Recruitment 2022
Welcome to the University of Georgia! Go dawgs! This is a reference guide for all things IPS, UGA, and Athens.

Students joining UGA through Integrated Plant Sciences (IPS) conduct cutting-edge plant- and fungal-related research on topics with applications to society and the environment. There are many opportunities in plant science at UGA. Access them through IPS.

IPS is the centralized portal through which students apply, and later specialize in a broad range of research topics including:

- Biinformatics
- Biotechnology
- Breeding
- Genetics
- Genomics
- Physiology
- Ecology
- Evolution
- Fungal Biology
- Molecular Biology
- Plant-Microbe Interactions

Research scales can be molecular, cellular, organismal, or ecological.

IPS is the starting point for participating graduate programs and the Plant Center, which collectively contribute to the overall graduate experience:

- PhD training in interdisciplinary plant research areas
- Customized research specializations
- Competitive financial support
- Plant-focused seminars, retreats and symposia
- A highly interactive plant sciences community spanning basic and applied research questions
IPS Program Information

IPS is a recruitment portal for the plant sciences at UGA. **All requirements for IPS are in the 1st semester**, after which the student selects a lab, major, and home department. After this, the student will follow the requirements of their chosen department.

**IPS covers 9 PhD graduate programs (departments):**
- Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
- Genetics
- Horticulture
- Institute of Bioinformatics
- Institute of Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Genomics
- Microbiology
- Plant Biology
- Plant Pathology
- Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources

**1st semester requirements:**
1. Students perform **three** 6-week lab rotations with any IPS faculty
2. Students take:
   - Responsible Conduct of Research seminar
   - Professional Skills seminar
   - A formal content course

**Funding:**
Students receive research assistantships for the first semester, based on an annual stipend of $29,120. After the first year, the stipend is set according to the student’s home department.
IPS students will take one of these courses in the first semester:

Biological Content:
- HORT/CRSS 6430, Plant Physiology – Basic principles of plant physiology
- HORT 8150, Plant Growth and Development – Physiological processes of growth, development, and environmental effects
- PBGG/CRSS/HORT 6140, Plant Breeding – Fundamental principles and theories for plant breeding and cultivar development
- PATH/PBIO 6200/6200L, Mycology – The biology, ecology, genetics, morphology, and taxonomy of fungi
- PBIO 6720, Plant Variation and Evolution - Conceptual basis and empirical approach for understanding genetic processes and patterns in natural plant populations
- PBIO 8100, Advanced Plant Genetics – Advanced course in plant genetics and genomics

Quantitative Skills:
- STAT 6315, Statistical Methods for Researchers – Basic statistical methods
- FANR 6750-6750D, Experimental Methods in Forestry and Natural Resources – Research methods for constructing and analyzing designed experiments
- STAT 8200, Design of Experiments for Research Workers – Methods for constructing and analyzing designed experiments
- BINF 8500, Algorithms in Bioinformatics – Bioinformatics algorithm design and implementation
- GENE/BINF 8940, Applied Genome Analysis – Bioinformatics approaches for whole genome analyses
IPS Faculty and Student Awards

IPS is marked by exemplary scholarship in research by both faculty and students. Its faculty have a long tradition of world-class excellence in the plant sciences.

Faculty:
- Faculty have received $20+ million in active grants
- 12 current faculty are American Association for the Advancement of Science Elected Fellows
- 1 National Academy of Science member
- 2 have won NSF Career Grants
- 3 are Fulbright Scholars
- 8 are UGA Distinguished Research Professors
- 7 have won a UGA Creative Research Medals

Graduate students (since 2012):
- 9+ students received NSF Graduate Research Fellowships
- 6+ received NSF Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grants
Meet some UGA Alumni

**Geoffrey Meru** (PhD, Horticulture 2010)
- Assistant Professor of Vegetable Breeding, University of Florida

**Chris Topp** (PhD, Plant Biology 2009)
- Associate Member, Donald Danforth Plant Science Center

**Jennifer Yates** (PhD, Plant Breeding 2006)
- Wheat Breeding Lead at Bayer Crop Science

**Safira Sutton** (PhD, Plant Pathology 2019)
- Microbial Discovery Scientist, Boost Biomes

**Jenny Cruse-Sanders** (PhD, Plant Biology 2003)
- Director of the State Botanical Garden of Georgia
- Director of Research and Conservation at the Atlanta Botanical Garden
Meet some UGA Alumni

