

**PLANT SOIL
& MICROBIAL
SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT**



Congratulations

We would like to wish **Linda Colon** a Happy Retirement! Today is Linda's last day after 42+ years of service at MSU. Congratulations Linda!

George Sundin, professor and Extension Specialist in the MSU department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences and **Nikki Rothwell**, director of MSU's Northwest Michigan Horticulture Research Center, have been awarded a \$5.2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA NIFA) to research control methods for fire blight, a bacterial disease that can hinder crop yields and kill apple and pear trees. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/michigan-state-university-researchers-lead-5-2-million-grant-to-investigate-management-strategies-for-fire-blight>

PSM Office Contact Information / Hours

Effective March 24, 2020 the PSM Administration Offices are closed. During this time of uncertainty, please be patient with any request that you may have placed with a PSM support staff member. Know that PSM support staff will get to your request as quickly as possible.

AnnMarie Guldner	guldner1@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	7 AM-3 PM
Ashley Lathrop	danas@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Brian Horgan	horganb@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Christiina Donley	tymoszew@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Debbie Williams	williade@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	7 AM-3 PM
Dominic Colosimo	colosi14@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 1-5 PM
Gina Centeno	centeno@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8:15 AM-2:45 PM
Lee Duynslager	duynslag@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12:30 PM & 1-4:30 PM
Lisa Bowen	bowenli1@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-4 PM
Mackenzie Graham	graham2@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	8 AM-12 PM & 12:30-4:30 PM
Rachel Esch	eschrach@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	9 AM-5 PM
Sandie Litchfield	litchfi9@msu.edu	Monday-Friday	7:30 AM-12 PM & 1-4:30 PM

PSM Meeting Calendar

Please save the dates for the following PSM meetings. An email was sent on July 28th with the Zoom login and password information for each meeting.

- September 30 from 1-3 PM Special DEI Workshop
- October 9 from 1-5 PM RPT Meeting
- October 23 from 1-5 PM RPT Meeting

2020 Fall Seminar Series

Thursday, September 17, 2020 at 4:00 PM

Timothy Miles, Ph.D., Michigan State University
Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences

Building a Framework to Revamp the Management of Small Fruit and Hop Diseases

Zoom: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/98053375357>

Meeting ID: 980 5337 5357

Passcode: 149423

Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 3:00 PM

Ashley Shade, Ph.D., Michigan State University
Department of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics
Department of Plant, Soil & Microbial Sciences

Understanding the Rules of Microbiome Resilience

Zoom: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/97034851714>

Meeting ID: 970 3485 1714

Passcode: 196468

Webinars

October 9, 2020 from 8:30 AM-4:30 PM

Preparing Agriculture for the Future

Register at: <http://symposium.cropsciences.illinois.edu/>

Call for abstracts information flyer attached.

October 12-15, 2020

Big Data, Safe Food 2020 Virtual Conference

Register by October 10, 2020

<https://ag.purdue.edu/big-data-food-safety-2020/>

Announcements

PSM Office Coverage

We will be staffing the PSM office for essential needs only (Ex: keys). An appointment needs to be made prior by contacting **AnnMarie Guldner** at either guldner1@msu.edu or 517-353-0120. No drop ins will be allowed.

- Friday, September 18th from 8 AM-12 PM
- Wednesday, September 23rd from 8 AM-12 PM
- Wednesday, September 30th from 8 AM-12 PM
- Wednesday, October 7th from 8 AM-12 PM
- Friday, October 16th from 8 AM- 12 PM
- Wednesday, October 21st from 8 AM-12 PM
- Wednesday, October 28th from 8 AM-12 PM
- Wednesday, November 4th from 8 AM-12 PM
- Friday, November 13th from 8 AM-12 PM
- Wednesday, November 18th from 8 AM-12 PM

Announcements

Community Engaged Learning Survey closes on September 11th

Each year, the Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL) reports on the number of students participating in community-engaged learning ([read more here](#)) at Michigan State University. It is important that this information be collected campus-wide and represent all colleges, departments, programs, and projects. Our institutional mission is, in part, fulfilled by the meaningful connections we have with communities. Through the scholarship of teaching and our community partnerships, we play an important role in preparing students for lifelong civic and social responsibility and contributing to the vitality and health of communities.

It is essential that we share our community-engaged learning data and stories with the MSU community, the public, and to our potential students and families. We ask that administrators, faculty members, and staff members complete the [2019-2020 Community-Engaged Learning Questionnaire](#) (covering summer 2019, fall 2019, and spring 2020 semesters). **The deadline for completing this questionnaire has been extended to Friday, September 11, 2020.** This short questionnaire should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

In an effort to recognize the work of our colleagues and highlight exemplary programs and projects, the CCEL publishes the MSU Community-Engaged Learning Index using the data collected annually from the Community-Engaged Learning Questionnaire. You may view the [2016-2018 Community Engaged Learning Index here](#). If you like you may [preview the questionnaire](#) in advance.

