I am investigating the diversity of endophytes that recruit from soil to the seeds of velvet mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*), an important food crop to the Tohono O’odham people of southern Arizona. Specifically, we are evaluating how endophyte communities that colonize seeds differ in native vs. degraded soil, and how these endophytes may influence the survival, germination, and early growth of mesquite and other ethnobotanically important plant species in the arid southwest. Ultimately, we aim to characterize the native microbiomes of these seeds and identify those that may aid in propagation and productivity of plants important to southern Arizona’s tribal nations.

Prior to coming to the University of Arizona in January 2018, I completed my bachelor’s degree in Plant and Environmental Science at Clemson University in December 2017. My undergraduate studies focused on agronomic practices and plant pathology. After graduation, I intend to pursue a career assisting indigenous communities with crop production and climate-related issues.