**Clint Steketee (PhD, Plant Breeding 2018)**
- Soybean Breeding Lead, Inari

**William Carromero (PhD, Plant Biology 2004)**
- US Forest Service National Botanist

**Ada Bacetty (PhD, Plant Pathology 2008)**
- Department Chief, Biological Threat Reduction Program, Defense Threat Reduction Agency

**Carolyn Lawrence-Dill (PhD, Plant Biology 2003)**
- Professor in Genetics, Development, & Cell Biology at Iowa State
  - Lead scientist for the USDA-ARS MaizeGDB project

**María Monteros (PhD, Plant Breeding 2006)**
- North Hybrid Regional Breeding Lead at Bayer Crop Science
  - Previously, Professor, Noble Research Institute
Key Places:

The Science Learning Center (SLC): Teaching labs, coffee & bagel shop

The Center for Applied Genetic Technologies (CAGT): Home to the Institute of Plant Breeding, Genetics and Genomics (IPBGG)

Riverbend Greenhouse Complex

The Complex Carbohydrate Research Center (CCRC): Many IPS faculty are housed here

Odum School of Ecology: Home to Ecology

Warnell School of Forestry & Natural Resources: Home to Forestry

Davison Life Sciences: Home to Genetics and Biochemistry

Miller Plant Sciences: Home to Horticulture, Plant Biology, and Plant Pathology
IPS Student Associations

Each IPS-affiliated department has a graduate student organization that provides opportunities for social events and academic enrichment to enhance the graduate experience.

Students from these departments often co-sponsor events and interface at the Plant Center.

Some past events include holiday parties, retreats, bowling, journal clubs, a fun run, and alumni talks.
Advice from current students

Questions to ask a potential advisor:

• Are you taking rotation students in the fall or full time students in the spring?
• How do you usually support your students financially?
• What expectations do you have for your students in terms of research development, publishing papers, teaching, and securing their own funding?
• What is the average graduation time for students in your lab and where are they now?

Tips when deciding on a program:

• Ask questions! Don’t be afraid to ask questions to anyone and everyone.
• While considering an advisor, also consider the lab environment. Talk to the graduate students, postdocs, staff, etc. of that lab.
• Advisor, lab, department, project, and school are important, but don’t forget that you’re potentially living in a new place for ~5 years. Is Athens a place you’d like to be?
Teaching at UGA

UGA has a strong focus on teaching, promoting excellence and innovation. In addition to abundant resources for instructors, there are opportunities for scholarship and research in teaching. Most IPS students will have the opportunity to develop teaching and communication skills.

- **Bioscience Learning Center** - Computer lab, MediaScape collaboration stations, instructional equipment

- **Center for Teaching and Learning** - Supports instructors campus-wide by providing activities planning, consultations, teaching resources, and workshops. Presents awards for excellent and innovative teaching

- **Greenhouse Teaching Collection** - A variety of tropical plants, cacti and succulents, seedless vascular plants, cycads, carnivorous plants, and orchids are available

- **Scientists Engaged in Education Research** - Facilitates cutting-edge research in STEM education through multi-disciplinary interactions and research collaborations between a community of scientists, provides opportunities to share research

“UGA provided great opportunities to learn about and engage in modern teaching methods and techniques, leaving me with invaluable experience for my current position at a teaching-oriented small university.”
- Alex Pilote, PhD, 2017
  Assistant Professor at Tennessee Wesleyan University
Certificates

Graduate students have the opportunity to pursue a variety of certificates with core content training and skills development. These are just a few that may interest IPS students:

**Interdisciplinary Certificate in University Teaching** - Enhances teaching skills and provides a credential that should enhance opportunities for academic employment. Requirements include four sections of teaching at UGA, selected coursework, a teaching project, evidence of scholarship of teaching, and teaching portfolio

**Bioinformatics** - Coursework that prepares a student to interface with biology and computer science/statistics

**Graduate Certificate in Agricultural Data Science** - Produce graduates capable of bridging the gap between the generation, analysis, and interpretation of big data in the agricultural sector. Students with these skills will be critical for improving communication between data generators (agricultural and biological scientists) on the one hand, and data specialists (computer scientists and statisticians) on the other.

