Ball Helix – Assistant Scientist: Testing Services

Reports to: Bethany Brown

Ball Horticultural Company

Work location: West Chicago, IL
Full-time, benefit-eligible position

Key Responsibilities (Outcomes – why does this job exist?):

The primary function of this position is to perform routine testing screens of plant material for the presence of viruses and viroids to maintain the highest standards of plant quality for our internal and external customers. Performs RNA/DNA extractions, conducts ELISA, RT-PCR and PCR assays, and interprets results including using software to analyze DNA sequences for confirmation, identification or characterization of plant pathogens. Maintains a database of samples and results. In addition, this position would be expected to participate in other molecular-related activities in the lab.

Relationships: To whom does this job provide service? Who depends upon this person to be here and functioning?

Insert chart showing customers – Who impacts this position and who is impacted by the outcomes??

Essential Functions – What needs to Be Accomplished?

1. Routine preparation and analysis of plant samples to detect the presence of plant pathogens using molecular (PCR) and immunodiagnostic (ELISA) techniques, with an emphasis on virus and viroid detection.
2. Independently perform genomic RNA/DNA extractions, conduct rtPCR and PCR assays and interpret results including the use of software to analyze DNA sequences for confirmation and identification of pathogens.
3. Independently perform genomic RNA/DNA extractions and PCR assays for molecular marker screening.
4. Data entry and record keeping to maintain accurate and efficient files of sample and test results
5. Daily lab upkeep including proper care and use of laboratory equipment.
Other Responsibilities:

When required, participate in other service and molecular-related research activities in the lab and greenhouse or other duties as needed or requested.

Requirements:

- Demonstrated ability to organize and prioritize tasks and perform multiple tasks simultaneously.
- Must be able to effectively communicate in English, both verbally and written, in a multi-cultural setting.
- Accurately and independently perform established molecular detection methods and protocols after appropriate training.
- Highly self-motivated, with a strong interest in working with and becoming knowledgeable about plants and plant pathogens (especially viruses) is necessary.
- Proven reliability and ability to work efficiently.
- Willingness to perform routine tasks with a high level of detail and mental concentration.
- Must be able work independently but also cooperatively in a team setting.
- Proficient and accurate computer skills (MS Word and Excel) for reporting and database entry.
- Good manual dexterity with the ability to perform repetitive motion.
- Aptitude to troubleshoot and learn new techniques.

Required Skills & Experience

- Bachelor’s degree or higher in biology, microbiology, molecular biology or related field of study.
- A minimum of 2 years’ laboratory experience through coursework and/or job experience is required. Industry experience preferred.
- Prior experience working in a regulated environment.
- Familiarity with various molecular biology techniques.
- Versed in molecular biology and plant pathology.

Physical Requirements

1. Must be able to stand for extended periods of time.
2. Must be able to perform repetitive wrist/hand motions.

Scope of Responsibility

Staff: This position does not have anyone reporting to it.
Budgets: This position does not have responsibility for establishing budgets.