

Position Description for Horticultural Crop Breeding

The Department of Horticultural Sciences, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University seeks outstanding applicants for one full-time, tenure-track position with a 9-month academic appointment beginning Fall 2024. Applicants will be considered for the faculty title of Assistant Professor in **horticultural crop breeding** with an emphasis on grapes. The distribution of effort for this position is as follows: research (60%), teaching (30%), outreach, and service (10%) responsibilities.

A variety of research methods including conventional, molecular, high throughput phenotyping, and data management approaches may be employed to establish an applied and fundamental breeding program to address the complexity of horticultural crop genetics focusing on the development of cultivars adapted to production in Texas. Research areas may include but are not limited to the genetics of biotic and abiotic stress resistance/tolerance, quality traits, plant architecture, yield, fruit ripening, post-harvest shelf-life, and other traits related to fresh and processed products as well as genotype x environment x management interactions. The position is part of an interdisciplinary cluster hire including two additional positions in Horticulture Crop Physiology and Horticulture Crop Secondary Metabolism. The applicant will work closely with other horticulture crop breeding, genomics, and genetics researchers, physiologists, production scientists, and biotechnology scientists within the department and Texas A&M University and Texas A&M AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension. The applicant will work with faculty both on and off-campus, along with other scientists in the region, nationally, and internationally to establish a highly impactful, extramurally funded research program.

The successful individual will be expected to develop undergraduate or graduate courses related to fruit breeding and genetics in consultation with the department head. The successful candidate will also advise and mentor undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scientists, and research technicians and participate in outreach and service activities related to the position. The individual will be expected to publish regularly in peer-reviewed journals appropriate to the discipline.

The Department of Horticultural Sciences is a nationally ranked program with a mission focused on sustainability, wellness, and food security to support the economic viability and national and global competitiveness of Texas horticulture, which contributes over \$70 Billion per year to the state economy. The Department houses 19 full-time faculty members and 13 additional faculty located at Research and Extension Centers across Texas. The Department offers two undergraduate degrees; a B.A. and B.S. in Horticulture; certificates in Floral Design, Viticulture and Enology, and Landscape Design, and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Horticulture, Plant Breeding, and the Master of Agriculture (non-thesis) in Horticulture. Areas of research, teaching, and extension emphasis in the department include horticulture crop physiology, post-harvest physiology, plant breeding and genetics; horticultural genomics and biotechnology, controlled environment horticulture, viticulture and enology, floral design, vegetable and fruit production, food science & technology, bioactive compounds, greenhouse and floriculture production & marketing, nursery and floriculture economics, international and social horticulture, ornamental horticulture, landscape plant development, plant-associated microorganisms and plant health, and sustainable horticulture crop production.

The Department is located in the Horticulture/Forest Science Building (HFSB) in College Station, TX. It boasts the Benz Gallery of Floral Art, modern research and teaching laboratories, and a growth chamber complex. Greenhouses (38,000 sq. ft.) are located behind the HFSB building and at the Horticulture, Teaching, Research, and Extension Center facility (HortTREC) near Snook, TX. Departmental faculty enjoy productive relationships in and with Texas A&M AgriLife Research, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Norman Borlaug Institute of International Agriculture, the Multi-Crop Transformation facility, Texas AgriLife Genomics and Bioinformatics Services, and the Texas A&M Supercomputing facility.

Distribution of Effort: 60% research, 30% teaching, 10% outreach and service.

Responsibilities:

- Conduct needs and hypothesis-driven research in horticulture crop breeding targeting traits that optimize the production and quality of horticulture crops in Texas.
- Collaborate and lead with multi-disciplinary Research Scientists and Extension Specialists to address key issues affecting the horticulture crop industry in Texas.
- Develop and/or lead research teams to apply for internal and external research grant opportunities with the involvement of research faculty from Texas A&M University, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, and AgriLife Extension, as well as other research institutions.
- Develop physiological knowledge and practices to enable sustainable, affordable, nutritious, and high-quality fruits for the citizens and industry of Texas.
- Teach one undergraduate and one graduate course in fruit breeding and genetics in the Department of Horticultural Sciences.
- Mentor and train the next generation of plant breeders, including students and post-Docs.
- Publish in high-impact, peer-reviewed journals.

Salary and Benefits: Salary is competitive and commensurate with background and experience.

Qualifications

Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral terminal degree in plant breeding or related discipline, along with a strong knowledge and experience in plant breeding, evidence of peer-reviewed scholarly accomplishments in the area of plant breeding, and excellent verbal and written communication skills are required. Relevant experience in plant breeding of fruit crops, demonstrated success in securing external grants and contracts, and evidence to engage with stakeholder groups, identify critical issues, and act on those needs through research activities that resolve problems. A minimum of two years of independent or postdoctoral research experience, along with at least one year of teaching experience at the undergraduate or graduate level is preferred.

Application Instructions

Applications will only be accepted online at apply.interfolio.com/135683

Applicants must upload the following components: (1) a Cover Letter (two-page limit), (2) Curriculum Vitae, (3) a Personal Statement (your statement should include your philosophy and plans for research, teaching and service, as applicable, and (4) Names and Contact Information of five (5) professional references.

To be given full consideration, please submit applications by January 22, 2024. The position will remain open until a suitable candidate is identified. The anticipated start date is August 1, 2024.

Questions: Address inquiries to Search Committee Co-Chairs: Carlos Avila, Ph.D. - Phone: (956) 969-5636 Email: carlos.avila@ag.tamu.edu and Kevin Crosby, Ph.D. Phone: (979) 845-7012 Email: k-crosby@tamu.edu

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