

Recommendations for Duling and Kimmel awards – 2017

The Research sub-committee of TREE Fund Research and Education Committee met via Zoom conference on Tuesday, Nov. 21, 2017 to discuss applicants for the Kimmel and Duling grant programs and to choose who among them would be awardees.

For the Kimmel program, of which two awards were available, the subcommittee agreed that a proposal by Drs. Franco-Lara and Brochera to study insect vectors of a phytoplasma disease of *Quercus* in Colombia was worthy of funding. And they now put that recommendation before the Board for consideration as one of the two awards.

However, the committee found enough significant deficiencies in the rest of the viable Kimmel proposals in the current cycle to make them wary about approving any further awards from the current cohort.

Meanwhile, of the Duling proposals, the subcommittee strongly endorsed funding of one by Dr. Nina Bassuk to measure the real value of root pruning in the nursery to success of follow-on transplants in the field, especially of notoriously hard to transplant species.

They also found a proposal by Dr. E. Crocker to document populations of microbiota in ash trees that are tolerant of or resistant to attack by emerald ash borer appealing and they recommend that for funding *if there are sufficient funds in the Duling account as year-end approaches*.

A third proposal in the Duling cohort, one by Dr. R. Antwis, was appealing to the subcommittee but not quite so persuasive as the other two. However, without a strong second for the Kimmel International Grants program and because Antwis – with roots in the U.K. – would have been a strong contender for a Kimmel award had she chosen to enter that competition, the committee respectfully requests that they be allowed to explore the possibility of a modified proposal by Antwis to fit into the lesser financial award that Kimmel offers. Although we're not sure what an offer for negotiation of this sort to Antwis might yield, if we're able to get useful information via a scaled back version of the original, we agree that that would be preferable to funding one of the other Kimmel proposals that has such conspicuous deficiencies.

Deliberations of the committee concluded at that point, obviously with a few still unresolved issues for the full Board of Trustees to consider.

Respectfully submitted,
George Hudler