



Leonardo De La Fuente, Ph.D.

Professor

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Graduate student search:

A Graduate Research Assistantship is available at the M.S. or Ph.D. level starting in Fall 2023 or later at the De La Fuente laboratory in the Auburn University Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology (<https://agriculture.auburn.edu/about/directory/faculty/leonardo-de-la-fuente/>). The successful candidate will conduct fundamental research on different aspects of pathogenic bacteria-plant host interactions in the framework of the international EU-funded project BeXyl <https://www.bexylproject.com/>. The graduate student will further the knowledge of lines of research ongoing in the lab involving *Xylella fastidiosa* (see *Annual Review of Phytopathology*, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-phyto-021021-041716>; *ISME Journal* [doi: 10.1038/s41396-019-0423-y](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41396-019-0423-y); *Plant Disease*, <https://doi.org/10.1094/PDIS-01-22-0246-RE>; and *Appl. Env. Microb.* [doi:10.1128/AEM.01167-18](https://doi.org/10.1128/AEM.01167-18)). One of our lines of research is focused on the mechanisms of natural competence, or acquisition of exogenous DNA, and its implication for bacterial pathogen evolution and host adaptation. Other research includes elucidating factors of pathogen-host specificity, and the use of novel nanoparticles to control plant diseases. These research projects allow close collaboration with multiple universities and researchers, engineers, and industry personnel with a great range of expertise from the US, Europe, South and Central America. Experience in molecular biology, microbiology and bioinformatics analysis is desirable but not required. The position will be ideal for a self-motivated person interested in the advancement of scientific knowledge of plant-associated bacteria. The successful candidate will work within a collaborative, diverse and multi-disciplinary environment. The student will be enrolled in a program towards obtaining a M.S. or Ph.D. in Plant Pathology. The position will remain open until filled.

Requirements:

A B.S. degree in a Biological Sciences-related discipline is required. Experience working in a research laboratory is preferred and skills in microbiology, molecular biology, bioinformatics and/or microscopy techniques are desired but not required. Strong communication skills and the ability to work as part of a team are essential for the successful candidate.

Instructions for sending job materials:

The candidate should contact Dr. Leonardo De La Fuente directly at lzd0005@auburn.edu, and send him a current CV and a letter of interest addressing their motivation to join our program. After a pre-selection, the candidate should apply to the Auburn University Graduate School at <http://www.grad.auburn.edu/>. Transcripts and TOEFL scores (if applicable), and letters of recommendation from 3 references will need to be submitted with the application.