**Conservation Ecology and Sustainable Development** - Interdisciplinary preparation to handle the unique, multi-disciplinary problems associated with working in the area of conservation and sustainable development

**Geographic Information Science** - Advanced training for the rapidly expanding field of GIS, students will learn geospatial concepts and skills in geographic data collection and analysis that may increase research and employment opportunities. In addition to coursework, an internship or independent study is required

**Sustainability** - Develop skills to make significant, systemic changes in communities, paving the way for a more sustainable future. Coursework, a capstone project, and a reflection portfolio are requirements for this certificate
Science Outreach:

There are so many opportunities for science outreach at UGA. These are just a few that IPS students have participated in.

“The Athens Science Alliance contains the Athens Science Café and Athens Science Observer. They provide wonderful opportunities for faculty and students to engage with the community and communicate their science to the public.”

- Mason McNair

“In Project Focus, I visited a middle school science classroom three days a week for a semester, designing hands-on activities and leading class lecture and discussions. The kids were avid learners, and it was a wonderful learning experience for me, the students, and their teacher.”

- Callie Oldfield

“As Managing Editor in Sciences at The Classic Journal, I review UGA students’ scientific research, giving them insight in the publishing process and offering suggestions and revisions to their work.”

- Patrick Smallwood
UGA Facilities and Services:

There are many research spaces and analytical services available on campus, including:

**Bio-imaging Research Center**  
Biological tissue imaging technologies

**Biomedical Microscopy Core**  
Confocal and traditional microscopes and filters

**Complex Carbohydrate Center Services**  
Mass spectrometry, NMR, chromatography, glycosyl residue composition & linkage, site of protein glycosylation, glycome profiling

**Georgia Advanced Computing Resource Center**  
High-performance computing and networking infrastructure

**Georgia Electron Microscopy**  
Transmission and scanning electron microscopy, X-ray fluorescence

**Georgia Genomics and Bioinformatics Core**  
Core laboratory for state of the art nucleic acid sequencing and bioinformatics

**Greenhouse Complex**  
Space for research and teaching, growth chambers

**UGA Herbarium**  
Over 230,000 sheets of vascular plants with an emphasis on plants from the Southeast, particularly Georgia

**Field Research Facilities and Opportunities:**  
Savannah River Ecology Laboratory  
Marine Institute on Sapelo Island  
Network of 10+ University research farms  
Coweeta Hydrologic Laboratory  
State Botanical Garden  
Museum of Natural History  
River Basin Center
UGA has been a part of Tifton, Georgia, for a century. Its faculty and staff discover agricultural solutions and deliver them to people around the state, nation and world.

GA and USDA-ARS breeding programs for peanut, cotton, soybeans, muscadine grape, citrus, turf and forage grasses along with the associated seed system that brings new cultivars to market.

For more than 100 years, the Griffin campus has played a leading role in the development of modern agriculture in the South. It houses UGA turf and ornamental breeding programs and the USDA National Plant Germplasm System – Seed Storage Facilities; the Sensory Science Laboratory to learn how consumer sensory perception is used to evaluate fruit quality in breeding; and the state-of-the-art Food Product Innovation & Commercialization Center where research is conducted to convert agricultural commodities to value-added products for farmers and producers in Georgia.
The Plant Center
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The Plant Center is the umbrella organization that unites the IPS participating units.

The Plant Center aims to enhance the tradition of outstanding research in plant molecular biology and genetics at the University of Georgia.

The Center brings together plant scientists through an annual retreat, seminars, and symposia to share research and promote the plant community here at UGA. Most IPS faculty and their students are members of The Plant Center.

