



The Tschinkel Ant Natural History Research Grant supports graduate student research on the scientific natural history and basic biology of ants. The grant encourages projects that consider ants in their social modality, with colonies as functional and developing entities. It is awarded annually to a student whose proposed research promises the best contribution to this often-neglected field of study.

The winner of the 2020 Tschinkel Grant is **Horace Zeng**, who will receive \$2,500 to support his research. Horace is a member of the IUSI who holds a bachelor's degree in Crop Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He is currently pursuing a PhD in the laboratory of Dr. Kenneth Ross, at the University of Georgia. His proposed research is titled, "Experimental Dissection of Acceptance of *Sb* Supergene-Carrying Queens by Workers in the Red Imported Fire Ant." Horace's work builds on the observation that fire ant colonies transition from a monogyne to polygyne social form when only 10 – 20% of the work force carry the *Sb* supergene. He intends to use the Tschinkel Grant to purchase camera equipment that will allow him to detail the behaviors of monogyne and polygyne workers, who are allowed varying degrees of physical contact, before and after the introduction of *Sb*-carrying queens. His goal is to reveal the behavioral processes that allow a minority of colony members to influence a collective decision and ultimately, their colony's social phenotype. Horace has already developed promising pilot experiments and demonstrates an uncommon knack for working with his study species. The awards committee felt that Horace's "Lüscher-like" approach and attention to the interplay between individual and colony characteristics in *S. invicta* best exemplified the spirit of the Tschinkel Grant.

Sincerely,

The Awards Committee:

Christina L. Kwapich, Jürgen Liebig (Co-Chairs)

Rachelle Adams, Kaitlin Baudier, Sarah Bengston, Floria Mora-Kepfer Uy