committee will approve the selection.

Award Presentations:

- SIPMC staff will notify the winners and nominators once the winners are selected.
- Awards will be presented at a venue mutually agreed upon by the award winner and SIPMC staff, preferably in front of the winner's peers. SIPMC typically attends major regional conferences (i.e., Entomological Society of America's Southeastern and Southwestern Branch meetings, Southern Division of the American Phytopathological Society annual meeting, and the Southern Weed Science Society annual meeting). Award winners may be asked to assist with obtaining approval for inclusion in certain venues and/or setting up local arrangements.

Honoraria:

- In order to receive an honorarium, award winners must assist SIPMC's Communication Director with an article about their project. This entails being available for interviews, providing photographs or other supplemental materials, and reviewing drafts. The article is typically published by May of the award year.
- Awardees will be given an option to be a guest on the *This is IPM* podcast, but this is not required.
- The honorarium will be awarded after the article is publicized (typically in May/June).
- **Important Note**: For students on a visa, there may be institutional restrictions on receiving award honoraria. It will be the student's responsibility to verify with their sponsoring institution that they are eligible to receive award income from an off-campus entity. SIPMC will make all efforts to disburse the honorarium. Depending on the student's institutional restrictions, the honorarium may also be disbursed in the form of travel funds to attend a conference or funds for research activities and this will be handled through the sponsoring institution.

Contact Information:
If you have any questions, please contact:

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