

Repurposing a Problem Into Art

This summer, an interdisciplinary graduate student team used support from the [ICAT Roger and Debbie West Student Grant](#) to transform *Ailanthus altissima* (Tree-of-Heaven), a damaging invasive species in Southwest Virginia, into ecologically safe, handmade art paper.

Led by Evans Akwasi Ahenkorah, the project brought together creative technologies, plant science, and chemistry to turn invasive biomass into a sustainable artistic medium. The work culminated in original laser engravings and paintings, with an interactive community workshop also planned.

Project members include: Evans Akwasi Ahenkorah, Srabonti Sandha Sikder, Harrison Miles, Katherine Suson, and faculty advisor Zachary Duer.



From left to right: Harrison and Evans harvesting tree-of-heaven; Evans holding the eco-conscious paper product.

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Story from [Invasive Species Collaborative Monthly Newsletter](#).