



THE
AMERICAN
CHESTNUT
FOUNDATION®

Job Description

Our Mission

The mission of The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) is to return the iconic American chestnut to its native range.

Position: Horticulture and Pathology Specialist – (Full time position)

Location: Meadowview Research Farms, Meadowview, VA

The American Chestnut Foundation is seeking a qualified candidate to manage our greenhouse, nursery, and blight resistance screening at Meadowview Research Farms in Meadowview, VA. The primary responsibility of the Horticulture and Pathology Specialist is to manage and supervise operations of a containerized seedling nursery currently consisting of one greenhouse and two shade houses. The nursery has the capacity to grow 20,000 seedlings per year. TACF is currently developing methods to screen containerized chestnut seedlings for blight resistance to accelerate breeding and selection. The Horticulture and Pathology Specialist will also assist the Meadowview team in the field, including vegetation management, orchard inventory, seed harvest, inoculation, and planting as needed. The Horticulture and Pathology specialist will play an important role in developing and optimizing early screening methods in addition to other job responsibilities listed below.

Essential Functions:

1. Supervise propagation, maintenance, and chestnut blight inoculation of containerized American chestnut backcross seedlings
2. Develop methods to increase the survival of chestnut seedlings in the field after inoculation with the chestnut blight fungus in the greenhouse
3. Work with TACF Director of Science to implement non-destructive early screening for blight resistance including chemical fingerprinting and genomic selection
4. Work with TACF regional staff to transplant pure American chestnut sprouts from the forest into orchards for future use in breeding
5. Optimize methods to accelerate the flowering of American chestnuts in the greenhouse for outcrossing and diversifying transgenic populations
6. Prepare cultures of *Cryphonectria parasitica* for blight resistance screening
7. Perform quality control on *Cryphonectria parasitica* cultures including long-term storage, pathogenicity tests, and fungal genotyping to confirm strain identity

8. Optimize chestnut seed harvest and storage methods to improve seed germination rates
9. Enter data into TACF's database

Knowledge/Skills/Abilities:

1. Experience with or knowledge of principles and techniques related to hardwood propagation, greenhouse operations, and greenhouse pest management
2. Experience or willingness to learn laboratory techniques, including fungal culture, DNA extraction, PCR, and gel electrophoresis
3. Excellent listener and communicator, willingness to search out answers and work collaboratively
4. Ability to work independently, take initiative on new projects, and manage a multitude of tasks
5. Willingness to assist in management of volunteers and nursery staff
6. Willingness to lead tours and communicate the chestnut story with enthusiasm
7. Willingness to learn and use dentataBase and Microsoft office applications

Qualifications:

Ideal candidates will have Bachelors or Masters of Science in Horticultural Science, Plant Pathology, or a related field.

How to apply: Please send your resume and a cover letter to Heather Nelson (heather.nelson@acf.org) 50 N. Merrimon Ave., Suite 115 Asheville, NC 28804

Benefits:

As part of a competitive compensation plan, The American Chestnut Foundation currently offers a robust Health, Dental, Vision, AD&D and Life insurance package at no cost to the employee, with coverage beginning the first day of the month following the date of hire. Employees may add dependents to the group plan at their cost, and any cost is offered under a Section 125 cafeteria plan – meaning significant tax savings for the employee. Under the cafeteria plan, we also offer participation in either a pre-tax Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or pre-tax Healthcare Savings Account (HSA) depending on the health insurance options selected and offer a variety of optional, supplemental coverage.

We also offer participation in a 403(b) retirement plan, with a 5% company match after two years of service. In addition to annual holiday pay, TACF offers two weeks paid vacation and ten paid sick days per year, with additional vacation time based on years of service.

The American Chestnut Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, age, protected veteran or disabled status, or genetic information.