Thank you for your assistance in identifying and recognizing the outstanding engaged experiences in which 80% of MSU students participate as they become globally engaged citizens.

Keys

A reminder as we start the new academic year, **please do not share your keys**. Keys are not signed out to an office or lab, they are signed out to individuals. When you sign out a key it is your responsibility to return that key to the PSM office once you leave your position. If your keys are lost or not returned once you have left PSM, your key deposit will not be refunded. Please direct any key requests to **AnnMarie Guldner** at guldner1@msu.edu.

Sign-in/out forms for PSSB and CIPS

The sign-in/out form for visiting PSSB and CIPS will no longer be required because it's largely redundant with the COVID-19 Workplace Health Screening (Updated 6/18/2020) form. Effective Immediately, you are only required to fill out the COVID-19 Workplace Health Screening (Updated 6/18/2020) form before you enter PSSB or CIPS. The health screening form provides the critical information for contact tracing in the event of potential COVID case or exposure in the building. The sign-in/out form has been removed from the PSM website. Note: Farms are still requiring sign-in/out form. The form can be found at this link

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=MHEXli9k2UGSEXQjetVofRr5465e eclGIAHCZg1x3UtUQU1EWTRBTkZTMzVESEJDTzRPMTBHNEFHVC4u>

Announcements

Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research Accepting Applications

The [Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research](#) (FFAR) will be accepting applications for the new Improving Climate Resilience in Crops program starting September 16, 2020. We are launching this grant opportunity through our [Next Generation Crops](#) Challenge Area to increase a crop's tolerance for higher temperatures.

We seek applications that increase the basal or acquired thermotolerance of crop plants, allowing them to better survive when exposed to high temperatures. This funding opportunity is focusing on solutions that can be applied to one or more of the following crops: maize, rice, sorghum, millet, wheat, sweet potato, cassava, banana, yam, common bean, cowpea, chickpea and groundnut. We will also consider research in other plants, if applicants adequately describe how the proposed research would be transferable to the preferred crops. Solutions that only apply to agricultural systems in high-income countries or involve domestication of new crops will not be considered.

Matching funds for this grant were provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Full application criteria and eligibility requirements will be available on our [Open Opportunities](#) webpage on September 16, 2020.

Food and Drink Policy

Food and Drink Policy - Addendum to the PSSB Reopening Plan 7/23/2020

Based on the changing Executive Orders and needs of the MSU community, food consumption will be allowed in PSSB in posted designated areas. Please keep in mind that this change in policy may pose an increased risk of exposure and it is important to observe physical distancing, follow disinfecting protocols and spend minimal time in the room.

To meet these goals and maximize safety, the PSSB building SOP plan has been modified to:

- Note that it is always preferable to eat outside of the building when possible
- Conference and break rooms on the second floor will be open for food consumption. Please limit your time to 30-min to accommodate colleagues/other building occupants.
 - A279 - Horticulture conference room - maximum occupancy is 5
 - A271 - PSM conference room - maximum occupancy is 6
 - A246 - Break room - maximum occupancy is 5
- Maximum occupancy signs will be posted on each door. If the room is fully occupied, please check another designated space. If all conference and break rooms are fully occupied, check back later.
- Masks must be worn in each room unless actually consuming food
- Kitchenettes will continue to be closed. There is no microwave or refrigerator usage allowed.
- Everyone should bring and remove all personal supplies for eating.
- The user is required to disinfect the space before and after each use following EPA approved guidelines (70% alcohol for 5-min; Sani-wipes for 3-min). Disinfectants will be present in the room.
- Snacks and community food to share should not be brought to work.

Face coverings are a crucial public health measure and help protect others by reducing exposure to droplets if someone is unknowingly infected with COVID-19.

FACE COVERINGS MUST BE WORN BY EVERYONE (including all faculty, staff, students, vendors, and visitors) indoors and outdoors while you are on property owned or governed by MSU and while participating in MSU-related or MSU-sponsored activities. If you have a medical condition that may prevent you from safely wearing a face covering, you should contact MSU's Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to begin the accommodation process.

Exceptions to the requirement for face coverings will be limited.