“The Plant Center enriches my research by re-energizing and re-focusing my ideas and approach to plant biology.”
— Josh Clevenger, Faculty Investigator, Hudson Alpha
Living in Athens

“The Classic City” is a cultural hub in the southeast with a flair for the arts. Renowned for its music scene, Athens is home to REM, Widespread Panic, and the B-52s and venues such as the 40 Watt Club and Georgia Theater. Downtown Athens has an abundance of food and nightlife, and was named as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

Athens has many distinctive neighborhoods (above) and historic areas with a lower cost of living than the national average. IPS students live in houses or apartments all around campus - some of their favorite neighborhoods include:

**Five Points** - right next to campus, you can grab a cup of coffee at Jittery Joe’s or enjoy fish tacos at Cali ’N Titos

**Normaltown** - go for trivia at Hi-Lo Lounge or visit The Grit

**Chicopee-Dudley** - visit Trail Creek Park or brunch at Mama’s Boy in this quaint neighborhood

Ask around for other favorite living areas!

**Athens Accolades**

"Best College Football Towns in America" (ranked #2), *USA Today Sports*

"12 Best Music Towns in the Nation,” *Expedia*

"Underrated food cities in the south," *USA Today*

"The 24 coolest towns in the USA" (ranked #1), *Matador Network*

UGA and Athens buses are free for students! - though many ride bikes to campus or carpool. The air quality index of Athens is 21% better than the national average! (Source: *AreaVibes*)

“My mother was deeded all land within 8 ft of her trunk, and I was planted after she passed.”

- *The Tree that Owns Itself*
Brunch? Eat at *Mama’s Boy* (left) – the best breakfast in Athens! Other options include Athens Bagel Company or homemade pastries at *Big City Bread* or dishes made with local ingredients at *Heirloom Café* and *The National*– or make your own with veggies from the *Farmers Market*.

Enjoy a freshly baked pizza outside surrounded by hanging lights at *Ted’s Most Bes*. If you’re looking for a nice place to have coffee in the day or a beer at night, try *Hendershot’s, 1000 Faces*, or *Walker’s*. A great vegetarian option is the Grit– so good it appeals to omnivores too! If you’re craving some BBQ, try *Saucehouse BBQ* for great ribs, homemade sauce, and sides. *World Famous* is a restaurant featured for its unique food and live music.

**Student favorites:**

- **Georgia Theatre** (top) – The local theatre is home to local musicians and acts/concerts that come through town. Its rooftop bar has live shows weekly!

- **Rook and Pawn** (right) – Athens’ newest board and brew game café is fully stocked with any tabletop game you can imagine

- **ARTini’s** – Paint a masterpiece led by a certified instructor… and drink wine while you do it!

- **Escape the Space** – Challenge yourself and a group of friends to a timed room puzzle

- **UGA Football** – We live for football. We live to tailgate. GO DAWGS!

- **Classic City Rollergirls** – Roller derby like you’ve never seen before!

- **Little Kings** - a bar which Athens Science Café hosts their monthly public science communication events

**Local Breweries:**

*Creature Comforts* (above) is a chill place to go downtown for a few cold beers– including Thor’s favorite beers on *Avengers: Endgame*– and good conversation. *Southern Brewing Company* and *Akademia* have a great indoor/outdoor scene. *Terrapin* remains a local favorite and has weekly events and live music in their large outdoor area. *Athentic Brewing Company* is the newest one to offer local brews.
In August 2020 Athens announced the creation of the Athens Music Walk of Fame, a two square block area in downtown Athens. Many artists have historically and currently call Athens home, making our small city the spot to see a lot of big artists at clubs like Georgia Theater and 40 Watt. The first 10 inductees include Drive-By-Truckers, Danger Mouse, and Widespread Panic.

Athens International Favorites:

- **Ding Tea**– Downtown Athens has always been the best spot to get your beverage of choice and now with the addition of Ding Ting, you can get your bubble tea fix too. Ding Tea offers an array of flavored teas, milk tea, slushes and juice drinks and is located on Washington St close to the parking deck.

- **All for Pho the love of Pho!**– Nothing is quite as comforting as a hot bowl of Pho on a chilly fall day. Athens has several excellent options to soothe the stomach and soul. **Mother Pho** downtown on Broad St and **Just Pho** on Baxter are both great places to get that pho fix.

