

Assistantship in Plant/herbivore Interactions in Manaus

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We are looking for a highly motivated and capable Brazilian citizen who recently completed a Bachelor's or MS degree and wants to gain research experience. The work would be as an assistant in a study of the ecology of plant/herbivore interactions. The field site is the Biological Dynamics of Forest Fragments Project's facility at Kilometer 41, north of Manaus. The position is full-time for three months, from about Sept 15, 2008 to about December 20, 2008. We will be at the field site essentially full time. The team will include T. Kursar, P. Coley and two assistants.

The aim of the project is to understand the ecology and evolution of plant defenses against herbivores and fungi. We are focusing on a speciose Neotropical tree genus, *Inga*, which is defended by ants visiting extra-floral nectaries as well as an extremely diverse set of secondary metabolites. Drs. M. Lemes (INPA) and T. Pennington (Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, UK) are constructing a phylogeny of *Inga* that will allow us to determine if shared defensive traits are due to common ancestry or to convergence and whether there are correlations between suites of traits. Responsibilities include field measurements of herbivory, phenology of leaf production and leaf expansion, ant visitation, making a photo guide to the plants and herbivores, collections and rearing of herbivores, collection of plant voucher specimens, measuring chlorophyll content at the field site, and data entry and management. Leaves will be vacuum-dried at the field site and sent to Utah for chemical analysis. In addition to field and lab work, the assistant should be familiar with data management and simple graphics and analyses. More information about our research can be found on www.biology.utah.edu/coley/.

This is an excellent learning experience for someone interested in continuing their studies for the MS or PhD. We prefer a highly motivated person who has a background in biology, especially ecology, botany, or entomology. We cover travel, room, and board and a salary (\$625/month). Knowledge of English or Spanish at the conversational level is highly recommended.

Please e-mail a CV, a research statement describing your background, language competency and career goals, plus the names, email addresses and telephone numbers of three people who can recommend you. Review of applications will start April 1, 2008. Please send to Drs. Thomas Kursar at kursar@biology.utah.edu and Maristerra R. Lemes at mlemes@inpa.gov.br