Our next member profile is of Dr. Clarence Swanton. Clarence is a Professor at the University of Guelph. Not only is he a former president of the CWSS but one of the Plenary Speakers for the upcoming meeting in Niagara Falls! Read below to learn more about Clarence!

Previous work and volunteer experience in Weed Science:
I started my career in weed science in the spring of 1978, when I was hired as a faculty member of the Ridgetown College of Agricultural Technology by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. I had graduated from the University of Guelph with my MSc in Agrometerology in 1977 and was currently working for the Campbell Soup Company in Toronto as a field agronomist *(Editors note: I wonder if Campbell's would sponsor our CWSS meetings since we have former employees!? Soup for lunch?)* . At the time my experience with weed science was very limited.

How did you become involved with CWSS and when?
I first attended the Expert Committee on Weeds annual meeting in the fall of 1978. I was mentored carefully through my first meeting by Rudy Brown from Ridgetown College and Dr. Al Hamill from the Agriculture Canada Research Station located in Harrow Ontario. At this time, the meetings were mainly concerned with recommendations for herbicide registration.

What has the extent of your involvement been?
Throughout my career, our annual CWSS-SCM meeting has been a conference highlight for me. The chance to get together with colleagues to discuss weed science issues at a national level has been most rewarding. Throughout my career, I have provided leadership on committees and the executive, having served as President in 2007/2008

Favorite memory/experience in your weed science career to date?
My favourite memory in weed science occurred when I discovered that weeds and crop plants can actually talk to each other!

What is your favorite weed and why?
My favourite weed is Jerusalem artichoke (Helianthus tuberosus L.). I studied this weed species for my PhD. *(Editor's note: I'm starting to sense a trend with species studied for a Ph.D. Choose those species carefully!).* It is a good example of a plant species that can be both a weed and a crop.

What are you career goals/future plans in weed science?
My research will continue to explore how crop and weeds communicate. It is my hope that by understanding the molecular and physiological changes that occur in crop plants as a result of this conversation, that we will redefine the concept of plant competition and that breeders may one day use our discoveries to enhance crop stress tolerance to weed competition.

(Editor's note: We hope Clarence also plans to keep training graduate students like our current President Dr. Eric Page to help keep the society membership up!)