- **Kelly’s Jamaican**– located near the UGA track on S. Milledge this Jamaican spot serves Athens residents the best jerk anywhere close to Athens and some say the southeast. The menu also has southern favorites like cornbread and collard greens with a Jamaican twist.

- **Punta Cana**– On Prince Ave you’ll find Punta Cana Latin Grill serving up traditional favorites in The Bottleworks. The Bottleworks was originally constructed by Coca-Cola in the late 1800s and is now the site of several restaurants and shops and has won awards for historic preservation. Punta Cana’s house made sausage and lively patio are both not to be missed.

- **Siri Thai**– On the Athens Eastside, Siri Thai is consistently a favorite for those who are seeking a spicy curry or Thai noodle dish. The service is as friendly as the curry is hot...first time diners beware the “4 stars hot”!

New and Notable in 5 Points:

- **Condor Chocolates** – Local brothers Nick and Peter sell bean-to-bar chocolate bars, truffles, coffee, gelato and more at this adorable confectionary. The store is an homage to their family’s Ecuadorian heritage and is a bustling spot in the 5 Points neighborhood. Have dinner at nearby Donna Chang’s or The Expat and desert at Condor Chocolates.

- **El Barrio Taqueria** – Mini golf and tacos go together like...tacos and mini golf! El Barrio has a covered open air dining area surrounded by the aforementioned greens for golfing while you wait for your order. There are many vegetarian options as well as fare for those who are not.

- **Fully Loaded Pizza** – A great spot to enjoy pizza and people watching, Fully Loaded Pizza occupies a prime corner in 5 Points with a big patio out front for perfect for outdoor dining.

visitathensga.com
More in Georgia

Get outdoors in and around Athens!

▪ **State Botanical Garden** – enjoy the observatory, cafe, gardens, and hiking trail at this must-see spot!

▪ **Bear Hollow Zoo** – a free park with Georgia wildlife, adjacent to a Memorial pool (pond) and dog park

▪ **Sandy Creek Nature Center** – explore woodlands and wetlands or stop by the visitor’s center to view aquariums and natural history exhibits

▪ **Tallulah Gorge** – about an hour from Athens, hike the trails to an overlook and visit the Victorian resort town

▪ **Panther Creek** – a little over an hour from Athens, hike the trail noted for its Chattahoochee forest flora

▪ **Blood Mountain** – about an hour and 45 minutes from Athens, great vistas from one of Georgia’s tallest mountains

▪ **Raven Cliff Falls** – about an hour and a half from Athens, hike to one of Georgia’s most popular and beautiful waterfalls

▪ **Broad River** – just half an hour away, it is a favorite for canoers, rafters, and kayakers (photo below)
Want to learn more? Beaches, white water rafting, canoeing, history— the largest state east of the Mississippi has it all!

Atlanta (~90 min away):
- Atlanta Botanical Garden
- Georgia Aquarium
- World of Coke
- High Museum of Art
- IKEA
- Zoo Atlanta
- Jimmy Carter Library & Museum
- CNN Headquarters
- Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site
- Truist Park, the Braves

Well worth the trip:
- **Savannah** (~3.5 hours away)
- **Chattanooga** (~3 hours away)

Student favorites:
“The Masquerade is a really amazing music venue in Atlanta and Lenox Square Mall in Atlanta is a great place for shopping.”

Admire Art in Athens:
- **Georgia Museum of Art** – new exhibitions every few months and a stunning permanent collection
- **Lyndon House Arts Center** – visit free exhibits, attend art classes, and explore the historic house connected to the gallery
IPS Faculty Directory:

Rebecca Abney
Assistant Professor
Warnell
Rebecca.Abney@uga.edu
biogeochemical cycles, post-wildfire erosion, soil C sequestration

Magdy Alabady
Associate Research Scientist;
Director of Georgia Genomics & Bioinformatics Core
PBio; Georgia Genomics Facility
malabady@uga.edu
functional genomics, epigenetics, small RNA

