

Position Announcement – M.S. Graduate Research Assistantship

An M.S. research assistantship is available with the Mountain Conifer IPM Program and Forest Health Lab in the Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources at NC State University beginning in June 2026. The incoming student will pursue research related to the phenology of two regulated scale insect pests of Fraser fir Christmas trees: Cryptomeria scale (CS, *Aspidiotus cryptomeriae*) and elongate hemlock scale (EHS, *Fiorinia externa*). Research activities will focus on determining the life stage phenology and generational time of CS at three field locations over a two-year period, assessing the cold development threshold of CS and EHS in the lab, and creating and validating a degree day model as a decision support tool for the application of control measures to manage CS and EHS populations. The student will be based on NC State's main campus in Raleigh where they will be part of the Forest Health Lab, a collaborative group of graduate and undergraduate researchers led by a supportive lab manager and two enthusiastic PIs. Field activities will be conducted in Ashe and Allegheny counties in the mountains of western North Carolina where the student will work closely with the NC State Forestry Extension Mountain Conifer IPM Specialist. This assistantship will include frequent overnight travel, field work in Christmas tree plantations established on steep terrain, mentoring and supervision of an undergraduate research assistant, and interaction with a multidisciplinary team of scientists, cooperative extension personnel, and growers.

Qualifications: Candidates with a B.A. or B.S. in biology, entomology, forestry, natural resources, or closely related fields are encouraged to apply.

Stipend and Benefits: The M.S. research assistant will receive an annual stipend, full waiver of tuition, and health insurance. The student is responsible for paying university fees. Funding is available for two years (4 semesters).

Contact and Application: This position will be co-advised by Drs. Jamie Bookwalter (jbookwa@ncsu.edu) and Robert Jetton (rmjetton@ncsu.edu). For more information and/or to apply, contact them both via email and attach a letter of interest, unofficial transcript(s), and a complete CV.