

# **Christopher P. Bivins**

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*Fungal molecular ecologist with extensive experience in ITS metabarcoding and teaching*

## **EDUCATION:**

**B.S. Biology (Botany)**  
San Francisco State University

**May 2017**

**M.S. Biology**  
Fresno State University

**May 2021**

**Ph.D. Quantitative & Systems Biology**  
University of California, Merced

**Aug. 2021 - Present**

## **RESEARCH & TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**University of California, Merced - Instructor of Record** **Aug. 2025 - Dec. 2025**  
Developed first mycology course at UC Merced, offering a comprehensive mycology education program covering taxonomy, ecology, and field identification. Developed innovative AI-integrated assignment requiring deep conceptual understanding while building AI literacy and creative engagement with course material.

**University of California, Merced - Teaching Associate** **Aug. 2021 - May 2024**  
Covered modern concepts fundamental to biology degree programs in a variety of courses, including Flora of California, Genetics, Microbial Ecology, Ecosystems of California, and Introductory Biology. Led discussion sections and lab sections, graded written reports, presentations, and exams.

**Joint Genome Institute Summer Intern** **May 2023- Aug 2023**  
Analyzed 13,000+ fungal genomes and tested and developed new tools for detecting genomic regions known to be associated with the biosynthesis of secondary metabolites.

**NSF-Sponsored Workshop: “Advanced Study Institute on Invasions and Evolution”**  
Traveled to South Africa as part of a 20-person team of Ph.D. students (10 from the U.S., 10 from South Africa). Conducted research on co-invasive fungi and pines from pine plantations. Engaged in a 2-week intensive bioinformatics workshop developing genomic analysis skills.

**Fresno State University - Introductory Biology Teaching Associate** **Aug. 2019-May 2021**  
Prepared and gave lectures, prepared and guided biological lab activities, proctored exams and quizzes, graded reports and written assignments, and regularly held consultation hours for students. Transitioned to remote learning due to Covid-19.

## **FELLOWSHIPS - AWARDS- GRANTS:**

- Sonoma County Mycological Association Scholarship (\$2,500)
- Graduate Student Research and Creative Activities Support Award - Fresno State (\$1,000)
- Graduate Student Research Improvement Award - UC Merced (\$1,000)
- National Science Foundation International Research Experience for Students Fellow (NSF-IRES)
- GRAD EXCEL Peer Mentor Fellow, UC Merced (\$1,000)
- California Institute for Biodiversity: Insecta, Funga, & Soil Biodiversity Grant (\$57,000)
- Mildred E. Mathias Graduate Student Research Grant (\$2,000)
- Best Speaker Award, ESS 190 Fall 2024, UC Merced. Selected by undergraduate students as top-ranked speaker.
- Henry Pavelek Sr. Memorial Scholarship, North American Truffle Society (\$1,500)
- Best Speaker Award, ESS 190 Spring 2025, UC Merced. Selected by undergraduate students as top-ranked speaker, two semesters in a row.
- Outstanding Teacher Award, UC Merced (\$1,000)

## **PUBLICATIONS:**

- Coleman, N. *et al.*, including Bivins, C.P., *Phytoremediation: The Toxicology of Essential and Nonessential Metal*. Lulu Publishing, ISBN 978-1-4834-6908-9.
- Bivins, C.P. & Frank, A.C. (2025), *Fungal Endophyte Communities in Galled Oak Leaves: Stability in Leaves, Divergence in Galls*. *Fungal Ecology* (Accepted: 10/16/2025).
- Nickles, G *et al.*, including Bivins, C.P. (2025), *Equipped for success: Genomes and metabolomes of the European Amanita muscaria are conserved in its novel South African range*. *New Phytologist* (Accepted: 11/19/2025).

## **PUBLICATIONS UNDER REVIEW:**

- Bivins, C.P & Frank, A.C. (2025), *Host species, site, and season interact to drive fungal endophyte diversity and guild structure in California oaks*. *Fungal Ecology* (Submitted: 9/10/2025).
- Bivins, C.P & Mujic, A.B. (2025), *Ectomycorrhizal fungal composition shows structured spatial variation around Sarcodes sanguinea and Corallorrhiza striata*. *American Journal of Botany* (Revised Manuscript Submitted: 12/1/2025).

## **OUTREACH & MENTORING:**

### **- Research Mentor (UC Merced)**

Mentored 21 undergraduate student researchers, including 4 students mentored through UCM's CORE program, which provides paid experiential learning for undocumented students. Mentees were trained in lab techniques including DNA extractions and PCR.

### **- Mycological Society of America (MSA) Student and Postdoc Section, Secretary**

Helped to organize the annual MSA conference, evaluated student/postdoc scholarship applications, kept meeting records/notes.