Jill Anderson
Assistant Professor
Genetics; PBio
jta24@uga.edu
global change, ecophysiology, natural selection, evolutionary genetics, local adaptation

Jonathan Arnold
Professor
Genetics
arnold@uga.edu
systems biology, symbiosis of fungi and plants, arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi, biological clocks

Doug Aubrey
Assistant Professor
Warnell; PBio
daubrey@srel.uga.edu
Tree ecophysiology, forest biogeochemistry, fire ecology, sustainability of bioenergy production

Sudeep Bag
Assistant Professor
Plant Path.
sudeepbag@uga.edu
plant virology: detection, disease epidemiology, genomics, small RNA, virus-host interaction, and virus disease management

Bochra Bahri
Assistant Professor
IPBGG; Plant Path.
bbahri@uga.edu
pathogen population structure, pathogen adaptation, plant-pathogen interactions, resistance gene and virulence factor identification, turfgrass and forage disease management

Maor Bar-Peled
Professor
PBio
peled@ccrc.uga.edu
complex carbohydrates synthesis and regulation, biochemistry and molecular biology

Jessica Barb
Assistant Research Scientist
IPBGG; PBio
jessica.barb@uga.edu
small grains breeding and genetics

Jeff Bennetzen
Norman and Doris Giles Professor, Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar, National Academy of Sciences Member
Genetics; PBio; IoB
maize@uga.edu
cereal comparative genomics, genome structure and evolution
Douda Bensasson  
Assistant Professor  
PBio; IoB  
dbensasson@uga.edu  
*fungal domestication, bioinformatics, population genetics, evolution*

David Bertioli  
Professor, Georgia Research Alliance Distinguished Investigator  
IPBGG; Plant Path.  
bertioli@uga.edu  
*peanut genetics and improvement using wild species*

Marin Brewer  
Associate Professor  
Plant Path.  
tmbrewer@uga.edu  
*plant-pathogenic fungi, population genomics, mating systems, host specialization*

Alexander Bucksch  
Assistant Professor  
PBio; Warnell; IoB  
bucksch@uga.edu  
*computational plant science, phenomics, plant roots, plant imaging and simulation*

Robin Buell  
GRA Eminent Scholar Chair in Crop Genomics  
IPBGG  
Robin.Buell@uga.edu  
*plant genome biology, genome-enabled breeding, plant resilience, genome editing, synthetic biology*

John Burke  
Distinguished Research Professor; Department Head of Plant Biology  
PBio  
jmburke@uga.edu  
*plant evolutionary genetics*

Shu-Mei Chang  
Professor  
PBio  
smchang@uga.edu  
*evolution and ecology of plant reproduction and mating systems*

Dario Chavez  
Assistant Professor  
IPBGG  
dchavez@uga.edu  
*peach breeding, genetics and production*

Peng W. Chee  
Professor  
Molecular Cotton Breeding Laboratory; National Environmentally Sound Production Agriculture Laboratory; IPBGG  
pwchee@uga.edu  
*molecular breeding of cotton*

Anny Chung  
Assistant Professor  
PBio; Plant Path.  
yyachung@uga.edu  
*plant-microbe interactions, competition and coexistence, population and community ecology, global change*

Josh Clevenger  
Adjunct Faculty  
IPBGG  
jclev@uga.edu  
*peanut genetic improvement polyploid genomics*
Joann Conner
Assistant Research Scientist
Hort.; IPBGG
jconner@uga.edu
apospory, angiosperm asexual reproduction

Jennifer Cruse-Sanders
Director, State Botanical Garden of Georgia
PBio
crusesanders@uga.edu
plant ecology, conservation

Kelly Dawe
Distinguished Research Professor
PBio; Genetics
kdawe@uga.edu
centromeres, cytogenetics

Megan DeMarche
Assistant Professor
PBio
megan.peterson@colorado.edu
population dynamics, evolutionary ecology, responses to climate change

Michael Deom
Professor
Plant Path.
deam@uga.edu
virus-host interactions, biotic and abiotic stress in groundnut varieties

Katrien Devos
Distinguished Research Professor
PBio; IPBGG; IoB
kdevos@uga.edu
comparative genomics in cereals

