



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE  
[www.ars.usda.gov](http://www.ars.usda.gov)

*"Solving Problems for the Growing World"*

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Announcement Number:** ARS-X4W-0421  
Demo/Alternative Merit  
Promotion

**Position Title/Series/Grade:**  
Biological Science Technician (Plants)  
GS-0404-7/8/9

**Promotion Potential:** GS-9

**Employment Type:** Full-time - Permanent

**Grade and Salary Range:**  
GS-7 \$33,071.00 - \$42,993.00 Per Year  
GS-8 \$36,626.00 - \$47,615.00 Per Year  
GS-9 \$40,454.00 - \$52,591.00 Per Year

**Location of Position:**  
Horticultural Crops Research Unit, Corvallis, Oregon

**Who Can Apply:**  
All U.S. Citizens (Local Commuting Area Only)

**Opening Date:** September 20, 2004

**Closing Date:** October 12, 2004

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional information regarding employment opportunities, please visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

**Contact Information**

**Human Resources Assistant:**  
Barbara Scafone  
(301) 504-1416

**Location Contact Information:**  
Carrie Fox  
(541) 738-4002

**DC Relay Service:** (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

**Send Applications to:**  
USDA, Agricultural Research Service  
Human Resources Division  
Attn: Barbara Scafone/ARS-X4W-0421  
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5106  
Beltsville, MD 20705-5106

**Fax:** (301) 504-1535  
**E-mail:** [scirecruit@ars.usda.gov](mailto:scirecruit@ars.usda.gov)

Applications must be postmarked, e-mailed or faxed by the closing date of the announcement. Applications received in Government envelopes will not be considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your application is complete.

For information about the organization and location, visit the location's website at <http://www.ars-grin.gov/hcrl/>

**Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting area.**

## **Major Duties:**

The incumbent provides support for a plant pathology program in the Horticultural Crops Research Laboratory in Corvallis, Oregon. The major goal of the program is research on epidemiology, evolution, population genetics of Phytophthora diseases of nursery crops with particular emphasis on the Sudden Oak Death pathogen *P. ramorum*. Plans, organizes, coordinates and conducts technical aspects of laboratory, containment growth-chamber greenhouse and field experiments. Performs recombinant DNA techniques, plasmid and genomic DNA purification, polymerase chain reaction, gel electrophoresis, restriction enzyme analysis, hybridization techniques and genetic marker analyses (AFLP, SSR, etc.). Conducts epidemiological experiments in growth chambers, greenhouse and field (includes inoculation and disease assessment). Prepares and maintains a large oomycete, fungal and bacterial culture collection. Follows USDA APHIS quarantine guidelines for *P. ramorum*. Operates and maintains laboratory equipment such as microscopes, centrifuges, balances, electrophoresis apparatus, incubators and shakers, PCR thermocyclers and spectrophotometers. Analyzes data including DNA sequence information using computer programs. Oversees daily operations of the laboratory by maintaining supply inventories and budgets, and supervising laboratory aides or student workers.

**Qualifications Required:** Your education and experience will be evaluated against all qualification requirements (basic and any additional requirements) listed below.

### **Basic Requirements**

- GS-7: Applicants must have 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-6 level or one full year of directly related graduate level education.
- GS-8: Applicants must have 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-7 level or one and a half-years of directly related graduate level education.
- GS-9: Applicants must have 1 year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-8 level or two years of directly related graduate education or a Master's Degree directly related to the work of the position.

**If qualifying all or in part based on your education, please submit a copy of your college transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grades received. If this information is not provided, your education may not be appropriately evaluated and you may lose consideration for this position. If your qualifications are based in any part on education and you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your academic transcripts prior to entering on duty.**

**Specialized Experience** - experience which has equipped you with the following Knowledge, Skills and Abilities - 'KSAs' required to perform the duties of this position:

1. Knowledge of plant pathology, microbiology and molecular biology.
2. Knowledge of recombinant DNA technology, nucleotide sequence analysis and bioinformatics.
3. Knowledge of experimental design to assist in setting up experiments, collecting and recording data, and performing data analysis.

## Other Important Information

### **Benefits Package:**

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at [www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm).

### **Veteran's Preference:**

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 478-757-3000 or TDD 478-744-2299. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veterans Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Visit their VetGuide website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

### **Relocation Expenses:**

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletin 03-402, which may be found at: [http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing\\_recruit/reloweb.htm](http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm).

### **Financial Disclosure Requirement:**

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. You may be required to submit a financial disclosure report if hired for this position.

### **False statements:**

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

### **Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):**

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

### **USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:**

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

### **Selective Service System:**

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

**Reasonable Accommodation:**

Reasonable accommodation is provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

**Civil Rights Policy Statement:**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

**To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).**

## Application Package Checklist

**If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.**

- Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

**The following information is required of all applicants:**

- Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- Social security number
- Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (if claiming veterans preference) (Visit <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp> for additional information).
- SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veterans preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
  - \_\_\_ Job title
  - \_\_\_ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
  - \_\_\_ Duties and accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Employer's name and address
  - \_\_\_ Supervisor's name and contact information
  - \_\_\_ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
  - \_\_\_ Number of hours worked per week
  - \_\_\_ Salary
  - \_\_\_ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
  - \_\_\_ Certificates/licenses (current)
  - \_\_\_ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
  - \_\_\_ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading "Other Education" for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)

- Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)
- Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures).
- Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a2.htm> and scroll down to the subject heading, "Category".)
- Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under "Other Important Information" below.)
- Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html> ).

**If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.**