

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE NURSERY RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM

2026 Proposal, Submitted September 12, 2025

CONTACTS

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BACKGROUND

The Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) was established on September 19, 1962, to support and promote horticultural research that benefits the nursery and landscape industry. Since 1962 HRI has directed over \$12 million of industry funds to research projects covering the full range of production, environmental, and business issues important to trade. HRI has supported more than 700 research projects.

Through HRI's competitive grants program, HRI strives to fund research that specifically deals with green industry-related issues. HRI-supported projects focus on significant problems, regulatory issues, and emerging opportunities in the nursery and landscape industry. HRI has long invested in research that tackles ongoing and emergent industry challenges in production, resource management, cultural methods, and insect pest and plant disease management. Providing practical and actionable advice for horticultural businesses to improve sustainability and profitability is a key tenet of our work. HRI further supports research with definable outcomes with promising returns on investment for the green industry.

In 2025, HRI distributed \$531,900 grant support, with \$111,300 supporting three projects in Oregon (Identification of thrips pheromones for the development of a sustainable thrips control for horticultural crops (Choi); Determining genetic regulation of tolerance to drought stress across a diverse suite of woody plants (Contreras); A New Grower's Guide to Nursery Production in Soilless Substrates (Nackley)). Donor-designated funds are the primary component of funding for HRI's research endeavors. Over \$20 million is committed to the endowment by over 200 individuals, associations, and corporations. The Endowment Fund's principal remains invested and untouched; only investment earnings fund HRI grants.

In 1994, the Oregon Association of Nurserymen & the Oregon Department of Agriculture established the \$100,000 Oregon Nursery Industry Endowment fund with HRI. Today, the **Oregon Nursery Industry Endowment Fund** annually distributes research grants to projects dealing with priority research issues that impact Oregon green industry members. Growing the Oregon Nursery Industry Endowment Fund ensures industry research funding in perpetuity.

The Oregon Fund has reached \$485,500 in contributions from numerous sources within Oregon's nursery industry. An additional \$12,500 in grant support from the Oregon Nursery Research Fund in 2025 (the remainder of our 2025 grant), will bring that total to \$498,000. The Funds received through the Nursery Research Grant Program would be designated to the fund. Earnings from the Oregon Nursery Industry Endowment Fund are designated to annual HRI funded projects through research grants that meet the Oregon Fund's research priorities.

HRI is requesting \$25,000 in support of the Oregon Nursery Industry Research Fund and research for 2026.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

Project objectives: The funds requested would be designated to the Oregon Nursery Industry Endowment Fund. The funding principal remains within the HRI Endowment while earnings (proceeds) are committed by the fund to research projects each year. Projects focus on the elimination of plant diseases and insect pests, the development of production methods, resource management, and plant health. In line with ODA's policy, HRI disallows indirect costs in all grant funding. Recent projects can be viewed at

HRIresearch.org or by contacting HRI. Grants funded will support projects which align with the Nursery Research Grant Program's objectives: prevention and elimination of plant diseases and insect pests, both common and emergent; and development and improvement of beneficial cultural methods, technologies, or cultivars.

Project Outcomes/Benefits to Nursery Industry: *Oregon Nursery Industry Research Fund & Research:* HRI, as a green industry information clearinghouse, can reduce research duplication by encouraging investigators to examine the same problem from different angles. This makes better information and more resources available to the researchers. And it helps HRI dollars to go twice as far. In addition, because of HRI's national presence, close working relationships with USDA agencies such as the Agricultural Research Service and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture allow greater leveraging of limited research dollars for a greater impact.

The relationship between HRI and state and regional industry associations is commendable for its collaborative efforts to support research at the local and national levels. HRI research allows associations the benefit of a national organization focused on the needs of the entire green industry while assisting at the local level through administrative savings and research grants. Many green industry associations and organizations find that HRI affords greater research opportunities by maximizing a larger endowment like HRI's to fund industry research. By creating a fund within the HRI endowment, an organization does not have the administrative, operational, and overhead expenses typical of managing an investment portfolio. The earnings from a named fund support the named fund's grant award each year.

To date, the Oregon Nursery Industry Research Endowment Fund has provided \$282,108 in funding for 100 research projects benefiting the nursery industry. In reviewing the 2026 Oregon research focus categories and specific areas of interest, we see that HRI has a strong track-record in funding projects that align with Oregon needs. For example, projects on boxwood and rose health, phytophthora, ambrosia beetles, vascular streak dieback, nostoc, drone spraying, inventory controls, and substrate research have all been funded through HRI in recent years. Most of these projects include industry collaboration which, as noted in Oregon's call for proposals, is vital to conducting research with practical industry impact. HRI will use the revised funding categories and areas of interest to direct Oregon funds.

Further outcomes: allocating budgeted funds to the Oregon Nursery Industry Endowment Fund, completing the grant review cycle, funding grants, and reporting research results back to the industry through reports, webinars, seminars, and other dissemination tools.

METHODS & TIMELINES

Overview of methods and timelines: HRI's competitive grants program funds research projects throughout the United States at land grant universities and USDA research stations. Applications are solicited from March to June 1st of each year. Following submissions, the proposals go through a vigorous and highly regarded review process as follows:

- Phase One: Industry leaders evaluate the significance and economic usefulness of research proposals.
- Phase Two: HRI's scientific advisory panel assesses each project's feasibility and methodology.
- Phase Three: HRI Donors (including representatives from Oregon) and HRI Board Members are invited to submit comments regarding top-scoring proposals.
- Phase Four: Projects are reviewed by the HRI Executive Committee, and final project selections are made.

BUDGET

Budget Summary: Total amount of request is \$25,000 for 2026. **HRI funded research projects do not permit indirect costs. All HRI funding must be directed to the proposed research project.*