

Austin Butterfly Forum Meeting

Monday, April 24, 2017 at 7:00 p.m.

Zilker Botanical Garden Center

This meeting is free and open to the public.



WASPS AND COMICS

Presented by Carly Tribull, Ph.D.

Have you ever found a caterpillar that seemed to be sporting some extra growths? Or the mummified husk of an aphid? Most likely, parasitoid wasps are to blame! These wasps are important controls on herbivorous insect populations, even if their lifecycle does require the gruesome deaths of their hosts. In this talk, Dr. Tribull will explore two families of parasitoid wasps, Bethyilidae and Dryinidae, and the potential they have for controlling major crop pests. She will also explore how molecular sequencing can help us better understand the taxonomy and evolutionary histories of these wasps and highlight the work her team of undergraduate researchers has been carrying out on local parasitoid species.

In addition, she will cover another of her passions - the use of comics and games in entomological and biological education. While many think of comics as focusing on superheroes in spandex, the medium has diversified and grown to include educational works. Comics can successfully be used at a variety of levels, from elementary school classes to advanced coursework, because the combination of sequential images and text act as an intermediary bridge for understanding complex ideas.

Dr. Carly Tribull received a BA in Integrative Biology and Practice of Art from the University of California, Berkeley in 2011 and her PhD from the Richard Gilder Graduate School at the American Museum of Natural History in 2015. She has produced educational outreach comics about different types of wasps for children. Now a visiting Assistant Professor at Sam Houston State University, she focuses her research on the local taxonomy and evolutionary histories of parasitoid wasps. She still continues to combine comics and education, with a current focus on creating comic materials for college lectures.