



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
www.ars.usda.gov

"Solving Problems for the Growing World"

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement Number: ARS-X4E-0380
Demo/Alternative Merit
Promotion

Position Title/Series/Grade:
Horticulturist
GS-0437-07/09/11

Promotion Potential: GS-11

Employment Type: Full-time - Permanent

Grade and Salary Range:
GS-07 \$34,184.00 - \$44,439.00 Per Year
GS-09 \$41,815.00 - \$54,360.00 Per Year
GS-11 \$50,593.00 - \$65,769.00 Per Year

Location of Position:
U.S. National Arboretum, Floral & Nursery Plants
Research Unit, Washington, D.C.

Who Can Apply:
All U.S. Citizens

Opening Date: September 20, 2004

Closing Date: November 1, 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 Specialist:
Liz Parker
(301) 504-1351

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

Send Applications to:
USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Human Resources Division
Attn: Liz Parker
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5104
Beltsville, MD 20705-5104
Fax: (301) 504-1535
E-mail: 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 www.usna.usda.gov.

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

Major Duties:

In this position you will provide support to the shrub breeding program targeted at developing improved landscape trees and shrubs that are pest resistant, tolerant of environmental stresses and of superior ornamental value. Specifically, you will conduct and/or supervise the propagation, evaluation and distribution of genetically improved shrubs. This position is being recruited to fill one of three steps within a career ladder---the GS-7, GS-9 or full performance level of GS-11. At the full performance level, duties include scheduling and carrying out such activities as controlled pollinations, seed collection and cleaning, plant propagation, and general plant care; operating the greenhouse/polyhouse complex; maintaining a national evaluation and distribution program of genetically improved shrubs; setting up projects, collecting and analyzing data, and summarizing results in the breeding, development, testing, and analysis of seedling progenies; updating the database with such information as breeding and distribution records, and maps and inventory of plant materials; investigating ways to improve propagation methods, cultural treatments, pest control, and pollination/seed gathering methodologies; documentation of findings for reports or manuscripts; directing breeding activities for one or more genera; providing technical and administrative guidance to one permanent staff member and occasionally to interns or volunteers. Candidates for the GS-7 or GS-9 level will also perform duties in support of this research program, but the work will be designed to prepare you ultimately to assume the full responsibility at the GS-11 level.

Working Conditions and Other Considerations:

The work requires walking, bending, stooping, reaching, climbing ladders, and lifting up to 50 pounds. Good vision, reflexes, agility, and dexterity in the use of garden tools, such as rakes, hoes, shovels, spades, pruning shears, saws, and standard laboratory equipment is necessary. Work is performed in the office, greenhouse, nurseries, and occasionally in the laboratory. Regular work outside in many weather conditions will be required.

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

Basic Requirements

A degree in horticulture or a related discipline of basic plant science that included at least 30 semester hours in the basic plant sciences, of which at least 16 semester hours were in horticultural subjects such as those dealing with the breeding, care, management, production, and post-harvest handling of horticultural crops; OR a combination of education and experience that included courses equivalent to a major in horticulture or related plant science that included at least 30 semester hours in the basic plant sciences, of which at least 16 semester hours were in horticultural subjects such as those noted above, plus appropriate experience or additional education. Courses in botany, plant physiology, plant taxonomy, plant pathology, genetics, agronomy, horticulture, and similar courses may be used to meet the 30-semester hour requirement in basic plant sciences. The 16-semester hour requirement in horticulture includes course work in basic horticulture and course work related to any of the recognized subject-matter fields of horticulture, i.e., fruits, vegetables, ornamentals, nursery work, seed production, or course work in related areas of sciences, such as microbiology, entomology, plant pathology, plant physiology, or genetics that is directly related to horticultural work.

This position has a positive education requirement. You must provide a copy of your academic transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grades received to verify education when applying for this position. If this information is not provided, your

education may not be appropriately evaluated, and you may lose consideration for this position. If you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your transcripts prior to entering on duty.

Additional Requirements:

GS-07: In addition to the education requirements noted above, you must demonstrate at least one of the following to qualify for the GS-07 level: 1) one year of related graduate level education; 2) superior academic achievement based on (a) class standing or (b) grade-point average or (c) honor society membership; OR 3) one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-05 level.

GS-09: In addition to the education requirements noted above, you must demonstrate at least one of the following to qualify for the GS-09 level: 1) 2 years of progressively higher level related graduate education leading to a master's degree or related master's or equivalent graduate degree; 2) one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-07 level.

GS-11: In addition to the education requirements noted above, you must demonstrate at least one of the following to qualify for the GS-11 level: 1) 3 years of progressively higher level related graduate education leading to a Ph.D. degree or related Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree; or 2) one year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-09 level.

Time-In-Grade Restrictions apply for all candidates considered under Merit Promotion/ Alternative Merit Promotion.

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 the methods and practices of horticulture and related sciences, including plant genetics, woody plant propagation, plant pathology, plant physiology, entomology, and plant taxonomy.
2. Skill in plant propagation and plant care and maintenance, preferably with experience in woody plants.
3. (GS-07/09 levels): Ability to perform assigned phases of plant breeding experiments, trials, and evaluations.

(GS-11 only) Ability to design, coordinate and execute plant breeding experiments, trials, and evaluations.

4. Skill in the operation of standard and specialized greenhouse controls and equipment.

5. Ability to use a computer and associated hardware and software to record and analyze scientific results (includes word processing, databases, electronic mail, and spreadsheet software).

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.

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 Veteran's 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.

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 veteran's 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.