Insects are everywhere and in great numbers. Their impact on our environment is unparalleled, but a number of scientists are expanding our knowledge from these creatures—whether for environmental reasons or to help business thrive. One of these scientists is Jason Williams. Williams was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. He received his bachelor’s degree in biology at the University of Iowa and his master’s and doctoral degrees in zoology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 2010, he is an assistant professor in the department of biological sciences at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

Unlike entomologists (insect scientists), Williams did not collect bugs as a kid. But it was inspired by a college professor. Today he teaches his own students about the biological impact insects have on our lives, from their work pollinating tomatoes to just their novelty,” said Williams. He said certain insects can survive extremely hot and low temperatures. One of the insects he uses in his research and teaching is the goldfinch, whose populations are extremely abundant in southern Illinois.

“Most people don’t think of insects as being diverse; they think of them as being just a bunch of bugs,” Williams said. “But they bring in so many different types of species—so it’s just a little bit of a disconnect.”

The students get the fact that insects play such an important role. “They learn that insects are critical to agriculture, how they are used for legal purposes—such as in crime scenes determining time of death, and medically and more common called wound debride-ment therapy. There are about 5,000 host-