



Graduate Research Assistantship Pollinator Ecology in Urban Landscapes

We are seeking motivated applicants for a graduate research assistantship for a Masters or PhD student interested in investigating the response of pollinators to native landscape plantings. The loss of biodiversity is a pressing global issue, and urban areas are influencing biodiversity at increasingly larger scales. Native plants can support native biodiversity and can increase resource use efficiency in urban landscapes. There is interest among developers, nurseries, and landscape architects in increasing the use of native plants to support these ecological functions.

This project involves a unique academic-private partnership focused on a large native landscape designed and planted near the gateway to a 24,000-acre community east of Orlando, Florida, being developed by the [Sunbridge Stewardship District](#) and Tavistock Development Company. These partners are providing funding for the graduate assistantship, and they are interested in exploring the use of native plants and sustainable landscape approaches in their development. Other project partners include [Cherrylake](#) landscape company, [LifeSoils](#) LLC, and the [Sustainable Floridians](#) Benchmarking and Monitoring Program at the University of Florida (UF), which partners with the Florida Chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

The designed planting has an experimental component that tests the effects of compost and different irrigation schedules on plant growth and performance, and the diversity and abundance of key ecological indicator groups, including pollinators and ground-dwelling beetles. The student will focus on pollinators, and will collaborate with doctoral students in the [Urban Ecology lab](#) at UCF and the [Residential Landscape Ecology lab](#) at UF who are focusing on the other project metrics. The student will develop an independent project that includes this scope.

Strong applicants will have a combination of key skills and attributes, including both biological expertise and leadership ability. Preferred biological experience includes field work collecting and identifying pollinators or other insects, with a desire to gain more experience with pollinators and plant-insect interactions. The student will have key ownership role in the project; thus, strong communication (oral and written) and organizational skills are essential, and experience leading others or working in research teams would be a plus.

Interested candidates should have a B.S (or M.S.) degree in biology, ecology, or a related field, and must be accepted into the graduate program in biology at UCF: **the graduate program application deadline is December 1, 2021**. To find out more about the graduate program at UCF, visit <https://sciences.ucf.edu/biology/graduate/>. Dr. Patrick Bohlen will be the student's advisor, and applicants must contact him at patrick.bohlen@ucf.edu prior to applying or to get more information. We encourage applicants from underrepresented groups to apply.