

**OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OAN NURSERY RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

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Principal Investigator:

Luisa Santamaria: North Willamette Research and Extension Center; 15210 NE Miley Rd, Aurora, OR 97002. Phone: 971-801-0389. luisa.santamaria@oregonstate.edu

Collaborator

Joleen Schilling. Program Chair, Horticulture. Chemeketa Community College; 4000 Lancaster Dr. NE, Salem, OR 97305. Phone: 503-399-5150. joleen.schilling@chemeketa.edu

Title: OSU NWREC–Chemeketa Community College Internship in Plant Health.

BACKGROUND

Hands-on applied research opportunities are critical for horticulture students as they prepare to enter the workforce. While universities often provide research internships, community college students—many of whom are pursuing degrees or certificates in horticulture, greenhouse, or nursery production—have limited access to such experiences.

The Oregon nursery industry requires a skilled workforce capable of addressing practical plant health challenges, from disease diagnostics and integrated pest management to sustainable cultural practices. To meet this need, Oregon State University’s NWREC Plant Health Program is partnering with Chemeketa Community College to expand its internship model.

Through this collaboration, Chemeketa students will gain valuable applied research experience in plant health, design and implement independent projects, and connect directly with the nursery industry. Equally important, the program will broaden students’ awareness of diverse professional pathways in agriculture—including laboratory diagnostics, applied research, extension, and industry collaboration—helping them envision future careers and strengthening the pipeline of skilled professionals entering Oregon’s nursery and greenhouse sector.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide community college horticulture students with immersive plant health research training through a summer internship program.
2. Engage students in the full scientific process, from generating a research idea to data collection, analysis, and reporting.
3. Strengthen collaboration between NWREC, OSU faculty, and community colleges to foster a stronger pipeline of skilled professionals for the nursery industry.
4. Benefit the Oregon nursery industry by training students in practical plant health problem-solving and disseminating applied research findings.

BENEFITS TO NURSERY INDUSTRY

- Prepares students for immediate employment in nursery/greenhouse operations.
- Trains future employees in disease prevention, diagnostics, and sustainable plant health practices.
- Provides growers with new applied research insights from student projects.

- Strengthens educational pipelines by connecting community colleges with OSU and the nursery industry.

PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

Phase / Timeline	Activities
Recruitment (Spring Semester)	- Position announcement distributed through the community college horticulture program. - Selection of 1–2 students through a competitive application process (statement of interest, GPA, recommendation).
Orientation & Training (Weeks 1–2)	- Introduction to plant pathology and plant health at NWREC. - Training in aseptic techniques, greenhouse practices, data collection, and safety. - Workshops on scientific method and experimental design.
Student Research Project Development (Weeks 2–3)	- Each student proposes a research idea related to plant health. - Projects refined with mentor guidance to ensure feasibility.
Project Implementation (Weeks 3–10)	- Conduct applied research in lab, greenhouse, or nursery setting. - Collect and analyze data with mentor support. - Participate in field tours of nurseries and other OSU Extension research centers.
Outreach & Presentation (Weeks 11–12)	- Prepare a written report summarizing project results. - Present findings at an NWREC seminar and share highlights with nursery industry stakeholders.

TIMELINE

- Spring 2026: Recruitment and selection.
- Summer 2026: Internship at NWREC (research, tours, and presentations).
- Fall 2026: Program review, reporting, and industry dissemination.

BUDGET SUMMARY

Category	Description	Requested Amount (\$)
Senior/Key Personnel	Salaries 0.1 FTE	10,900
	Fringe (% of salary) 39%	5,500
Intern stipend (1 student 40 hr/wk or 2 students 20 hrs/wk each)	40 hrs/week, \$20/hr, 12 weeks	9,600
	Fringe (% of salary) 10%	960
Materials & Supplies	Media, pots, substrates, lab reagents	1,600
Travel (field tours to nurseries/OSU centers)	Transportation, lodging	1,200
Other Direct Costs	Greenhouse rental, Printing, publication fees.	1,500
Total Budget Request		31,260