



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

COLLEGE OF COMPUTER, MATHEMATICAL AND NATURAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENTOMOLOGY

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POSITION ANNOUNCEMENT

DIRECTOR, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND PLANT DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY

Assistant/Associate Research Professor/Professional Track Faculty/Extension Specialist
Department of Entomology (51%), Department of Plant Sciences and Landscape Architecture (49%)

Justification: Maryland agriculture includes a mix of traditional agronomic, fruit and vegetable production systems -as well as agritourism, urban farming, ornamentals production and landscape maintenance industries. Rapid and accurate plant problem diagnostics is a crucial foundation for crop management decisions in each of these systems. Inaccurate diagnoses can result in crop losses, application of ineffective pesticides and increased chemical, labor, and environmental costs. The University of Maryland Plant Diagnostic Laboratory (PDL) provides diagnostic services for Maryland stakeholders as well as clients throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. A faculty position as director of the PDL will allow continued progress in maintaining the highest standards for accurate diagnoses and reporting along with expanding opportunities to seek extramural funding.

Responsibilities: The successful applicant for this position as Director of the PDL will have a 12-month appointment with primary responsibilities in the area of diagnostics and laboratory management. The director oversees all aspects of PDL operations including sample submission, sample analysis using microbiological, serological and molecular techniques, and communication of diagnostic results and management options to PDL clients. The director oversees the laboratory budget and clinic database and supervises student interns and hourly workers. The PDL Director is the Maryland representative for the National Plant Diagnostic Network (NPDN), and manages NPDN programs and funding for the state. The director also delivers educational programs on plant disease-related topics for Extension faculty and stakeholders statewide and in the region. The director communicates pertinent and timely plant problem information through extension publications, newsletters and web resources. The director may also collaborate on research projects and participate in graduate student training. Opportunities for undergraduate and graduate teaching are possible, based on qualifications and interest.

Collaboration: Diagnosis and clinic management entail frequent interaction with PDL clients, opportunities to collaborate with campus faculty, especially within the Departments of Entomology and Plant Sciences, and extension educators and specialists to assure accurate and timely diagnosis and that client questions are answered appropriately. The director is a key collaborator with the Maryland Department of Agriculture and federal regulatory officials on plant disease issues in Maryland. The successful applicant will participate in the NPDN, the American Phytopathological Society and seek other opportunities for professional development to stay current with advances in diagnostic plant pathology.

Qualifications: A Ph.D. in Plant Pathology or related area with experience in plant diagnostics is required. The candidate must be able to work effectively in a team setting with university, government agency and private industry personnel. Effective written and oral communication skills are required. Experience in laboratory management and/or extension is preferred.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Coordination and overseeing all aspects of the plant diagnostics laboratory operations including sample submission, processing, and diagnostics (molecular, serological, biochemical, and/ or traditional diagnostic methods). Coordination of laboratory services to include analysis of plant material for bacterial, fungal, viral, and nematode pathogens, in addition to insect and abiotic causes, and suggesting appropriate control measures when appropriate. Assigning and supervising technical personnel in diagnostic laboratory activities.
- Collaborating with State Extension Specialists to diagnose plant health problems and prepare written responses describing the diagnosis and the appropriate management recommendations. Work with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, DNR-Forest Service, and APHIS to identify plant insects and diseases.
- Develop publications and web resources, and provide leadership on timely topics for various modes of pest management information transfer. Develop training programs for Extension faculty as appropriate. Participate in educational programs for stakeholders (e.g. growers, landscapers, arborists, agribusiness) as well as researchers and students as appropriate.
- Maintain a database for plant pest and disease diagnoses. Coordinate with counterparts in the North East Plant Diagnostic Network. Compile and distribute yearly reports that summarize clinic submissions and diagnoses.

Physical Demands of the position: The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

- This position frequently presents information through vocal and written communication to individuals of various ages, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds.
- The employee will have to lift and/or move items weighing up to 25 pounds.
- This position requires the employee to work outdoors conducting field research, delivering programs, and teaching at events. This may occur during very hot and/or inclement weather.
- Visual acuity is required for preparing and analyzing written or computer data and presentations.

Salary and Benefits: Salary will be commensurate with experience. The University of Maryland offers an extensive benefits package.

Applications: All candidates must apply on-line at <https://ejobs.umd.edu/postings/117752> (Position # 103246). Please submit a letter of interest highlighting relevant experience, CV, and the names and contact information of three references. Position is open until filled, but for best consideration apply by **April 12, 2024**. We anticipate a job start date to be early summer 2024. Questions may be sent to Dr. Paula Shrewsbury, Faculty Search Chair, at pshrewsbury@umd.edu.

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