

Rebecca Harkness

I graduated from James Madison University in 2018 with a BS in Biology and a concentration in Microbiology. I discovered my interest in plant-microbe interactions through environmental microbiology and microbial ecology coursework during my time as an undergraduate and decided to pursue a graduate degree. Now I'm working toward a PhD in plant pathology studying *Caliciopsis* canker disease in Michigan White Pines. My current research on this pathogen has 3 foci: the first is to describe potentially novel species of *Calciopsis* found in Michigan forests, the second is to determine when infectivity of this pathogen is at its peak and what practices land managers can use to mitigate it, and the third is to compare the pathogenicity of Michigan's *Caliciopsis* species with other species from around the country. We hope that this research can help protect Michigan's forests from *Caliciopsis* as an emerging endemic pathogen and prevent the widespread damage that we see it causing in other regions of the US. I'm passionate about forest health as well as making science a more welcoming place for all people. When I'm not working I like to hike, watch horror movies, and spend time with friends and family.