

**Name:** Tasha Valente

**Occupation:** Field Research Associate/Technician with BASF

**Previous work and volunteer experience in Weed Science:** My first work related experience in weed science was with the weeds lab at the University of Guelph as a summer student in 2013. I received my Master's degree from the University of Guelph working with Dr. François Tardif. I completed my thesis looking at different cultural management practices (seeding rate, fertilizer, and soybean physiology) to improve crop competition in soybeans. I then worked for Dekalb as a Market Development Agronomist in South Western Ontario, and then as a Sales Agronomist with an independent retail. In terms of volunteer experience, I have helped out with the events at the University of Guelph and I am on the board of directors for my local Soil and Crop Improvement Association.



**How did you become involved with CWSS and when?**

My first involvement with CWSS was in 2014 when I attended the Montreal conference as a graduate student.

**What has the extent of your involvement been?**

I am currently the Communications Director for the CWSS !

**Favorite memory/experience in your weed science career to date?:** So far, my favourite experience working in weed science was working with Breanne Tidemann with AAFC and PAMI (Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute) on a project in Saskatchewan. This was my first big research project outside of my thesis work. I had to ship myself all the materials I would need for the project in advance from Ontario then carry out phase one of the project in Saskatchewan, then mail the samples back to Ontario for phase two (definitely some faith in Canada Post needed with this one..). There was no chance for do overs or running back to get something. I had so much fun working on the project! It was definitely a “whoa, I’m really doing this. I’m doing research ” moment.

**What is your favorite weed and why?:** My favourite weed is Scarlet pimpernel. It is a small, low-lying plant that can easily be missed. It makes such a nice flower. A reward for slowing down and looking around.

**What are your career goals/future plans in weed science (if you are comfortable sharing)?:** I would like to do more community outreach and education projects. Helping people learn is a passion of mine. This year our local Soil and Crop Improvement Association did a “what crop is this” field sign education project that had the name of the crop being grown in the field on one side and uses for the crop on the other. We have had great feedback from the general public! People are curious. Whether teaching weed ID, helping growers better understand soil nutrient management, or helping people not directly involved in agriculture better understand what actually goes on in the fields. Things are a lot less intimidating when you have some understanding or at least know what you are looking at.