If you are indoors, exceptions are limited to when:

- You are in your own place of residence and can therefore properly self isolate.
- You are in a private, single-occupancy office or lab space with a closed door and can reasonably expect other individuals not to enter (but if you leave your private, single-occupancy office or lab space and proceed into a common area or hallway - even if there are no other individuals present - you must wear a face covering)
- You are eating or drinking but still maintaining proper distance (at least six feet of physical separation between yourself and others)

If you are outdoors, exceptions are limited to when:

- You are an outdoor worker and can maintain social distance from others (but you will need to wear a face covering outdoors when interacting with others or when unable to maintain social distance)
- You are exercising or engaging in high-intensity activities outdoors (for example, jogging, running, bicycling, or golfing) and can maintain social distance from others

If you are working, exceptions are limited to when:

- You are working in a setting where a face covering may increase the risk of a hazard (for example, the face covering could become wet, the face covering could get caught in machinery or the face covering could become contaminated with chemicals used in the work environment)
- You can maintain social distance from others
- You have previously consulted with your supervisor to determine the appropriate face covering for your setting

Face coverings should (a) be non-medical grade to maintain supplies for health care use, (b) fit snugly against the side of your face, (c) cover your nose and mouth, (d) be secured with ties or ear loops, and (e) allow for breathing without restriction. Cloth face coverings should only be worn for one day at a time, they must be properly hand washed or laundered before subsequent use. Face coverings may vary (for example, disposable non-medical masks or neck gaiters are acceptable).

Please adhere to the guidelines and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as federal and state governmental authorities, in order to protect your own health and the health of the entire MSU community.

In addition to wearing face coverings, you also must take the following personal precautions:

- Practice physical distancing
- Practice good personal hygiene, including washing hands frequently with soap and water or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap is unavailable
- Routinely clean and sanitize your workspace and shared equipment

Vehicle Use Policy

MSU travelers are now allowed by MSU Transportation Services to travel with two persons in full size vans large enough to allow six-foot spacing. There are no restrictions on distance traveled. This approval applies to MSU Transportation Services vans and department or project owned vans of similar size.

Please comply with the following conditions:

- 1) The two passengers must remain at least six feet apart while traveling.
- 2) Both the driver and passenger must wear face coverings at all times while in the vehicle.
- 3) Maximize movement of external air at all times. Use ventilation fans with recirculation disabled. Windows may be open if weather allows.
- 4) Disinfect all high-touch surfaces with an EHS approved disinfectant such as 70% ethanol at the conclusion of each leg of the trip.
- 5) Normal travel approvals continue to be in effect.

Information from MSU Payroll Department

MSU Will Not Participate in the Social Security Deferral Program

Per IRS Notice 2020-65 (released August 28, 2020), employers may elect to defer the withholding and payment of the employee share of social security taxes (6.2%) from September 1 through December 31, 2020. The deferral only applies to employees whose compensation is approximately \$104,000 or below.

Please note that this is simply a deferral of taxes - it is not a forgiveness of taxes. Any taxes deferred must be recouped and repaid by the employee through payroll deduction between January 1 and April 30, 2021. This means that instead of having 6.2% Social Security taxes deducted during the January through April 2021 time period, employees would have 12.4% deducted to repay the amount deferred in 2020.

After assessing the overall Social Security deferral plan, MSU has elected to not participate due to the payback burden that will be placed on employees beginning in January 2021. As a result, Social Security taxes will continued to be deducted, as normal. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to the payroll department at 517-355-5010 or payroll@ctrl.msu.edu.

New Version Fillable PSMS PDF Time Sheet

Attached to this newsletter is the [new fillable version of the PSMS PDF time sheet, this version replaces all other copies](#). The new time sheet has required fill-in areas (i.e. dates and signatures) and all areas are now fillable or a check box.

PSM Payroll Time Reporting

Due Date Reminders for **biweekly payroll** (includes labor and student)
Reminder: If your employee's time is not submitted, they will not be paid.

- For the September 25th pay date (for time worked from August 30-September 12) your time is due by 5 PM on Tuesday, September 15th.
- For the October 9th pay date (for time worked from September 13-26) your time is due by 5 PM on Tuesday, September 29th.
- For the October 23rd pay date (for time worked from September 27-October 10) your time is due by 5 PM on Tuesday, October 13th.

MSU Academic Calendar

Fall 2020

October 21	Middle of Semester
November 26-27	Holiday - University Closed
December 11	Classes End
December 14-18	Final Exams
December 24-25	Holiday - University Closed
December 31- January 1	Holiday - University Closed

Fall 2020 Commencement will be virtual. More information will be provided when available.

Send newsletter submissions to AnnMarie Guldner at guldner1@msu.edu
Deadline: Thursdays by 10:00 AM