

The Ma lab at the Gregor Mendel Institute of Molecular Plant Biology will harness the power of gall-inducing insects, nature's own plant manipulators, to explore the intricate interplay between plant development and defense signaling. We are looking for a:

Predoctoral / Master / PhD Student

About the lab

Galling insects hijack existing plant developmental pathways to induce diverse and complex galls. Our group will establish a novel gall model between the model plant *Arabidopsis thaliana* and Swede Midge. We will integrate a range of disciplines — genetics, transcriptomics, molecular biology, biochemistry and advanced imaging — to uncover the genetic & signalling determinants of gall formation and characterise key hormonal and receptor signalling during gall formation from single cell to whole organ level. See [more](#).

Candidates

We are looking for inquisitive, independent, and passionate learner(s) to join our team. The candidate should have a background in bioinformatics and/or in molecular biology and be fluent in English (written & oral). Experience in handling genome-wide polymorphism data, proficiency in programming, and experience working with plants are pluses. We offer training in advanced cell biology, confocal microscopy, and various molecular & genetic skillsets for investigating fundamental cellular mechanisms. We value the development of the student's communication & critical thinking through journal clubs, conferences, presentations, and project building. Successful PhD candidates will join the VBC PhD program, which offers highly multidisciplinary training in a world-class research environment.

About the research project

The main aspects of the project(s) include establishing the new gall model (*Arabidopsis* & Swede Midge), characterising gall development with advanced imaging and transcriptomics, conducting GWAS to identify key genetic determinants of gall induction, and the subsequent dissection of insect-induced molecular changes in plant cells.

Contact

Send your CV and a brief motivation letter to Yan Ma (yan.ma@unil.ch). In your letter, share why you're interested in our lab, the research questions you are most curious about, and your vision for a good research environment. For more information, visit [Information for Students and Postdocs](#). The first selection round will start on September 18 and will continue until positions are filled. For PhD students: Submit applications through the [Vienna BioCenter PhD Program](#). Call opens on September 1.

About the Gregor Mendel Institute

The Gregor Mendel Institute is an international research institute founded by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Its main goal is to promote excellent curiosity driven research within the field of plant molecular biology. The Gregor Mendel Institute is located at the Vienna BioCenter, one of Europe's hotspots for Life Sciences.

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