Lisa Donovan
Distinguished Research Professor
PBio
ldonovan@uga.edu
plant evolutionary ecophysiology, stress physiology, resource allocation

Michael G. Hahn
Professor
PBio; CCRC
hahn@ccrc.uga.edu
study of plant cell wall polysaccharides using monoclonal antibodies

Dan Johnson
Assistant Professor
PBio; Warnell
danjohnson@uga.edu
tree ecophysiology, water use, drought

Chang Hyun Khang
Assistant Professor
PBio
ckhang@uga.edu
plant-fungal interactions, rice, blast fungus

Brian Kvitko
Assistant Professor
PBio; Plant Path.
bkvitko@uga.edu
mechanisms of plant immune action against bacteria, molecular phytobacteriology

Soraya Leal-Bertioli
Senior Research Scientist
Plant Path.; IPBGG
sorayab@uga.edu
peanut, wild arachis, introgression, tetraploidization, disease resistance
Jim Leebens-Mack
Distinguished Research Professor;
Director of UGA Plant Center
PBio
jleebensmack@uga.edu
genomic, phylogenetic and experimental analyses

Zachary Lewis
Associate Professor
PBio; Micro
zlewis@uga.edu
fungal genetics, chromatin structure and function, epigenetics, gene regulation

Zenglu Li
Georgia Seed Development Professorship in Soybean Breeding and Genetics
IPBGG
zli@uga.edu
soybean breeding, genetics and genomics

Xiaorong Lin
Professor
PBio; Micro
Xiaorong.Lin@uga.edu
fungal genetics, human fungal pathogens, sexual reproduction, dimorphism, pathogenesis, protein trafficking

Wolfgang Lukowitz
Associate Professor
PBio
lukowitz@uga.edu
plant development and cell biology

Anish Malladi
Associate Professor
Hort.
malladi@uga.edu
fruit growth and developmental physiology

Rodney Mauricio
Josiah Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor
Genetics
mauricio@uga.edu
conservation genetics, invasive species, ecological genetics, evolutionary ecology, plant-animal interactions, evolutionary quantitative genetics, adaptation

Cecilia McGregor
Associate Professor
IPBGG
cmcgre1@uga.edu
vegetables, breeding, genetics, genomics, marker-assisted selection, QTL

Mohamed Mergoum
Georgia Seed Development UGAF Professorship in Wheat Breeding and Genetics
IPBGG
mmergoum@uga.edu
small grain breeding, genetics and genomics

Ali Missaoui
Associate Professor
IPBGG
cssamm@uga.edu
bioenergy, forages, breeding, genomics
Melissa Mitchum  
Professor  
IPBGG; Plant Path.  
melissa.mitchum@uga.edu  
molecular plant-nematode interactions, effectors, peptide signaling, host plant resistance, soybean genetics and genomics

Jacqueline Mohan  
Associate Professor, School of Ecology  
PBio  
jmohan@uga.edu  
ecosystem ecology, population and biogeochemistry, climate change, conservation, geographic genetic variation, species range shifts

Debra Mohnen  
Georgia Athletics Association Professor  
BMB; PBio; CCRC  
dmohnen@uga.edu  
biosynthesis of plant cell wall polysaccharides

Michelle Momany  
Professor  
PBio  
mmomany@uga.edu  
fungal genetics, cytoskeleton, polar growth

Savithri Nambeesan  
Assistant Research Scientist  
Hort.  
sunamb@uga.edu  
ripening and postharvest physiology

Brad Nelms  
Assistant Professor  
PBio  
nelms@uga.edu  
plant reproduction, genomics and gene regulatory networks, single-cell RNA-sequencing, reprogramming cell fate

Peggy Ozias-Akins  
D.W. Brooks Professorship, UGA  
Distinguished Research Professor  
IPBGG; Hort.  
pozias@uga.edu  
developmental biology, molecular mechanisms of apomixis, peanut & grasses genetic enhancement

Wayne Parrott  
Distinguished Research Professor  
IPBGG  
wparrott@uga.edu  
gene editing and transgenic breeding of legumes and grasses

