



cordially invites you to an

Interdisciplinary Seminar

with

Dr. Lauren Smith-Ramesh

on

“Placing species invasions in a food web context: A new twist on old invasion hypotheses”

Tuesday, October 4, 2016

3:30-5 p.m.

Reception & refreshments at 3 p.m.

Hallam Auditorium, Room 206

1122 Volunteer Boulevard



A postdoctoral fellow at NIMBioS, Lauren Smith-Ramesh investigates invasive plants in a food-web context and the direct and indirect effects to native communities and ecosystems.

Abstract: A core goal of invasion ecology is to identify the factors that drive species invasions. A few dominant hypotheses have surfaced to explain why invaders succeed, including the 'enemy escape hypothesis,' which purports that invaders suffer reduced damage from natural enemies relative to natives. However, empirical support for enemy escape is mixed. Placing our study of invasion in a more complete food web context (beyond two trophic levels) may help to explain why this hypothesis often fails. Through theoretical and empirical case studies of invasive plants in Eastern deciduous forests of the United States, I consider how food web context can inform our understanding of species invasions. Then, I present a global synthesis that examines how food web complexity interacts with invasion success across habitats. By considering invasion in the context of broader food-web interactions, we can explain why common hypotheses such as enemy escape often fail, while gaining new power to explain global patterns of species invasions.