



Ph.D. Position in Blueberry Resilience

Overview: The Small Fruit Horticulture Laboratory at the University of Florida is looking to recruit a doctoral student with an interest in horticultural physiology. The selected student will enroll in Spring 2027 and will have 4 years of financial support (tuition waiver for full-time enrollment, health insurance, and stipend). The student will investigate blueberry farming resilience in the face of climate and labor challenges. The first focus area will be blueberry responses to cold stress. The student will investigate flower bud initiation and flower bud freeze tolerance in commercially relevant southern highbush blueberry cultivars. The second focus area will be blueberry mechanical harvest. The student will evaluate the suitability of over-the-row harvesters for use with grafted blueberry plants. Experiments will combine farm, greenhouse, and laboratory activities at UF main campus (Gainesville, FL), the Plant Science Research and Education Unit (Citra, FL), and commercial farms in north-central Florida.

Our laboratory: Our lab culture is inclusive, hyper-connected, and collegial. We pride ourselves in performing rigorous science in a collaborative environment. Our team benefits from constant collaboration with blueberry growers and scientists from multiple disciplines (plant physiologists, production specialists, and plant breeders). Graduate students in our lab present their research at scientific conferences, publish in peer-reviewed journals, and apply to grants/awards before graduation. Teaching and mentoring opportunities are available if the student is interested. More details about lab expectations can be found in our mentoring compact (www.nunez-lab.com/people).

Candidate profile. Graduates from any Masters of Science program in an agriculture-related discipline that can clearly articulate why they want to pursue research and training in this area will be considered. Applicants with prior coursework, research, or work experience in berry crop production are especially encouraged to apply. The ideal candidate for this position is someone who 1) exhibits superior oral and written communication, 2) has the ability to work independently and as a part of a team, and 3) is aiming for a career in the horticulture sector whether in industry, government, or academia.

Application Process: Please, contact Dr. Gerardo Nunez (g.nunez@ufl.edu) as soon as possible if you are interested in this opportunity. Applications will be reviewed starting on September 1st, 2026. Please, include these documents in your email:

- A summary of relevant coursework, work, and/or research experience
- A copy of your resume
- Contact information of 3 professional references
- A writing sample (scientific article, academic essay, thesis, or similar). It is exceptionally important that generative AI is not used in this writing sample.