

- **Would you recommend the Summer REU fellowship to someone else? Why?**

I would definitely recommend the summer REU fellowship to other aspiring scientists. You finally get to see how the topics you learn in class apply to the real world and you are able to make a contribution in some way to solving a real problem.

- **What is the most valuable thing, which you learned during the Summer REU fellowship?**

The most valuable thing I learned was that persistence is one of the most important qualities a scientist can have. Sometimes data will not make sense or an experiment you thought would work failed, and on top of it all the questions you may have can feel overwhelming. But remaining persistent and not giving up on a problem when it gets hard will pay off in the end.

- **What are your future professional plans?**

My future professional plans are to attain a Ph.D. in plant biology, and with my degree I hope to work with other scientists and help mitigate (and one day, resolve!) climate change.

- **What is a fun fact about yourself?**

A fun fact about myself is that I lived in Ecuador for three months in 2019. Sin embargo, mi español todavía necesita mejorar mucho antes de hablar con fluidez...

- **If you can change one thing about the world, what would it be?**

If I could change one thing about the world, I would close the loop of food waste by improving access to local agriculture and improving the way society stores and prepares food. At the very least, I would make composting an accessible public service in all communities!

Cailin Smith