Andrew Paterson  
Regents Professor; Plant Genome Mapping Laboratory Genetics; IoB; PBio  
paterson@uga.edu  
plant genetics, genomics, evolution, crop improvement, domestication

Chris Peterson  
Professor  
PBio  
cjpete@uga.edu  
carbon cycling, forest recovery, landscape patterns

Paul Raymer  
Professor  
IPBGG  
praymer@uga.edu  
turfgrass breeding and genetics
Bob Schmitz  
Associate Professor  
Genetics; PBio; IoB  
schmitz@uga.edu  
epigenetics, epigenomics

Brian Schwartz  
Associate Professor  
IPBGG  
tifturf@uga.edu  
turfgrass breeding

Shavannor Smith  
Associate Professor  
Plant Path.  
shavs@uga.edu  
plant-pathogen interactions,  
structure and evolution of disease  
resistance loci

Andrea Sweigart  
Associate Professor  
Genetics; PBio  
sweigart@uga.edu  
evolutionary genetics, speciation

Dorset Trapnell  
Associate Professor  
PBio  
dorset@uga.edu  
ecology, landscape disturbances,  
phylogeography

CJ Tsai  
Winfred N. Haynes Professor and  
Georgia Research Alliance Eminent  
Scholar  
Warnell; PBio; Genetics; IoB  
cjtsai@uga.edu  
phenylpropanoid metabolism, stress  
response, wood formation, gene  
family evolution, gene-metabolite  
networks

Breeanna Urbanowicz  
Assistant Professor  
BMB; CCRC  
breeanna@uga.edu  
structure and function of plant  
carbohydrate active enzymes

Esther van der Knaap  
Professor  
Hort.; IPBGG; PBio; Genetics  
vanderkn@uga.edu  
tomato developmental genetics,  
genomics, molecular biology

Marc van Iersel  
Vincent J. Dooley Professorship in  
Horticulture  
mvanier@uga.edu  
physiology, drought, photosynthesis

Justin Vaughn  
Adjunct Faculty  
IPBGG  
justin.vaughn@ars.usda.gov  
gene discovery, population  
genomics characterization and  
visualization, simulation of genetic  
systems

Caterina Villari  
Assistant Professor  
PBio; Warnell  
cvillari@uga.edu  
fungal pathogens, resistance  
mechanisms of trees, chemical  
ecology, insect-fungi symbioses

Jason Wallace  
Associate Professor  
IoB; IPBGG  
jason.wallace@uga.edu  
quantitative genetics and genomics  
of crops and their microbiomes
Dayton Wilde  
Professor  
Hort.; IPBGG  
dwilde@uga.edu  
molecular genetics of ornamental plants

Nina Wurzburger  
Associate Professor  
PBio  
ninawurz@uga.edu  
ecosystem biogeochemistry, plant-microbial symbioses, disturbance ecology

Li Yang  
Assistant Professor  
Plant Path.  
Li.Yang1@uga.edu  
molecular genetics of plant immunity and development

Zheng-Hua Ye  
Professor  
PBio  
yh@uga.edu  
molecular genetics and biochemistry of secondary cell wall biosynthesis

Donglin Zhang  
Dirr Professor  
Hort.; IPBGG  
donglin@uga.edu  
woody ornamental improvement

Abbreviations:  
BMB. = Biochemistry and Molecular Biology  
CCRC = Complex Carbohydrate Research Center  
Ecol. = Ecology  
Hort. = Horticulture  
IPBGG = Institute of Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Genomics  
IoB = Institute of Bioinformatics  
Micro = Microbiology  
PBio = Plant Biology  
Plant Path. = Plant Pathology  
Warnell = Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources
Dr. Esther van der Knaap  
Graduate Coordinator  
Institute of Plant Breeding, Genetics & Genomics  
University of Georgia  
Athens, GA 30602 U.S.A.  
vanderkn@uga.edu

Dr. Wayne Parrott  
Program Director  
Institute of Plant Breeding, Genetics & Genomics  
University of Georgia  
Athens, GA 30602 U.S.A.  
wparrott@uga.edu

For general & application inquiries:  
plantinfo@uga.edu  
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