Position Announcement

Postdoctoral Researcher

Position Details
Located at the Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center in Wenatchee. 100% FTE. 4 years of funding.

University Title Postdoctoral Researcher
Working Title Apple, Pear & Cherry Pathology Extension
Title Code 0306
Position Number 132394
College/Area College of Agriculture Human and Natural Resources
Department ANR
Hiring Unit Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center
Work Location Wenatchee
Position Supervisor Prof. Tianna DuPont

Summary of Duties This position will run Research and Extension activities for Fire Blight Management as part of a national collaboration as a member of the Washington Tree Fruit Extension program based in Wenatchee WA. This position will also collaborate on Extension activities related to X-disease and Little cherry disease of cherry and stone fruit. The incumbent will: conduct blossom blight protection trials; conduct shoot blight protection trials; conduct on-farm demonstrations of fire blight cultural strategies; and extend research results through local meetings. He or she will perform a wide range of duties including field work, laboratory analysis, data analysis, grant management and organization of workshops and outreach activities. This project will require a high degree of communication and collaboration with industry. The individual will manage the project including overseeing student workers, organizing trials, and working with collaborators. Duties will include actuating spray trials, rating damage, conducting laboratory assays, and communicating with trial hosts. Other required activities include data entry, summary, statistical analysis, preparation of presentations and reports. Experimental and analytical skills, precision, reliability, understanding and knowledge of research theory, excellent organizational skills are required. Extension duties will include creating and giving presentations, writing newsletter and website materials, organizing workshops and creating innovative outreach materials. Ability to work outdoors in all-weather required.

Fire Blight is a devastating bacterial disease affecting apple and pear. Recent disease epidemics in WA have caused up to 5% loss of production in apple and pear and more than $100 million in losses. A national collaboration initiated in 2020 has been funded to 1) improved non-antibiotic management options and strategies validated on a national scale, 2) improved methods to minimize systemic spread of the pathogen that too often results in tree death, and 3) provide effective extension to support implementation of optimized management.

X-disease has reached epidemic levels in Washington state over the last three years resulting in the removal of hundreds of acres of cherries and stone fruit. Effective extension involvement is necessary to help growers apply new research on effective management for the phytoplasma and its vectors.

To apply visit https://wsujobs.com/postings/54102

For more information about our program visit http://treefruit.wsu.edu/tianna-dupont/

WSU is an EO/AA educator and employer.
Duties

Project management 20%
- Organizing and carrying out field and laboratory trials.
- Preparing protocols.
- Supervising student helpers.
- Data entry, summary, statistical analysis, preparation of presentations and reports.
- Completion of travel and grant paperwork.
- Locate and purchase supplies.

Fieldwork 20%
- Design field experiments.
- Conduct product trials.
- Conduct cultural controls trials.
- Evaluate efficacy.

Laboratory analysis 20%
- Create protocols and carry out analysis.

Outreach 25%
- Communicate with growers and industry through phone calls, online database, email, and participation in local meetings.
- Work with Extension to organize, market, and evaluate educational events including field visits and intensive trainings under the mentorship of the project lead.
- Develop presentations, reports and educational materials (which may include activities, videos, and manuals).

Other 15%
- Other duties as assigned

Required Qualifications
Earned Ph.D. in Plant Pathology or closely related science field within the last five years, 2) Strong interest in applied research and outreach; 3) Strong analytical and statistical skills; 4) Ability to work independently as well as with an interdisciplinary team of researchers, extension specialists, and other project participants; 5) Interest in apple, pear, integrated pest management and sustainability; 6) Excellent organizational and project management skill;, 8) Excellent written and oral communication skills; 9) Have or be able to obtain a valid driver’s license at the time of hire.

Preferred Qualifications
1) Evidence of high-quality publications and presentations; 2) Experience working with growers and agricultural industry; 3) Familiarity with tree fruit production, pest management and ecology.

Essential Work Competencies
Knowledge, skills and abilities
- Working knowledge of agricultural systems.
- Able to communicate clearly through both spoken and written communication.
- Experimental and analytical skills, precision, reliability, understanding and knowledge of research theory.
- Basic field work skills necessary.

Mental Requirements
- Initiative: takes ownership of his or her work, does what is needed without being asked, follows through on tasks and commitments.
- Efficiency and Organization: Plans ahead, able to manage time and always thinking of better ways to do things.
- Coachable: Receptive to feedback and willing to learn and embrace continuous improvement.
- Critical thinking and problem solving.
- Ability to work as part of a team and work independently.

Physical Requirements
- This position requires significant outdoor work from March to September which will require significant walking, squatting and carrying of light field equipment. Wenatchee is hot in the summer and the incumbent will have to work in all weather conditions.
- This position requires ability to apply applications in spray trials which involves spraying with a backpack type sprayer weighing approximately 30 pounds, walking through the orchard for approx. 4 hrs in a day for several days each season.
- The incumbent will drive to study locations in the vicinity which may be multiple hours in a day most days.
- The incumbent should be able to lift and carry 30 lbs comfortably.