### **- Expert docent for the Sierra Foothill Conservancy (SFC)**

Taught ~300 community members over 12 hikes about fungal identification, ecology, and conservation priorities within the Sierra Nevada Foothills, raising ~\$7,500.

### **- RADIOBIO, UC Merced**

Tabled a booth at the ValleyBio science community outreach event in downtown Merced. Taught visitors about the local fungal ecology of the Merced area and surrounding foothill habitats.

### **- QSB Grad EXCEL Peer Mentor Program**

Served as a peer mentor for first-year Ph.D. students in the Quantitative and Systems Biology (QSB) graduate program. Completed formal mentorship training focused on graduate student transition and inclusive pedagogy, earning a Graduate Peer Mentorship Certificate.

### **- MSA SPORES Mentor**

Served as a mentor for two undergraduate students attending the Mycology Society of America conference for their first time.

## **PRESENTATIONS:**

- *What Mushrooms Teach Us About Wellbeing*, Lectures on Drip, Merced, CA (10/18/25)
- *Woodrats & Truffles*, North American Truffle Growers Association, Monthly Meeting (9/15/25)
- *Woodrats & Truffles*, Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter, Fresno, CA (9/9/25)
- *Fungi in Galls & Leaves*, Mycological Society of America, Madison, WI (7/1/25)
- *Truffles of the Sierra Nevada*, SFSU Sierra Nevada Field Campus (6/4/2025)
- *Woodrats & Truffles*, ESS Undergraduate Seminar Series, UC Merced (4/30/2025)
- *Fungi in Galls & Leaves*, Symbiosis Annual Conference, Yosemite, CA (4/20/2025)
- *Truffles of the Sierra Nevada*, Tree School, Oakhurst, CA (4/12/2025)
- *Woodrats & Truffles*, North American Truffle Society, Corvallis, OR (4/8/2025)
- *Truffles of the Sierra Nevada*, Tree School, Santa Cruz, CA (4/5/2025)
- *Emerging with ChatGPT*, Demystifying AI in Academia, UC Merced (3/14/2025)
- *Fungal Biodiversity in California*, UC Merced Naturalist Training series (2/14/2025)
- *Truffles of the Sierra Nevada*, ESS Undergraduate Seminar Series, UC Merced (1/29/2025)
- *Below the Trees - Truffles!* Above the Trees, Oakhurst, CA (11/9/2024)
- *Fungal Ecology in the Sierra Nevada* Sonoma Mycological Association, Sonoma, CA (10/25/24)
- *Truffles of the Sierra Nevada* Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter, Fresno, CA (10/23/24)
- *Fungal Biodiversity in California*, Ecosystems of California Guest Lecture, UC Merced (10/2/24)
- *Truffles of the Sierra Nevada*, University of California NRS Day, Oakland, CA (10/1/24)
- *Truffles of the Sierra Nevada*, ESS, Undergraduate Seminar Series, UC Merced (9/16/24)
- *Mining Fungal Genomes for BGCs*, QSB Seminar, UC Merced (9/12/24)
- *Fungal Ecology in the Sierra Nevada*, Sierra Foothill Conservancy, Fresno, CA(6/16/24)
- *Are Mycoheterotrophs Actually Parasites?*, Mycological Society of America, Toronto, CA (6/10/24)
- *Are Mycoheterotrophs Actually Parasites?*, North American Truffle Society, Corvallis, OR (6/4/24)
- *Truffles of the Sierra Nevada* Mariposa Science on Tap series (5/6/2024)
- *Are Mycoheterotrophs Actually Parasites?*, Symbiosis Annual Conference, Yosemite, CA (4/19/2024)
- *Fungal Biodiversity in California*, UC Merced Naturalist Training series (3/8/2024)
- *Fungi in Galls & Leaves*, UC Merced SPARK Seminar series (2/13/2024)
- *Invasive Fungi in California*, Merced High School, Merced, CA (10/17/2023)
- *Fungi in Galls & Leaves*, UC Merced QSB Seminar Series (9/8/2023)
- *Cynipid Wasps & Fungal Endophytes*, Mycological Society of America, Flagstaff, AZ (8/3/2023)
- *Mining Fungal Genomes for BGCs*, Joint Genome Institute, Berkeley, CA (7/21/2023)
- *Cynipid Wasps & Fungal Endophytes*, Symbiosis Annual Conference, Yosemite, CA (5/6/2023)
- *Fungal Biodiversity in California*, UC Merced Naturalist Training series (3/24/2023)
- *Cynipid Wasps & Fungal Endophytes*, University of Pretoria, South Africa (10/18/22)
- *Fungal Ecology in the Sierra Nevada*, UC Merced QSB Seminar Series (9/2/22)