

Name: William Kramer

Occupation: Graduate Student at the University of Guelph

Previous work and volunteer experience in Weed Science:

Growing up on a cash-crop family farm in Alberta, I was introduced to the importance of weed management in crop production at a young age. Throughout my undergraduate degree at the University of Saskatchewan, I worked as an agronomist intern and research associate at both Cargill AG Horizons and Cargill Global Edible Oil Solutions. In these roles, I gained a better appreciation of the impacts that weed interactions can have on crop production

and the diversity that this discipline has to offer. My interest in weed science inspired me to move across the country to take a position as a research assistant in the weed science laboratory at the University of Guelph, and eventually lead me to start a master's program within the department.

How did you become involved with CWSS and when?

I was introduced to CWSS when I started my master's program in the fall of 2019. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the annual conference in Kelowna, but had heard great things about it from my peers. I was interested in the graduate student representative position as I wanted to become more involved with the CWSS community and get a better understanding of what the society entails. I was fortunate to be involved in the organization of the 2020 virtual conference. It was great to work with such an outstanding team of people that made organizing such an event seem easy. I look forward to meeting everyone in person at our next conference.

Favorite memory/experience in your weed science career to date?

Working in the University of Guelph weed science lab, I was exposed to a wide diversity of weed species that I had not had the chance to work with on the prairies. One of the most impressive weeds that I was able to work closely with was giant hogweed. I am fascinated with the overall structure of the plant and its ability to consume a given area. An interesting trial that I was involved with was testing various cultural and chemical control methods to eradicate



giant hogweed. Methods of control included broadcast herbicide, herbicide injection, and physical decapitation. Overall, it was interesting to see the final product of such a physically demanding trial.

What is your favorite weed and why?

It is difficult to select one weed as my favourite because growing up on a cash crop farm, I was raised to believe that all weeds are bad. However, from an evolutionary perspective, I think common burdock has an interesting seed dispersal mechanism as it can hitch a ride on the manes and tails of horses, cows and other livestock for several kilometers. Additionally, this sticky/latching method of dispersal inspired George de Mestral to create and patent the Velcro product commonly used today. This is just one of the examples of how weed species can positively influence our everyday lives, as we are typically more concerned about the negative implications associated with them.