



# Dr Elia Pirtle



Elia is a Research Scientist in Entomology at Cesar Pty Ltd in Melbourne.

Elia has been fascinated by nature for as long as she can remember. Growing up in the North American desert surrounded by a menagerie of animals and close proximity to the wilderness was the main reason for her passion for the environment, sustainability and conservation.

Completing a Bachelors degree in Biology in her hometown of Reno, Nevada Elia moved to Australia to pursue a PhD at the University of Melbourne. Through her project looking at how lizards stay cool and hydrated in extreme environmental conditions, Elia visited remote parts of the Australian desert which concreted her passion for working in the field.

Elia’s vision was to work in a very applied role where she could feel like she was making a difference, this led her to Cesar where she is able to apply her background in zoology to tackle issues of insect pests in agriculture. Elia has no background in agriculture so the transition was challenging but Elia also found it very rewarding too.

“It has really opened my eyes to just how little I knew about a system which I relied on so heavily every day of my life!”

Elia has found working within the vegetable industry has enabled her to tackle real world problems and see her research go straight to those that can use it.

Elia’s focus pests include some that still pose a biosecurity risk, such as the vegetable leafminer fly.

“I get to work directly with end users , including biosecurity officers, and growers and advisors who would be most affected by this pest. This helps me stay focused on the practicality of the resources I develop. I am an artist on the side, and I always try to apply my artistic skills to make research as clear and user friendly as possible.”

*“I have found the vegetable industry a great place to work, where I am always learning, where opportunities to work outdoors are plentiful, and where the growers and advisors I meet are very supportive.”*



## Research Scientist in Entomology

The Role	Prerequisites	Skills Needed	Salary Guide	Training options	Resources needed	Next career step
<p>Surveillance for insects in the field</p> <p>Insect collection, identification and rearing</p> <p>Testing control measures in the laboratory</p> <p>Testing ID method in the laboratory</p> <p>Running field experiments</p> <p>Data analysis</p> <p>Desktop research</p> <p>Developing user friendly resources</p> <p>Working with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government</li> <li>• Industry</li> <li>• Community groups</li> <li>• Growers</li> <li>• Advisors</li> </ul>	<p>Happy to work long hours</p> <p>Enjoy meeting people</p> <p>Enjoy collaboration with a range of people</p> <p>Enjoy working outdoors</p> <p>Enjoy travel</p> <p>Need to be able to work in a team</p> <p>Passion for insects</p> <p>Interest to continually learn</p>	<p>Work autonomously</p> <p>Good decision making skills</p> <p>Strong understanding of experimental design and techniques</p> <p>Strong quantitative skills (coding is a plus)</p> <p>Good understanding of ecological processes</p> <p>Good time management and organisational skills</p>	<p>\$76,000 - \$332, 000</p> <p>Depends on size of enterprise and level and responsibilities</p> <p>(payscale Australia)</p>	<p>Diploma in Biology or Zoology (or other related subjects)</p> <p>Bachelors degree (or higher) in Biology or Zoology (or other related subjects)</p>	<p>Car licence and transport a must</p> <p>First Aid Training</p> <p>Laboratory Safety Training</p>	<p>Develop within current enterprise that you work for</p> <p>Move to a role for a larger company or one in a different sector</p>