

Job opening: Tree Crop Breeder – 2 positions

Hours: Full-time

Location: Madison / Southwestern WI (details below)

Posted: May 14, 2023

Salary: \$75,000-\$90,000

Deadline: Open until filled, with applications reviewed on a rolling basis

Who we are

The Savanna Institute, a nonprofit organization based in Madison, WI and Champaign, IL, works with farmers, businesses, and scientists to lay the groundwork for widespread agroforestry in the Midwest US. Inspired by the native savanna ecosystems that once covered much of this region, we envision a transformed agricultural system, centered on trees and other perennial crops, that fosters ecological resilience, climate stability, economic prosperity, and vibrant, equitable communities. For more information, please visit <https://savannainstitute.org>.

The Tree Crop Improvement Program

Savanna Institute has assembled large, phenotypically and genotypically diverse breeding populations at its demonstration and research farm sites (primarily in Spring Green, WI) for black currant, American elderberry, chestnut, hazelnut, black locust and American persimmon.

These breeding populations form the basis for a crop improvement strategy which integrates high-throughput phenotyping methods to drive the selection and identification of varieties suitable for multi-environment testing. In addition, they are designed to function as training populations for the development of genomic prediction models of both genetic value (in order to screen progeny families) as well as breeding value (to aid in parent selection).

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.savannainstitute.org/tree-crop-improvement/>

The job

The Savanna Institute (SI) is making a cluster hire of two Tree Crop Breeders (this announcement) and an Agricultural/Ecological Imagery Analyst (separate announcement) as it expands its Tree Crop Improvement Program. These positions will



work to directly support cultivar development for these six tree and shrub crop species that have the potential to play critical roles in agroforestry systems.

These positions will work closely with the existing Tree Crop Improvement Program team, including a tree crop geneticist, a germplasm specialist, and two research technicians, along with the broader SI Research team and the SI Spring Green Campus farm crew.

Specifically, these two Tree Crop Breeder positions will be responsible for:

- The development and implementation of scalable and effective phenotyping protocols based on crop-specific breeding objectives
- Coordination of field management of breeding populations with the farm team
- Working with service providers to sequence and genotype breeding populations and progeny families
- Identification of parents, performance of controlled crosses, and production of progeny families
- Coordination of the release of new varieties with Savanna Institute's Commercialization team

Who you are

We're looking for scientists who believe in our mission and have:

- Strong background in plant breeding theory and quantitative genetics, and a PhD (preferred) or MS in plant breeding, plant genetics, agronomy/horticulture, or related field
- Familiarity with the application of high-throughput phenotyping methods to crop improvement
- Experience with application of next-generation sequencing to advance breeding objectives (e.g. marker-trait association, genomic prediction)
- Experience in multi-environment variety testing and cultivar release (preferred)
- Familiarity with agroforestry or perennial agriculture (preferred)

Job details

- These positions report to the Director of Research & Commercialization.
- These are full-time positions with a salary range of \$75,000 to \$90,000 per year.
- These positions are eligible for the Savanna Institute's benefits package. Benefits for full-time employees include 30 days paid time off per year, a Health Reimbursement arrangement that can be applied to insurance premiums and

approved healthcare costs, a dependent care reimbursement arrangement, and a monthly home office stipend.

- Location is flexible, but frequent visits to breeding orchards at SI's demonstration & research farm in Spring Green, WI (one hour west of Madison) will be critical. Occasional travel to research sites in Illinois will also be needed.
- Most Savanna Institute employees work remotely, but access may be available to shared workspace in our Madison, WI; Spring Green, WI; and Champaign, IL offices.
- A start date of summer or fall 2023 is preferred, but can be adjusted if necessary

How to apply

If you're excited about this job, we're excited to learn about your skills and experience! To apply, please submit a cover letter, a resume/CV, and three professional references to jobs@savannainstitute.org. Positions will remain open until filled, with applications reviewed on a rolling basis.

Questions?

Email Kathleen Fitzgibbon, Operations Manager, at kathleen@savannainstitute.org.

Diversity commitment

The Savanna Institute affirms the value of diversity of staff and stakeholders, and aims to foster inclusive environments and equitable outcomes of our work. We seek individuals who are committed to these goals.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Equal Opportunity is and shall be provided for all employees and applicants for employment on the basis of their demonstrated ability and competence without unlawful discrimination on the basis of their race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable state or federal law.

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